



TAKING TIME FROM a busy schedule, U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran had Rhonda May take his picture Monday with members of the Stick-to-It 4-H Club who had come to his "town-hall"

meeting at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center. With them was club leader Maureen Anderson (back row).

— Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

Board OKs new idea for school

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin School Board approved Superintendent Pat Cullen's work on an operational agreement for an alternative school at the former youth ranch and for the district to provide computers for youths at the 180 House who are taking classes online.

Dr. Cullen said the idea is to help the kids in the district who need an education. The young men at the 180 House, an alcohol rehabilitation facility, are using a program called A+, he said. It allows them to take high school classes on the computer.

Dr. Cullen said he is proposing that the district works with the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center and the 180 House to start the school at the classroom at the old youth ranch east of town, but it could serve other students as well.

The school would need a teacher, who would have to be hired, and probably an aide, he said. There would be some expense to get things ready, said Dr. Cullen, but the district would probably get that back in state aid. He didn't estimate how much the school could add to the district's budget.

The school would be in classrooms once used for the Sappa Valley Youth Ranch before it closed in September, 2006. The buildings have been empty since then. When the ranch closed, though, the district had three full-time and two part-time employees and received double the state money for each of the kids there on count day. The district would actually spend money out of the general fund and then the state would reimburse the district for the money spent at the ranch.

How much does the district receive in state aid for each child? asked Board Member Dan Nedland. Dr. Cullen said the base is \$4,100, but the state adds money for at-risk

School roundup

At a meeting last Monday, the Oberlin School Board:

- Accepted the resignations of Trevor and Tina Williams, who both teach at the junior/senior high school. Story to come.

- Agreed to a cell phone policy giving the three administrators a \$50 monthly stipend to get cell phones and leave the rest of the plan as is. Story on Page 3A.

- Approved the superintendent working on an operational agreement for an alternative school at the former Sappa Valley Youth Ranch. Story at left.

- Approved an audit report after hearing that the district received a clean opinion from the accounting firm. Story on Page 3A.

Farmers, kids, area officials meet with U.S. Rep. Moran

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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More than 50 people, including several youngsters, talked with Congressman Jerry Moran on Monday about the farm bill, a proposed waste water treatment plant in Oberlin, immigration and more.

People seemed to keep coming in during the "town hall" meeting at the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center, sponsored by the Oberlin-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce. Rep. Moran said this is his 46th meeting his year, leaving 23 counties to go in the big 1st District.

One of his priorities this year, he said, is finishing the farm bill. Both the House and the Senate have passed bills, he said, but the president has threatened to veto either version. This farm bill, said Rep. Moran, might be the last one written by people from agricultural

states.

Only about one-fourth of the money in the bill actually goes to farmers, he noted. More than half goes to things that aren't farm-related, mostly welfare programs like food stamps and that sort of thing.

Rep. Moran said on his return to Washington in a week the House and Senate will appoint a conference committee to hash out a compromise bill. Noting that he expects to be one of the House conferees, he said it is important to him to continue with direct payments to farmers and crop insurance.

Also, he said, the government needs to move aggressively on energy, including producing oil from the United States, more bioenergy such as ethanol and biodiesel, and wind.

There has been a vote probably every year he's been in office, said

Rep. Moran, on whether to drill for oil in Alaska. Every year, that vote fails, even with gasoline over \$3 a gallon.

The congressman said he voted against the so-called economic stimulus package. He said he doesn't understand how the \$600-per-person rebates are going to really help the economy, especially if the government doesn't have the money. (He noted they will have to borrow \$109 billion to pay them.)

The country needs more savings, not more spending, he said.

He said Congress ought to repeal or at least change the No Child Left Behind Act, President Bush's controversial education program which requires schools to test children on basic subjects and show improvement every year.

The more teaching is made to be about paperwork and testing, he said, the less people are going to

want to become teachers. Rep. Moran said he spent the last year talking to superintendents and other school officials to try to work on No Child Left Behind and make it better.

Jay Anderson, an Oberlin city council member, noted that the city has been working with the Federal Aviation Administration and other agencies to put in a longer runway at the airport here. Rep. Moran, who has been involved in the discussion, said he is excited at what the city is trying to do. The city is making a good case about needing an airport to handle jets in northwest Kansas in case of emergencies and for business, he said. Congress did take a step to continue the aviation funding, he said, so the agency can continue doing grants.

