

Oil increases county tax valuation

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Decatur County's property valuation, used to set and figure taxes, jumped \$5 million this year — nearly 13 percent — due to new oil wells in two townships, commissioners heard last Tuesday.

The increase means each property tax levy mill could bring in \$5,000 more, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn. Last year the property tax levy was set at 65.815 which brought in \$2,206,293.

If the property tax levy stays the same it would bring in \$319,000 more this year, she said.

Basically, looking at the various valuations, if the property tax levy stays the same mainly the people with the producing oil wells will pay more in taxes because that

County Countdown

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Heard the county's property valuation is up \$5 million from last year, mostly because of new old production in two townships. Story at left.
- Suggested that the undersheriff check at the post office about shipping guns here that the department purchased from federal surplus in Idaho, rather than the county getting a credit card. Story on Page 3A.
- Approved \$24,577 in new flooring for the Good Samaritan Center. Story to come.

• Talked with a member of the Oberlin Country Club about providing some financial help for equipment for the golf course. Story on Page 3A.

• Listened to a request from the Extension Council for \$82,000 for next year's budget, almost \$10,000 more than last year, but made no decision. Story on Page 3A.

• Gave the emergency management director approval to look into a grant to renovate or build an emergency operation center. Story to come.

• Approved vacation of the west half mile of a section road in Dresden Township. Story to come.

valuation doubled from last year to list. In 2007 oil and gas was valued at \$5,241,559 and this year at \$33,517,434.

Valuations in real estate, personal property and state assessed utilities

dropped compared to last year. The valuation for severed minerals went from \$193,035 last year to \$201,950 this year.

The increase more than wiped out expected declines in agricultural

assessments. The commissioners had been warned that ag land values could drop \$1 million from last year because of the way the state figures those assessments.

Last year, said County Attorney

Steve Hirsch, the valuation was \$33.5 million. That number determines how much one mill of property tax levy will bring in. Last year, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, one mill brought in \$33,529.

The valuation, said Mr. Hirsch, will go up next year to \$38.5 million.

The increase, said Mr. Hirsch, is mostly in two townships, Prairie Dog and Bassettville in the southwest part of the county.

Bassettville Township's valuation, he said, is almost the size of the City of Oberlin's at \$5,598,441 million just for oil, compared to \$6,773,987 million for the city. Prairie Dog valuation is at \$3,260,422 just for oil.

Mr. Hirsch said Bassettville Township has four oil leases that

increased the valuation.

Without those two townships, he said, the valuation would have dropped \$1.5 million. In a previous meeting, Commissioner Ralph Unger explained that farm land is valued on a seven-year average based on production. That means the drought years are starting to dominate the average.

Last year, said Mr. Hirsch, the oil valuation was 15 percent of the budget, while this year it's 30 percent.

The thing is, he warned, mineral production normally doesn't last, so the county doesn't want to build a budget around the valuation and then have it drop next year and have to increase taxes to make up the difference.



Campers run, play at park

IN CITY PARK, Kaine Fredrickson (above center) did a play-by-play of a game during the first day of Frogs Summer Day Camp on Monday, with his friends Jeff Juenemann (above left) and Ganon Henningson helping out. Aspen Gallentine (right), Rielly Rittmann (right middle) and Jillian Peters spun in circles during a game of "Tony and Karli Says." Head Frog Tony Marshall (below) ended the game by calling the 27 kids in.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Green wheat, cool weather slow harvest

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Wheat harvest started Friday across the area, although green wheat, cool days, wet fields and a forecast for rain were slowing things down.

Kurt Anderson, general manager at the Decatur Co-op, said the elevator has taken in just a few loads over the weekend, including one with moisture at 11 percent and one at 13. The elevator in Oberlin, he said, wasn't busy on Monday. Possibly with the wind and some heat, said Mr. Anderson, more grain will start coming in soon.

He said he didn't really see anything starting to happen until today, however.

Last week, said Mr. Anderson, the elevator did get 37 empty rail cars to fill. That's in anticipation of a good, big harvest, he said.

At the Jennings elevator, several people had brought in samples Monday, but the elevator didn't get any grain over the weekend, said Hope Brown.

