



State gives center plan tax credits

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The plan to replace the Golden Age Center and Sunflower Cinema with a new building including a bowling alley got a boost last week when the Kansas Department of Commerce awarded the project \$125,000 in Community Service Tax Credits.

The Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. applied for \$175,000 in tax credits, which would have raised around \$250,000 for the project, but the state approved only \$125,000.

Greg Lohofener, a former board member who is working on the project for the corporation, said the \$125,000 will bring in roughly \$178,000, or 71 percent of what the corporation asked for.

At a public meeting at the Golden Age Center a few months ago and through a pledge campaign, the corporation got promises of dona-

tions totaling \$250,000 to \$260,000 to match the tax credits.

Now, said Mr. Lohofener, it's up to the corporation to sort out the pledges. Some people said they would give regardless of the refund on their state income taxes, he said.

Under the program, he said, a donor can get up to 70 percent of his or her gift to the project back as a credit on state taxes. With the lower amount authorized by the state, he said, around \$70,000 of the pledged money won't be eligible for the tax credit program.

Even though the corporation didn't get the full \$175,000, said Mr. Lohofener, being accepted into the program is good news.

The corporation hopes to use this money to buy equipment for the new senior center, cinema and bowling alley.

In the coming weeks, Mr. Lohofener (See CREDITS on Page 8A)

Showers slow wheat harvest

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Spotty showers over the weekend slowed wheat harvest, which had barely started, to almost a standstill in the county by Monday.

In the Traer area, Dan Grafel, co-owner of D&S Grain and Cattle Co., said the area received around half an inch over the long weekend. That with the cooler weather and humidity has slowed things down, he said.

Farmers around Traer, he said, started to cut last Wednesday. The test weights have been pretty good, he said, and the yields on the summer-fallow wheat have been good, anywhere from 35 to 80 bushels per acre.

The elevator, said Mr. Grafel, has taken in around 73,000 bushels, with the ability to hold around 350,000.

Traer got 15 hundredths of rain Sunday night and then a light sprinkle Monday morning, said Mr. Grafel. He said he hadn't heard from a lot of the farmers in the area about this year's crop, except for the fact that people are ready to get harvest over with. It's later than normal, he said; most years they are done by now.

In Norcatour, the ground was wet, too, with the northeast part of the county getting around 25 hundredths of an inch of rain Sunday night and 10 hundredths Monday morning. With the little dabs of moisture, said Todd Johnson, general manager at Norcatour Grain, it's been hard for crews to get going.

Test weights in Norcatour have been 56 to 62 pounds per bushel, he said, with no trend in yields yet.

Most farmers in the area, he said, probably started cutting last Wednesday, although some brought in samples last Tuesday. It just hasn't really been busy yet, said Mr. Johnson.

At Hansen Mueller Grain in

Rain for year past normal once again

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Oberlin has already received a little more than half the normal precipitation for the year in the first six months of 2008, so the area is on track for normal rainfall this year despite a budding drought farther west.

So far this year, said Jerry Killingsworth, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Goodland, Oberlin has received 12.97 inches of precipitation. Typical precipitation for a year is 20.79 inches, he said, and last year, the area got 20.35.

The office, he said, has records back to 1893 for Oberlin, so there's a long history of what's typical.

In May, said Mr. Killingsworth, Oberlin received 6.32 inches of rain, a huge amount in just one month, and if things keep going as they are, there's no reason to believe that Oberlin won't have normal or above normal precipitation this year.

Last year, from January to June, the area got 9.97 inches, compared to this year from

(See RAIN on Page 8A)

Oberlin, things were slow on Monday morning. Janice O'Hare said they had probably taken in about 125,000 bushels. There's been some good-quality wheat harvested, she said, but so far no one is talking much about yields.

Some of the farmers in the area (See WHEAT on Page 8A)

Passing chief stops fire in rolling Bug

By **STEVE HAYNES**
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They say there's never a cop around when you need one, only when you're speeding. But what about a fireman?