Firms like Bus and Coach International, which moved into the old Jennings school and asked for the (See CROWD on Page 10A)

County addresses in mail

Letters informing people in Decatur County of their new mailing address went out last week and have left some with unanswered questions, especially about how to display the new address on their home.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he is asking people to bear with county officials while they research the best way to have a consistent display of the numbers. Mr. Unger said they are asking the public not to do anything yet, just wait for the county to figure out what to do.

The letters had to be mailed before the county could come up with an answer, said Mr. Unger, so that everything would be done according to the terms of a state grant.

Everyone who had a new address — mostly those who previously had a rural route box number — should have received a letter last week, he said. The letters give the new address of the home and the fact that the address has to be posted on the property.

Anyone with questions about their new address was given a phone number to call.

If anyone has questions, said Mr. Unger, or if there is a problem, this is the time to call. If something about the address needs to be changed, he said, this is the time to get it done.

The new addresses are needed for the new Emergency 911 system, county officials claim. With the new system, the computer which runs the system will be able to pinpoint where phone calls come from, even those made on cell phones.

Deer samples sent to K-State for testing

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Test results for the 35 deer killed last week in Decatur County by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks should be back by the end of the week, and officials may know how widespread chronic wasting disease is in the area.

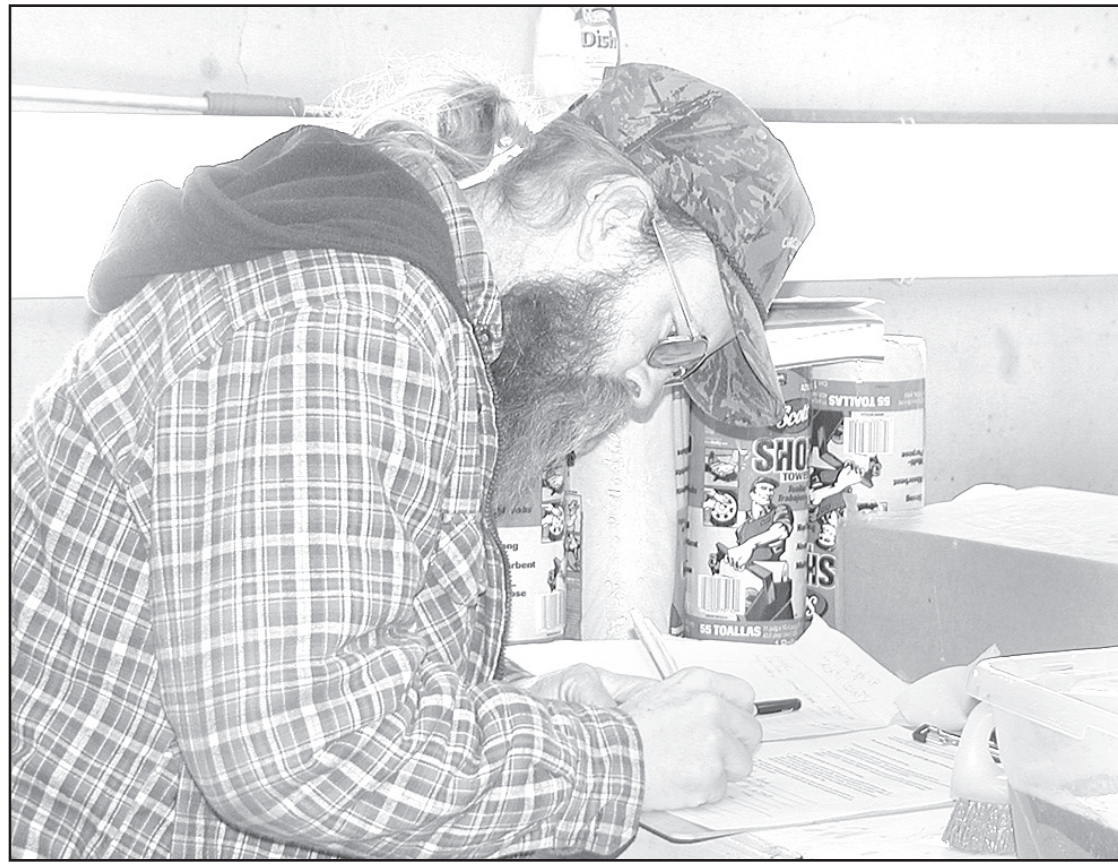
Lloyd Fox, big game program coordinator for the agency, said the department wanted to take between 25 and 50 deer during the collection. With the muddy roads and the weather, he said, they were happy with the 35 they got.

