

At the scene



AT THE HIGH SCHOOL Monday, Bronson Scott talked with Officer Troy Haas after an accident between Joanne Wendelin in a car and Karli Fredrickson on a motorized scooter. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Extension requests budget hike

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Decatur County Extension Council asked for \$82,000 from the county at a meeting last Tuesday, almost \$10,000 more than the group received this year.

The commissioners said they would discuss the request. Under state law, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch, they have to make a decision within 10 days or send it back to the extension office, which would then have to make another request.

Last year, said Byron Hale, county agent for the Kansas State University extension service, the county asked for \$74,000 and got \$72,050 in the budget.

For the upcoming year, the group is asking for \$82,000. That's about a 6 percent increase, said Chris Onstad, area Extension director for K-State, but the total is about the same as the program got last year.

Mr. Hale and Mr. Onstad were joined by Jason Ketterl, extension council chairman.

Mr. Hale said both the council here and the Norton County Extension Council are gathering information about forming an Extension district which would join the two. He said none of the council members has had any feedback on the idea.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he's heard from taxpayers who weren't in favor of the idea. They don't want to have to travel for extension services or meetings, he said. Some compared it to the merger a few years ago of state welfare offices, which closed the office here.

With a district, said Mr. Hale, none of the services will leave the county. He might go to Norton to do

something, but their agent would come here.

If this passes, said Commissioner Doyle Brown, it takes all of the commissioners' hands and puts it in the hands of an elected board. The board members are elected by people in the county, with ballots available at the extension office.

For the first year, said Mr. Hale, the commissioners from each county appoint a board. After that, they would be elected at the same time as school board members.

What are the agents' areas of expertise? asked Mr. Unger. Mr. Hale said his program focus is leadership, while the Norton agent, Keith Van-Skike, has natural resources.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said he's a little concerned with the idea of the election because fewer and fewer people are running for office. Look at the township boards, he said, there aren't even enough people interested to run for all of those.

With a district, said Mr. Onstad, each county only needs four people instead of nine. Each member serves for a four-year term.

Mr. Brown said the people he's talked to aren't sure if this is really a benefit to the county. People can get on the computer and find the answer to a question or make a phone call and have the expertise they need, he said.

One of the good things, said Mr. Ketterl, is if Mr. Hale wants to take kids to the stock show in Denver or to the state fair, and so does the Norton agent, they don't have to take separate vehicles with just a few kids each. One agent can take all of the kids and cut down on the expense.

Country club asks for county money to buy equipment

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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A representative of the Oberlin Country Club asked the Decatur County commissioners for financial help for equipment and other things at the golf course at their meeting last Tuesday.

Gary Walter, a board member of the club, had talked with the Oberlin City Council the previous week, asking for money in the city budget to help at the course, which is run by volunteers. The group leases the course from the city.

The club started the year \$10,000 or more in the hole, he said. Since then, donations and membership fees have helped the club climb to pay off that debt. Mr. Walter said the club is dealing with declining memberships, although the expenses don't seem to decline.

At this time in the season, with the exception of food or beer sold in the club house, the club is done generating money.

The group, said Mr. Walter, is asking the county and city to budget money for capital purchases.

It would be nice if the volunteers could mow instead of having to repair the mower.

The commissioners could maybe do this through the recreation part of the budget, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch. That money is generated through alcohol sales, he said.

Mr. Walter said the club did make some changes this year, putting in a new floor, tables, chairs and a television in the club house, and the group is selling beer and food.

There's also been more tournaments, he said. They are trying to keep participation and interest up. The club members are trying to do everything they can, he said, but if they run up a debt, the budget will fall short again. The group does have \$5,000 in savings, said Mr. Walter, probably to put a down payment on a mower.

This sounds like an economic development thing, said Commissioners Stan McEvoy. He suggested Mr. Walter talk with Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp.

Ambulance to get resuscitation machine

The Decatur County commissioners told the undersheriff to check with the Postal Service about shipping guns the department bought from federal surplus in Idaho, instead of the county getting a credit card to set up an account to have the items shipped.

Undersheriff Randy McHugh said he needed a credit card to set up an account with FedEx or UPS to have the guns shipped.

Sheriff Ken Badsy said the Mini 14 rifles cost \$50 apiece instead of the usual \$300. The office has had a request for the guns for the last five years through federal surplus, he said.

The county doesn't have a credit card, though, said Undersheriff McHugh. County Clerk Marilyn Horn said they could use her personal credit card and then she could be reimbursed through a voucher.

The county has Wal-Mart, Conoco and Phillips 66 cards, said Undersheriff McHugh, but not a regular credit card.