Apparently, the same rules don't always apply.

Oberlin Fire Chief Bill Cathcart was driving up Elk Avenue, just a couple of blocks from his house Sunday, when he spotted a Volkswagen Beetle spewing smoke.

"I thought, 'That car doesn't look

like a diesel,'" he said later.

Bill Flynn said he had just pulled the car out of Roxie Pomeroy's garage at 108 S. Elk when he noticed it was on fire. He'd been working on the car and wanted to see how it was driving. Though he was glad he got it out of the garage, he said, he didn't want to park it near anyone else's house, either, "in case it blew up."

He pulled to the curb just as Chief Cathcart drove up. The chief (See FIRE on Page 8A)



Parade pleases all ages

PEDDLING A BICYCLE, a visitor from Phillipsburg (above) was one of a dozen or so entries in the Good Samaritan Center's Fourth of July parade on Friday. Erin May (left), who had been in the parade, enjoyed a dish of homemade ice cream afterwards. Dorothy Pryor (below) also enjoyed her ice cream.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



*Credits to aid center

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 fener said, there might be more news about the project.
 He said he and Connie Grafel, marketing director for the corporation, met with a representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Administration about a guaranteed loan to help pay for the rest of the project, which is estimated to cost \$900,000.

At a recent Decatur County commissioners meeting, Mr. Lohoefer talked about having a non-profit group like the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce apply for a loan to pay for the rest of the project.

The project includes tearing down both the existing cinema and senior center, two separate buildings that share a leaky roof.

The new steel building would have one sloped roof, with separate entrances to the theater, senior center and bowling alley. At one time, the group also talked about having an after-school day care in the building.

Either next Wednesday or Friday, July 18, Ms. Grafel and Mr. Lohoefer will attend a meeting held by the state about the tax credit program, including when the money has to be spent by.

Mr. Lohoefer said he expects to have more information in about a week or so, after the corporation's board meets again.

Shopper to receive \$1,000

One lucky shopper has the chance to win \$1,000 by entering the annual \$1,000 Shopping Spree sponsored by Oberlin businesses and *The Oberlin Herald*.

Anyone 18 or older can enter the spree without making a purchase. Just fill out the small entry form at participating businesses and drop it in the box. The deadline to enter is 4 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 12.

The drawing will be at the Chamber of Commerce Back to School Picnic in City Park at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 13. In case of bad weather, the picnic will move inside to the high school cafeteria. The drawing will also be in the cafeteria if that happens.

The lucky shopper must be present to win. Names will be drawn until a winner is found.

The one lucky person will receive \$1,000 in scrip money and has from Thursday, Aug. 14, to Friday, Aug. 22, to spend the money at participating stores only. The shopper has to notify *The Herald* so a photographer can go with them.

Sponsors for this year's Shopping Spree include Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Stellar Sales, Culligan Water Conditioning Co., R&M Service Center, Ward Drug Store, Countryside Veterinary Clinic of Oberlin, Aqua Shield Roofing and Construction, the LandMark Inn, Stanley Hardware, Raye's Grocery, Addleman Drug Store and Prairie Petals.

Benefit tournament to aid hospital

Tickets are on sale for the Decatur County Hospital's annual golf tournament and dinner benefit in the middle of August.

The event, on Saturday, Aug. 16, starts with an 8 a.m. registration for teams at the Oberlin Golf Course. Administrator Lynn Doeden said the teams will start playing at 8:30 a.m. with a shotgun start, meaning everyone will start at the same time.

The golf tournament, which is a four-person team scramble, has a full slate of teams with 28, she said. Each team paid \$200 to take part in the event.

That evening at 7 p.m., there will be a prime rib dinner at The Gateway. Tickets are \$30 a plate.

Everyone is invited to the dinner, said Mrs. Doeden; people don't have to play in the golf tournament to come to the dinner.

Tickets will be sold during the Decatur County Fair, she said. The last day to buy them is Wednesday, Aug. 13.

There will be a silent auction and raffle during the benefit.



