

Harvest starts again as fields dry

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Fall harvest is off to a slow start, with the weather putting the brakes on things before corn picking gets into full swing.

Over the weekend, farmers headed out to their fields to see what could and couldn't be harvested.

In Traer, farmers were out cutting, starting on Saturday as the fields dried out a little and again on Monday.

At Hansen Mueller Grain in Oberlin, Janice O'Hare said they've barely gotten started taking grain.

Trucks were rolling in on Monday, she said, with corn and milo and wheat that had been stored on farms.

She said they were also shipping wheat out.

Over the weekend, the Decatur Co-op started to get some loads in, said Dalene Horton, grain accountant.

On Saturday, she said, some farmers brought in soybeans and sunflowers, but the corn was still too wet around Oberlin. She said she thought there was around 4,000 to 5,000 bushels of soybeans and a couple semi-trailer loads of sunflowers.

In Jennings, she said, the elevator took in 23,000 bushels of corn over the weekend. In Norcat, some crops were brought in before it rained, she said, but she wasn't sure what happened over the weekend.

On Monday in Oberlin, said Ms. Horton, a few samples were brought in on corn. She said the co-op likes the moisture to be under 15 1/2 percent if possible.

Some guys are talking about trying to pick corn this week, she said, but no one knows for sure when harvest will really get under way.

After rains last week, the fields have been too wet and for the most part the corn moisture too high.

Once the fields dry off, said Ms. Horton, they will start getting busy, but then again, the forecast is for more storms.

The National Weather Service in Goodland gave Oberlin a 50 percent chance of showers Monday night and Tuesday, a 60 percent chance Tuesday night and a 40 percent chance during the day today. The forecast included a 40 percent chance of snow tonight and a 20 percent chance of rain or snow on Thursday.



Board looks at wind turbine at high school

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin School Board talked with representatives of a wind-energy company about putting a 100-kilowatt turbine at the high school on Monday, but didn't make any decisions about the plan.

Chris Bentley and Brice Barton, with Sunflower Wind, said the firm has offices in Hutchinson, Goodland and Colby as well as Detroit. Last year, the company proposed a commercial wind farm in Decatur County, pressing the city to sign a power-supply contract to back the idea. Eventually, the city backed out and the plan died.

There isn't any cost up front to the school district, said Mr. Bentley, but he pointed out that using wind energy is good for the environment.

Mr. Bentley didn't say what the cost to put up the tower would be or how long the district would pay for it.

Energy costs for the district are going up by about 2 percent a year, based on statistics, he said. With a wind turbine, those costs would go down. He said Kansas is the third-windiest state in the country.

He said the firm's turbine has no gear box. A broken gear box is normally the reason someone sees the wind turbine not blowing, Mr. Bentley said. He said the company has taken that box out to help prevent turbine breakdowns. Instead, the model they sell has a hydraulic control system.

The firm is proposing a 100-kilowatt-per-hour turbine near the shot put pit, he said. There's no

School Roundup

At its monthly meeting last Monday, the Oberlin School Board:

- Talked with representatives from Sunflower Wind about putting up a 100-kilowatt wind turbine south of the high school. Story at left.

- Decided to table a job description put together by the superintendent for the September meeting to get some feedback from teachers and staff. Story on Page 10A.

- Heard from the superintendent that they need to start looking for ways to cut \$100,000 to \$150,000 for the current budget. Story on Page 3A.

- Discussed having a few tuck-pointing issues on the district buildings fixed, but tabled the idea so the superintendent can get more bids. Story to come.

- Accepted a financial gift from Col. Delbert Townsend to put a scholarship room and career center in the high school. Story on Page 3A.

responsibility to the school to get the turbine hooked up to the city power system, he said; Sunflower takes care of that.

Mr. Bentley said they came in and (See WIND on Page 10A)

Students practice for play

AT PLAY PRACTICE last week at Oberlin Elementary School, Winter Polivka (above left), Morgan Jansonious, Rebecca Wentz and Kaine Fredrickson sang. Regent Erickson (left) said one of his lines while the other two princes, played by Troy Juenemann and Gabe Anderson, stood behind him. Demi Murray (below) told about her spell. The sixth graders will perform "Doo-Wop Wed Widing Hood" at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday in the grade school gym.

—Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Commissioners bail out fair board with end of year loan

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Decatur County Fair Board asked the fair foundation to reimburse it for money spent to help finish the new livestock building and to loan it \$2,500 so the fair board can end the year with a positive balance.