The co-op elevator in Kanona was busy, however. The elevator was open until 9 p.m. Sunday, bringing

Woman guesses load time

An Oberlin woman took first place in the Oberlin merchants' annual Harvest Countdown contest, guessing twice within 15 minutes of when the first load of wheat would come in.

Jeanette Miller said the load would come in at 11:15 a.m. Friday on one entry and at 10:45 a.m. Friday in another. Either would have won the contest, which allows multiple entries.

Henry and Robert Martin (See WOMAN on Page 5A)

in around 6,000 bushels over the weekend, said Dan Mayberry. (See HARVEST on Page 5A)

Friends remember retired undersheriff

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Officer, dispatcher, jailer, father, husband and volunteer — just a few of the ways people will remember former Undersheriff Bert Cool — who retired at least three times, but kept working until illness forced him into the hospital this spring.

A small handful will remember Mr. Cool, 80, as Santa Claus. That's right; among the many things the former detective did over the years was play Santa for the family of Sheriff Ken Badsky. Mr. Badsky said for years, Mr. Cool and Jeanne Pachner, chief dispatcher for the county, would deliver presents to the Badskys' home in the country.

Mr. Badsky said he would wrap the presents and bring them to the fourth floor of the courthouse, then when the family was at church, Ms.

Pachner and Mr. Cool would load up the gifts, drive to the country, put the gifts under the tree, eat the cookies and milk the kids left for Santa and leave them a note.

Not many people, said Mr. Badsky, knew that about Mr. Cool, who died Saturday at the Decatur County Hospital.

Mr. Cool, said Mr. Badsky, came to Oberlin as his undersheriff in 1985. He had retired from the Kansas City, Mo., police force after 20 years, most of that time as a homicide detective. Mr. Cool served as undersheriff for eight years, then Brian Simonsson replaced him, and Mr. Cool became a deputy and chief jailer.

He served as part-time dispatcher, said Mr. Badsky, full-time jailer and also as the county's emergency (See MAN on Page 5A)



Bert Cool

Fireworks show Friday will begin after dark

Fireworks stands in Oberlin will open this week in time for the Fourth of July celebration Friday.

On Friday, there will be pool games at the City of Oberlin Swimming Pool from 5 to 6 p.m. Following the games, the Good Samaritan Center will have an ice cream social and kids parade at 7 p.m. at the center.

The Oberlin Business Alliance will sponsor a community fireworks show at the Decatur County Fair-ground at dusk.

City ordinances allow fireworks stands to be open for seven days before the holiday and one day after. Fireworks cannot be set off between midnight and 6 a.m.

*Man served in many roles

(Continued from Page 1A) management director.

Mr. Cool always liked to tell stories about the murders he had investigated, said Mr. Badsky. For the first few years, the sheriff said with a laugh, the stories were really interesting, but after that, he would retreat to his office because he'd heard them all before.

Mr. Badsky said Mr. Cool taught him a lot about investigating. It was no problem for Mr. Cool to pick up the phone and call across the country to get some information on someone.

In 1997, said Mr. Badsky, two prisoners escaped and attacked Mr. Cool, beating him with a sock full of batteries. Bruce Winder, a jail trustee serving time for battery against a law enforcement officer who was trying to arrest him after a wreck, came to the deputy's rescue, possibly saving his life.

"Bert was like a second dad to me," the sheriff said. "He would always take care of us."

He did extra work for the county and never asked to be paid for it, Mr. Badsky said. His life was on the fourth floor (in the sheriff's office and dispatch center), in law enforcement and just in helping others out.

"Bert was a good man, with a heart the size of Texas," said Ms. Pachner. "He was a little gruff at times, but would give you the shirt right off his back."

Mr. Cool made a difference in the lives of a lot of kids and other people, the dispatcher said. At first, she said, people feared he would have his big-city cop ways in a small town, but eventually they came around.

Mr. Cool would do anything for anybody, she said. Many prisoners, said Ms. Pachner, actually came back to shake his hand.

He really cared about kids, about teenagers who got in trouble and how they were growing up.