Sky filled with fire for Fourth

THE ROCKETS had plenty of red glare and the bombs burst in the air over the Decatur County Fairground on Friday as the volunteer firemen set off the Fourth of July fireworks display. People in vehicles and on lawn chairs watched the 45-minute spectacle, organized by Rusty Addleman of Addleman Drug and sponsored each year by the Oberlin Business Alliance. Earlier in the day, fireworks stands all over Oberlin were busy selling firecrackers and nightworks. At the Maverick 4-H stand in the Raye's Grocery parking lot (above), Taylor Macfee examined two cones before presenting them to a prospective buyer.

— Herald staff photos by Steve and Cynthia Haynes.



Emergency center proposed

The Decatur County commissioners gave the emergency management director approval to look into a grant to renovate or build an emergency operation center here.

Director Patti Skubal said at the meeting Tuesday, June 24, there's \$14 million available across the nation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for these projects.

The grant, she said, is based on need. Decatur County, said Mrs. Skubal, should be a fairly good position because it doesn't have an emergency operation center and the weather has been threatening.

The county could get up to \$1 million for new construction and \$250,000 for renovation, she said.

The county would have to put up a 25 percent match, she said, but that can be at least partly in kind. Mrs. Skubal said her time on the grant could count as a part of the match, for instance.

Furniture for the center isn't included in the grant, she said, but

communication equipment like phones or radios is allowed. It would be one center to house her and fire, ambulance and other emergency offices, she said.

The first step, said Mrs. Skubal, is to decide if the county wants to pursue this. If so, she said, she will have to do an assessment on the need and a place.

Is there enough land by the fire station for a center? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown. The city owns that land, noted Clerk Marilyn Horn.

Mrs. Skubal said by the county ambulance barn, behind the hospital, would work. Someone also suggested the old port of entry at the intersection of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83, which the state gave to the city.

Will the grant help move equipment from the disptach center on the fourth floor of the courthouse? Mr. Brown asked. Mrs. Skubal said she didn't know.

The county can still decide not to do the grant even after the assess-

ment, Mrs. Skubal said, noting that the grant money could be used to pay for an architect.

Mr. McEvoy said he didn't see any problem with going to the next step and checking the project out. She needs to keep the commissioners informed, said Mr. Unger.

Mrs. Skubal said the county had a confirmed tornado south of Dresden in a field on Saturday, June 21.

When the storm sirens were tested this week, she said, the one on Penn Avenue in Oberlin didn't work, so she called Nex-Tech to work on it.

The firm repairs all the sirens and maintains them. The Norcat siren had been down, she said, but it's working again.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard Mrs. Skubal is still gathering information about recent storms and damage for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Heard the county received a \$3,396 grant from the state to help pay part of her salary.

Good Sam flooring to be replaced

Decatur County commissioners approved \$24,577 for new flooring at the Good Samaritan Center.

Administrator Janice Shobe said at a meeting Tuesday, June 24, that when the center had its state inspection, it did well with the nursing part of the survey but had a few deficiencies in the environmental part because of the floors in the kitchen, physical therapy room and a bathroom.

She said she received a few bids,

including one from a company out of Minnesota for \$23,000 for sheet vinyl, but the state doesn't like that kind of flooring in a kitchen. Mrs. Shobe said the state inspector would rather see tile in a kitchen.

Mrs. Shobe said she went to the Carpet Center and owner Bill Goscha told her he can do tile in the kitchen for \$20,900 and then put sheet vinyl in the front restroom visitors use for \$1,502, the physical therapy room for \$1,400 and the

south bathroom for \$1,700. The visitors' restroom wasn't on the list for deficiencies, she said, but is coming loose and needs to be replaced.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he would rather use a local vendor, and the commissioners approved the bid. Mrs. Shobe said Mr. Goscha told her he can start on the project this summer.

*Wheat ready, but showers slow harvest

(Continued from Page 1A)
 had hardly gotten started before the rain, she said.