Over the state line in Nebraska, he said, the state wildlife department took close to 30 animals around the Beaver Creek. With the two states working together, he said, they should have a pretty good sample of what's out there.

The departments decided to harvest more deer after three white tail hunted last season tested positive for the brain-wasting disease, which is similar to "mad cow" disease.

At a public meeting, the department announced the plan to take 25 to 50 more deer near the Sappa Creek, where the three confirmed cases were found.

Eight biologists with the department, Mr. Fox; Ruby Mosher, wildlife disease coordinator for the department from Emporia; Tyson Seirer, a student at Emporia State University; Kevin Blecha, a student at Kansas State; and Megan Friedrichs, with the department, worked together from last Tuesday until Thursday. Some were in the field hunting. Mr. Fox said, while others got the samples and some boned out the meat.



DURING A SIGNUP at the Kansas Department of Transportation offices Wednesday, Dave Bose filled out paperwork to receive two bags of deer meat during a harvest by the state Department of Wildlife and Parks, which wanted to test more animals for chronic wasting disease.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Mr. Fox said the department asked people who wanted venison to sign up and all of it was given out. In most cases, he said, they gave each person two packages of meat from two animals. That way, if one was infected, the person would have the other meat to eat.

Some of the samples, he said, were sent to labs at K-State fresh, while others were put into a preservative.

The idea was to get a better sample of how many deer in the

county are infected with the disease, which has been common in Colorado for years. Chronic wasting disease, which is fatal in deer, hasn't been shown to transfer to cattle or humans, officials say.

Mr. Fox said almost all of the deer taken during the sampling were white tails, although there was a mule deer found sick along the side of the road. It had a broken leg and was obviously sick, he said, although it wasn't dead when the biologists found it.

All of the meat was boned out with the exception of the sick deer and those killed in vehicle accidents that were found along the road.

All of the deer were taken in the sample area around Sappa Creek, with the exception of the mule deer which was found south of town dying.

Mr. Fox said all of the carcasses were taken to the Cheyenne County landfill, since Decatur County officials refused to accept them.

Coach resigns

By **JIM MERRIOTT**
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Trevor Williams, head football coach at Decatur Community High, has accepted an assistant football coaching position at Chapman High School, a larger Class 4-A school between Abilene and Junction City on I-70.

Williams turned in his resignation earlier this month after posting a 26-37 record as head coach for the Red Devils in seven seasons between 2001 and 2007.

Before coming to Oberlin, Williams posted a 20-8 record in his first head coaching assignment at Guernsey, Wyo.

While finishing his teaching degree, Williams said, he was town clerk and treasurer for Guernsey and a part-time assistant coach. He is a 2001 graduate from the University of Wyoming in Laramie with a Bachelor's Degree in social studies.

He teaches American and World History in Oberlin, and said he will continue teaching the same courses at Chapman along with his coaching assignment.

Williams grew up and graduated from high school in Hemingford, Neb., where he played quarterback during his high school career.

"It has been an honor to be a part of the Red Devil program here at Decatur Community High School," Williams said. "I feel this is a good (See COACH on Page 10A)



T. Williams

*Crowd talks about farm bill

(Continued from Page 1A)
longer runway, have made every empty school around here worth something, said Dr. Anderson.

It's amazing how the Internet works with empty schools, said Rep. Moran.

The group talked about earmarks in the federal budget and appropriations. What's the difference between the two? asked Councilwoman Rhonda May. Nothing really, said Rep. Moran. Congress establishes a budget, then passes appropriation bills for each part of the government, like one for transportation. An earmark is just a portion of an appropriation set aside for a specific item, he said. Conference committees can put things into the bills or appropriation as earmarks, he said, and most members will never know they are there. One bill had more than 9,000 individual earmarks and no one really knows if they all are worthwhile projects.

What would he think of the president having a line-item veto, where he could remove individual earmarks? asked Steve Haynes, publisher of *The Oberlin Herald*. Rep. Moran said he is all for the president having that power, adding that he's been surprised more bills with earmarks haven't been vetoed. As it is today, though, the president has to veto the entire bill, leaving the affected departments with no money until another is passed.