Other employees have needed credit cards for some projects, he said, so maybe it's time for the county to get one.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he's used his personal card for 25 years and then been reimbursed, as have others. The auditor suggested the county not get a credit card, he said. There are too many problems with that, said Commissioner Doyle Brown.

The men suggested Undersheriff McHugh check at the post office about shipping the guns.

The Fair Foundation board, minus member Greg Olson, met during the meeting and agreed to pay a \$2,500 bill to have lights at the horse arena. Treasurer Jean Hale,

said Mr. Brown needed to go sign an account card at the Bank, since he is now on the foundation board as commission chairman.

The commissioners talked with Appraiser Alan Hale about the Neighborhood Revitalization Act in Norton County, where he is the appraiser as well. He said the program was designed to help improve areas in the county.

The act rebates money to people who increase the valuation of their property by \$10,000. The first year the person receives a 100 percent tax rebate on the improvement. So if the improvement increases the valuation \$50,000 the person would receive a rebate on the taxes paid on the \$50,000, then 90 percent the second year, 80 percent the third and down from there.

Each county can decide how much increased appraised valua-

tion is needed for the rebate program. Some counties do \$5,000, he said, but Norton County is doing \$10,000.

With homes, he said, the cap is at \$50,000 and for commercial and agriculture properties, it's at \$250,000.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Paid \$28 to AT&T which wasn't included in a previous E911 bill.

- Held a five-minute closed session for attorney/client privilege with Mr. Hirsch. There wasn't any action taken.

- Approved adding \$10 to the 2007 tax roll for paving done in the alley by the telephone building.

- Heard that a pickup Sheriff Badsy wants the commissioners to look at was in and parked behind the courthouse for them to see.

City Council plans budget session Monday

The Oberlin City Council will have its first budget workshop of the year at 7 p.m. Monday downstairs at The Gateway.

The meeting will be open to the public, and any citizen can come listen to the discussions.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the council will go through each area of the budget. One of the big items, he said, will be street paving. The members decided to save \$25,000 out of the street sealing budget for the year to add

to money being transferred from the electrical fund to pave streets. The council would like to start the project next year.

Mr. Shike said the budget has to be certified to the county clerk by Monday, Aug. 25, which means the council has to be pretty much done with it by the end of the month.

Once the budget is set, he said, it will be published and the council will hold a public hearing to get comments before making a final decision.

Superintendent evaluated

The Oberlin School Board met behind closed doors for two hours and five minutes to discuss the superintendent's evaluation.

The board scheduled a special meeting on Monday, June 16, to discuss the evaluation and then decided to add discussion of a donation for renovation at the high school library and a report about an "energy audit" from Johnson Controls.

Each board member filled out an evaluation on the superintendent. Their points were compiled and then

the board had the chance to discuss the scores during the meeting.

For the first hour and 25 minutes, the members met without Superintendent Pat Cullen. For the next 40 minutes, the board met with Dr. Cullen. Even though the doors to the board room were closed, at times the discussion got loud enough to hear the mumble of voices from the meeting room.

There was no action taken after the discussions.

Nominate the favorite eight county wonders

Readers have just one week left to nominate candidates for the "8 Wonders of Decatur County" by using the form in today's *Oberlin Herald* or online.

The eight wonders in Decatur County can be anything you think is wonderful — a building, place, business, something man-made or something natural. This is a chance, said Managing Editor Kimberly Davis, for people who live here to boast about the great things we have in the county.

People have until Monday to nominate a place, business or building, whatever you want. At that time, the top 16 wonders will be printed in the paper with a picture and some information about each.

The ballots will be printed

again and people will have the chance to vote up to Tuesday, July 22.

The winners will be announced in the Wednesday, Sept. 3, edition of *The Herald*.

The "8 Wonders of Decatur County" is being sponsored by the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., the Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau, the LandMark Inn, the Decatur County Museum, the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce and *The Herald*, in conjunction with the *Hays Daily News*, which is sponsoring an area-wide compilation of county-by-county wonders.

Make sure to nominate your favorite before Monday.

Decatur County Courthouse
will be closed
Friday, July 4th

Decatur County Landfill
will be closed
Friday & Saturday,
July 4 & 5.
(Saturday opening will be July 12.)

THE OBERLIN HERALD

The Country Advocate

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

The Oberlin Herald will be closed on Friday, July 4th.
All advertising for *The Country Advocate* must be in by Noon on Thursday, July 3rd.

HAVE A SAFE HOLIDAY!

FOUNTAIN SPECIAL FOR THIS WEEK

Milk Shakes

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