Kurt Anderson, general manager at the Decatur Co-op, said he hasn't really heard anything on yields yet. Possibly in the next day or two, he said, he will start to see some numbers.

Test weights, he added, have been averaging 60 pounds.

He said the elevator in Oberlin is probably close to half done with harvest, with crews loading out a trainload of rail cars over the weekend and getting a few more on Monday. In the Jennings and Danbury areas, it's a different story, said Mr. Anderson. Danbury is always slower to get started, because it's farther to the north.

Jennings, in the south part of the

county, usually gets going sooner, but harvest really hasn't started there yet.

With the recent showers, he said, things had slowed down on Monday and he didn't expect crews to get really busy again until today. That is, if it didn't rain again.

The National Weather Service office in Goodland had forecast a 50 percent chance of rain for Monday and 20 percent for Tuesday.

The good news, said Mr. Anderson, is that the recent rain has been really good for the dryland corn and milo.

For the rest of the week, he said, the Decatur Community High School cheerleaders will be selling sub sandwiches and a bag of chips at the Co-op from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for \$5.

Rain helps erase drought in Oberlin

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 January to June of 12.39 inches, or 2.42 inches more.

The area is getting normal rainfall, and isn't in a drought anymore, he said. Things are getting better.

Some areas in northwest Kansas have been in a drought for a long time, he said, but recently those areas got rain, which has helped some. Still parts of the region are a little dry. Mr. Killingsworth said a triangle from Colby to Goodland to Cheyenne Wells, Colo., is probably the driest. That area has recently received some rain, he said, but it's still dry.

In this part of the state, he added, no area is in an officially declared drought. Those declarations, he added, come from the governor. Southwest Kansas has a drought declaration from back in the middle of June that still holds, he said, and five counties in the far southwest corner are under a drought warning. In the south central part of the state, the weather service has issued

a drought watch.

In Decatur County, though, said Mr. Killingsworth, the drought is over.

The outlook from back in the spring was for the drought areas to improve because of the end of La Niña, caused by cold temperatures for the water in the Pacific Ocean off of South America. There is a good connection between La Niña and poor precipitation in this part of the country, he said. It rained less and snowed less, said Mr. Killingsworth, but now that La Niña is over, the outlook for precipitation is back to normal.

The ocean waters are pretty much neutral now, he said, neither cold nor warm, and that's happening during the summer months, which is the peak time for rain in this part of the country. It seems like an end to the drought.

For Oberlin, he said, if the rain keeps up the way it's been, the area should get normal to above-normal precipitation for the year

* Fire doused by chief

(Continued from Page 1A)
 grabbed a garden hose from a nearby house and started soaking the engine compartment.

"I wasn't exactly dressed for the occasion," said the chief, who was wearing not fire-fighting bunker gear, but shorts and a T-shirt.

Nonetheless, he put the fire out and called the rest of the volunteers, by then at the station, to tell them not to bother bringing the truck.

Mrs. Pomeroy said the blue 1975 Volkswagen, "her car," was fun to

drive.

"Well," said Mr. Flynn, "it's a bird house now."

Several of the firemen and police officers who'd gathered around allowed as how it probably could be rebuilt, though, since the fire had been put out so quickly.

Deputy Jay Tate said it looked like the Bug had sprung a fuel leak. There was gasoline on the floor of the garage, he said, and a trail coming out the driveway to the street.

Sewer pipes to be cleaned

Crews will be cleaning a section of the Oberlin's sewer pipes this month, starting Monday.

City Administrator Gary Shike said anyone in that area should find a tag hung on their front door before work starts.

The city plans to clean lines in the section from Marks Avenue to U.S. 83 and from Commercial south to the sewer plant.

The job, although scheduled

for a week, normally takes about three days, said Mr. Shike. Mayer Specialties out of Goddard has the contract.

The company uses high pressure jets to cut tree roots out of the lines, he said, so people should cover their floor drains, and cover toilets with plastic and put the lids down. The door hanger, said Mr. Shike, will explain what people should do.

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