If it takes a president using the line-item veto to hold Congress's feet to the fire and keep national spending down, he'd be for it. The president has vetoed bills saving \$24 billion in spending, he noted, but seldom vetoed a bill while the Republicans controlled Congress.

Are there any Kansas representatives on the appropriation committees? some asked. Yes, said Rep. Moran, Sen. Sam Brownback in the upper chamber and Rep. Todd Tiaht from Wichita in the House.

Would it be possible to have a citizens' committee to be like a watchdog on the government? asked Joel Shaw, a rural Decatur County resident.

Legislators, said Rep. Moran, need their constituents to be their watchdogs. It's important for everyone to pay attention to what goes on in Washington. That's part of what the town hall meetings are about, he said. Everyone is holding me accountable as a human being to do the best job I can. A personal goal, said Rep. Moran, is to not let Washington change him in any way he isn't happy with. Wilma May asked how to keep tax money in the Social Security fund, rather than letting the government "borrow" it to pay for other programs. She said she is worried about having enough money left for the next generation. Congress, said Rep. Moran, borrows money from the Social Security trust fund to pay for other things. Now the fund is taking in more money than it is paying to retirees, but when the fund needs it, the government will owe that money back. The problem is that this allows the government to spend more money than it has, he said.

With the new airport, said Doc Franklin, who is on the Decatur Tomorrow committee, the town may need help recruiting companies that use jets as their main transportation to locate here. Any time there is a company looking at the area, Rep. Moran said, he would be willing to call the chief executive. He said he would be happy to be an advocate for the quality of life here.

The greatest asset here, said Dan Nedland, who serves on the Oberlin School Board, is the kids. He said the board supports No Child Left Behind because of the money it gets, but not necessarily the idea of it or all the testing. Historically, said Rep. Morn, education has been a state and local issue. It shouldn't be run on the federal level.

With the No Child law, schools have to focus on areas the tests are in, he said, although the country desperately needs vocational education.

Rep. Morn said he was glad to see the 4-H kids — members of the Stick-to-It Club, at the session. Historically, farming has been moms and dads working side by side

with their kids, he said. It shows the integrity in people.

Any word on a better system for workers to come in from other countries? asked Patrick Shirley, an area farmer. There is work going on in Washington on how to get people here to work legally, Mr. Moran said. Now people can get a permit to work, but they get caught in the system forever. It can take years.

People have said that if companies in the United States started paying more for the jobs then Americans would take the jobs, he said, but there are some jobs people here just won't do.

Mr. Shirley also asked about the federal motor carrier for farm trucks. To haul fuel, he said, people have to have a commercial driver's license with a hazardous materials endorsement and have the truck marked with placards. A foreign worker can't get permission to haul fuel, he said, nor can anyone under 21.

Rep. Moran said he worries that regulation will keep kids today from getting jobs and learning a work ethic.

The Kansas Corporation Commission Motor Carrier Division was going to hold public meetings on trucking rules, he said, but canceled them and will instead work trying to inform the public for the next two years. He said he doesn't think the state has to enforce federal regulations on most farm trucks anyway.

What about unfunded federal requirements? asked Ms. May. The city is supposed to put in a \$4 million plant to remove minute amounts of arsenic and uranium from its water. She said she's seen no science to prove a public health benefit from this, but the city is being required to treat for something it never has before. The city just borrowed \$2 million for a waste-water treatment plant many thought the city didn't need. It will need \$1 million for the airport and the city really needs a pool, which will cost \$1 to \$1.5 million. All of that added up is \$8 to \$9 million, said Ms. May, for a town of 2,000 people.

"Is there any way out of this, or do we just send the city administrator to jail?" asked Ms. May as the group chuckled.

Rep. Moran said he has thought about this, as Oberlin isn't the only city facing the issue. He said he is uncertain how to solve the problem, since environmental causes of all kinds are powerful in Washington. No one wants anything that will be detrimental to someone's health, he said, but there doesn't seem to be any sound science behind the water rules.

"I represent communities who could never afford to fix any of this," he added.

If the federal government is going to require this, he said, it first needs to base the regulations on science and common sense. Second, he said, if the government requires it, the government should help to pay for the project, other than just making towns raise the rates so no one can afford them.

Rep. Moran said he met with the Kansas Rural Water Association and it is trying to set up a session with people from the federal Environmental Protection Agency and Kansas Department of Health and Environment, which actually issues permits for water and sewer projects, as well as other officials to sit down and address this issue.