Mr. Cool wanted to start a scholarship fund for the kids, she said. He helped start the Oberlin Mavericks, a fund raising group. He loved to play poker, said Ms. Pachner, and

wanted to use the charitable organization to set up a scholarship fund.

County Commissioner Ralph Unger and Larry Mack, another founder of the Mavericks, are working on a scholarship that would carry Mr. Cool's name, she said.

She said Mr. Cool, a Nebraska native, was a fanatic Nebraska Cornhusker fan.

Mr. Cool was born Jan. 15, 1928, in Kearney, the son of Eugene and Ethel (Fellows) Cook. He attended Sand Puppy Elementary School and graduated from Amherst High School in 1945. He served in the Army and was discharged in 1948.

He married Bernadine Covert on Oct. 8, 1949. On Oct. 13, 1962, he married Shirley Dreher in Kansas City, Mo. He worked for the Union Pacific Railroad as a station agent and telegrapher for several years before moving to Kansas City to join the police department. He retired as a detective in May 1976.

He moved back to the family farm north of Amherst, then in 1985 moved to Oberlin to become undersheriff.

Survivors include his wife, of the home; two sons, Stephen and Linda Cool, Grand Island, Neb., and Michael and Diane Cool, Amherst; a daughter, Marsha and J. Michael Enyard, Moberly, Mo.; a brother, Harold and Bonnie Cool, Broken Bow, Neb.; two sisters-in-law, Beverly and Frank Gilmore, Shell Knob, Mo., and Jeanette Lindberg, Roanoke, Ill.; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a granddaughter, a niece, and a brother-in-law.

Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. today at the Horner-Lieske-Horner Mortuary in Kearney, with Pastor Dean Pofahl officiating, and burial in the Kearney Cemetery. Military graveside rites will be offered by the Nebraska National Guard Honors Team, the Kearney Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, and the Kearney American Legion Post.

A use for memorials will be designated later by the family. Messages for them may be left at www.hlmortuary.com.

In the shade



AT THE CITY POOL on Monday, Esperanza Fahrenbruch played under one of the three new umbrellas donated by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. The group also donated a clock for the pool and planted a tree in City Park. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

District closes its year

The Oberlin School Board closed out its budget year with a 14-minute special meeting early Monday.

The tentative figures showed \$251,066 left in the general fund, although the school district won't actually get its last check from the state until Monday.

Clerk Vickie Lippelmann said the board approved the tentative numbers and made transfers from the general fund of \$25,000 to food service, \$119,513 to special education, \$1,000 to driver education, \$20,000 to professional development and \$85,553 to capital outlay, pretty much eliminating the surplus.

The board also approved a transfer of \$55,000 to capital outlay from interest earned from the district's checking accounts and idle funds.

In other business, members approved an upgrade to the Power-school software used for student management from Pro to Premier at a cost of \$1,600, plus a server upgrade for \$4,320.

Tickets on sale for basket

Tickets to win a goodie basket sponsored by Frogs Summer Day Camp are still on sale, but only until Friday.

Money raised through raffle sales will support the camp which started Monday and ends Friday, Aug. 1. The camp, for kids entering second to sixth grades, is held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday at City Park.

Tickets are for sale at Stanley Hardware at one for \$1, six for \$5, 13 for \$10 and 26 for \$20. The basket includes one \$10 gift certificate each for Pizza Hut, Crossroads Express, Ampride, Dollar General, Stanley Hardware, the Re-Load and the LandMark Inn, a \$15 gift certificate for Raye's Grocery and a \$6 certificate for A&W.

Cell company gives rebate

The Oberlin School District received \$898 in rebate money from Nex-Tech Wireless this month.

Since August 2006, when the rebate program with the cell phone company started, the district has received over \$3,300.

Gary Juenemann of Ultimate

Fertilizer, the dealer for the wireless company in Oberlin, said anyone who signs up for a Nex-Tech wireless plan can choose the school they want the rebate to go to. Then 3 percent of the monthly bill is rebated to that district.

The Oberlin School District, said

Mr. Juenemann, has received more money than any other from Great Bend west.

The school receives a check every three months, he said, which can be used for whatever the district wants to use it for.

*Harvest starts with a few loads

(Continued from Page 1A)

Mr. Anderson said they have hired some summer staff for harvest, but still need some more, especially in Ludell and Herndon, to help dump trucks.