Now, said Ms. May, the city is waffling and procrastinating hoping to not have to put in a water treatment plant for several years. The \$4 million doesn't even include treatment for nitrates or other problems with the city water, she said.

"This isn't a new issue for me," said Rep. Morn, "but a refocused issue."

Isn't there some way to come up with some common-sense immigration reform for people who are already here working here and going to school? asked Mr. Shaw. Rep. Moran said he thinks that hasn't been done because no one wants to offend any group.

Before leaving for Norton, Rep. Moran had his picture taken with members of the Stick-to-It Club. He said he had been in Atwood.

In a day's work



THE COUNTY CLOSED part of Hall Street last Tuesday while a large crane and crew of men put a new heater and air conditioner on the roof of the courthouse

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis.

*Former ranch could be school

(Continued from Page 1A)
kids at the 180 House, he said, but there are others here who would fit this program.

"It's important to serve kids and make a difference," he said.

There are kids in the district who are dropping out of school, said Carolyn Miller, administrator at the 180 House. This program would benefit more than the 180 House.

Is the A+ program through Colby? asked Mr. Nedland. It is through the Mullenville School, not the Oberlin district, said Ms. Miller.

Alternative schools came up at a meeting of the service center board, said board member Monte Moore. The center, which provides special education and other services to schools in the region, will help set up the program, he said.

The 180 House is doing an alternative school program now? asked Mr. Moore.

Yes, said Ms. Miller, but it would be nice to keep the money in town and it would be a plus to the school district.

Wouldn't it be better for the boys to get out of the house for school? he asked

So far, said Ms. Miller, it works fine in the house. The only thing is they need more computers. If the boys had school outside the house, she added, they have a van and could take them to school.

At the end of the A+ program, said

Ms. Miller, the boys graduate with a high school diploma. If they move before they are done, it is easy to log on from another place.

Can they go faster on the computers? asked Mr. Jackson. Yes, said Ms. Miller, they can. The students work at their own pace.

Would this be an all-day school? asked Mr. Grafel. Would the district need to provide food? Yes, said Dr. Cullen, but it could be prepared at the high school and taken to the ranch, just like it is to the grade school.

Could this project be done incrementally? asked Mr. Moore. The district could start with the 180 House students and then see how it goes?

Yes, said Dr. Cullen, the district could help with that program. Right now, they need more computers which the district has. He said he wants to be proactive with this program and have a plan in place.

Mr. Jackson agreed and said the district should try the alternative school for a year and see if it works.

"I see nothing but benefits here," said Dr. Cullen.

The board approved Dr. Cullen coming up with an operational agreement for an alternative school to open in August. They also agreed to help the 180 House with five computers.

*Coach, wife to take jobs at larger school

(Continued from Page 1A)

sports community, and I still enjoy it here. I hope for nothing but the best for the kids that I have coached over the years.

"This was an opportunity for me and my family to be closer to my daughter, who currently plans on attending Washburn University in Topeka in the near future."

Heather Williams is a freshmen

on scholarship playing volleyball at Pratt Community College.

"It also is an opportunity to move up to a 4-A school in the North Central Kansas League, where I hope to learn and improve my skills. It also is close to Manhattan, where if I choose, I can work on my master's degree at Kansas State University.

"My son Chad is eager to play high school baseball, a sport that is

missing in northwest Kansas. My

wife, who teaches American history and family and consumer studies in Oberlin is also being considered for a similar position at the school in Chapman.

"We will always look back at our experiences in Oberlin as happy ones, and wish all students and the community well. We also want to thank everyone for their support."

The Chapman Fighting Irish

compete against Abilene, Clay Center, Concordia, Marysville and Wamego in the North Central Kansas League. Chapman is one of the older high schools in Kansas, opening in 1889.

Williams has a lifetime football record of 45-46 over his 10 years as a head coach.



Lawrence Wenger brought in four jacks and won first place. Norma Richards won second with a full house of aces and kings. Deanna Hanschild brought in a full house of fives and tens for the third-place hand.



LAWRENCE WENGER (above) held a bouquet of roses that he received from Prairie Petals for bringing in the winning hand. Norma Richards (top right) held a certificate from the Diederich Salon and Day Spa and Deanna Hanschild (lower right) held a certificate she received from Stanley Hardware.



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