There was a little concern about people applying fungicide too close to harvest in some parts of the state, he said, but everything had been OK here. Farmers are supposed to wait 45 days after spraying the fungicide to harvest grain, he said. In some parts of the state, that was going to be borderline, but he said he received word on Monday from the Kansas secretary of agriculture's office saying that all of the wheat in this area should be OK.

At D&S Grain in Traer, no one had brought in any wheat as of

Monday.

At Norcat Grain, Todd Johnson said they hadn't received any wheat either. He said he heard some guys were talking about cutting towards the weekend, but everything there is still too green and too wet to cut.

Janice O'Hare at Hansen Mueller Grain in Oberlin said they hadn't received anything yet, either. She said she talked to a farmer from the northern part of the county who said they might not cut for another week or so because the wheat is still green. Others have talked about trying on Tuesday or Wednesday.

The area had a 20 percent chance of rain on Tuesday, 30 percent today and 20 percent Thursday, so damp fields might not get a chance to dry out.

*Woman wins contest

(Continued from Page 1A) brought the first load of wheat into the Decatur Co-op in Herndon at 11 a.m. Friday. General Manager Kurt Anderson said the 425 bushels had a moisture rating of 13.5.

Mrs. Miller won \$50 in scrip to be spent at sponsoring businesses.

Chris Bainter of Selden took second place guessing the first load would come in at 11:42 a.m. Friday, winning \$35 in scrip money. Brenda Ulery of Oberlin took third with a 10:16 a.m. guess, winning \$15 in scrip money.

The first phone call to *The Oberlin Herald* actually came from the Decatur Co-op elevator in Jennings, where the first load arrived at 11:43 a.m. with a moisture level of 10.3. The load was hauled from north of Jennings by Roberta Petracek's crew.

Not 30 minutes later, Mr. Anderson called about the load delivered to the Herndon elevator.

The elevators that participated in this year's countdown included Hansen Mueller Grain in Oberlin and Cedar Bluffs; Decatur Co-op in Jennings, Kanona, Herndon, Ludell, Danbury and Edmond; and Hi-Plains Co-op, with elevators in Dresden, Edmond, Gem, Hoxie, Lenora and Selden.

Businesses sponsoring the countdown also include Addleman Drug Store, Decatur County Title and Abstract, Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Fredrickson Insurance, Hirsch and Pratt, Goltl Home Planning Center, KFNF Radio, the LandMark Inn, Raye's Grocery, Southwest Implement, Stanley Hardware, Ward Drug Store, Pizza Hut and *The Herald*.

Businesses to close for Fourth

Most Oberlin businesses will be closed on Friday for the Fourth of July, including city, county, state and federal offices, the Decatur County Museum, the Decatur County landfill and all banks.

There will be no mail service Friday, but mail will be delivered on Saturday and the post office will be open from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Letters mailed outside will be picked up at 4:30 p.m.

A&W Restaurant, the Frontier Restaurant, Pizza Hut, Crossroads Express, Raye's Grocery, D&M Sinclair and Ampride will be open regular hours. The LandMark Inn will serve dinner from 6 to 8 p.m. The ReLoad will be closed.

The Oberlin Herald office will be closed. Deadline for all ads in the Country Advocate will be noon on Thursday, rather than Friday.

THE OBERLIN HERALD

presents.....

Harvest Countdown WINNERS



HARVEST COUNTDOWN 1ST PLACE WINNER Jeanette Miller is shown here with Dave Bergling, advertising manager at *The Oberlin Herald*.



Brenda Ulery, 3rd place

Not pictured: Chris Bainter, 2nd place

Thank you to these participating businesses:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Addleman Drug Store | Home Planning Center |
| Decatur County Title & Abstract | KFNF |
| Decatur Co-op Association | LandMark Inn |
| Farm Credit of Western Kansas | Raye's Grocery |
| Fredrickson Insurance Agency | Southwest Implement |
| Hansen Mueller | Stanley Hardware |
| Hi-Plains Co-op Associaton | Ward Drug Store |
| Hirsch & Pratt LLP | Pizza Hut |