Greg Long, fair board president, told county commissioners last Tuesday that the board met recently and added up \$1,092 in bills paid for the building. That money should come out of the

fair foundation, he said, though it was easier at the time for the fair board just to go ahead and pay the bills.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he didn't see a problem with transferring that money from the foundation if there is money in the account set aside for the livestock building.

County Treasurer Jean Hale, who also serves on the foundation board, said there is a little over \$8,000 in the account. The (See FAIR on Page 10A)

Attorney asked to collect race cash

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Members of the Decatur County Fair Board asked the county attorney for help collecting money from a Colorado race promoter at a commissioners' meeting last Tuesday.

Board President Greg Long said the promoter isn't holding up to his end of the contract and hasn't paid the fair board for the races. He said the fair board loaned the man \$2,000 to get races started. That money has never been paid back. Promoter Joe Bellm held races

on Saturday, June 7; Monday, June 16; Sunday, July 13; and Monday, Aug. 4.

The contract says the board is supposed to get 1 percent of the gross from the races, too, Mr. Long said, and the board hasn't seen any of that money.

Basically, he said, the fair is out at least \$3,000.

The board members are working on getting the facts and figures together to be turned over to County Attorney Steve Hirsch, he added.

Is this the same gentleman (See RACE on Page 10A)

Banquet planned before pheasant season starts

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Opening day of pheasant season is just about here, and members of the Sunflower Chapter of Pheasants Forever are gearing up for their annual banquet the night before.

The season opener is Saturday, Nov. 1, this year, which means the banquet is Friday, Oct. 31, Halloween, at The Gateway in Oberlin.

Rick Doeden, banquet chair, said people don't have to make reservations for the banquet. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$25.

The evening starts at 5 p.m. with a social hour and dinner, steak with all the trimmings, will be served at 6:30 p.m.

Membership for the group, which includes a quarterly magazine, costs \$30 and can be purchased that evening. Kids, Mr. Doeden said, get a free membership with the chapter picking

up the cost.

The evening will feature raffles, plus live and silent auctions. Auction items include framed prints, baskets, decorating items, guns and hats, just to name a few. This year, he said, a new kind of three-dimensional art will be released by Wild Wings at the banquet.

There will be at least nine guns auctioned or raffled off. A 16-gun fireproof safe will be raffled off this year, with only 100 tickets sold at \$20. The purchaser will receive a knife as a ticket. Each knife will have a number 1 through 100 on it.

A lot of the money raised at the banquet goes to the chapter's habitat project at Sappa Park, Mr. Doeden said, but some of it is designated for youth projects.

He said members would like to do a youth shoot, but they haven't planned it yet.

In the past year, the Sunflower Chapter has planted a pumpkin patch, sweet corn, switch grass, Christmas trees and fruit trees in the old lake bottom at Sappa Park.

Some of the projects worked, he said, and some were flooded out.

The group has also helped maintain the walking trails at the park. The chapter leases the land from the City of Oberlin.

Mr. Doeden said there's other ideas for the park, including doing field trials on the lake bottom.

With the banquet being held on Halloween, he said, they plan to have candy on the tables for kids who attend.

Mr. Doeden said the chapter owes a big thanks to the businesses that donated items for the event. Those items will be in the sponsoring businesses for people to see before the banquet.

*Wind project proposed to district

(Continued from Page 1A) talked with the superintendent about the district's power use. He said they picked up the schools' usage numbers, and wind makes sense.

The district can own the turbine, rent it or lease it, said Mr. Barton. The district is paying a high electric rate here, he said, and the city is buying power at a high rate.

If the district's turbine produces excess power, he said, the city has to buy it at one and a half times what the city can buy the cheapest power for. It's the cost of energy minus the transmission, he said.

The two men, Mr. Barton and Mr. Nedland, never came to an agreement on the cost of power or what it's purchased at or who has to purchase it.

The city purchases power from the Western Area Power Authority hydropower for two and half cents and from Holcomb for around four and a half cents.

According to the city bills, said Mr. Barton, the district could save \$10,000 a year using wind power. With a 100-kilowatt turbine, he said, the district will use 65 percent of the power and the other 35 percent will be sold.

The district would be paying about 7 cents per kilowatt, he said, which is less than it paying now. The city sells power for 12.5 cents per kilowatt hour. The excess 35 percent would then be sold to the city.

What about zoning? asked member Dan Grafel. Mr. Barton said he checked a little on zoning, but it

never said whether a wind turbine is or isn't allowed. He said Sunflower recommends putting the turbine behind the high school near the shot put pit.

The Oberlin City Council talked at a meeting Wednesday, Oct. 8, about adopting a sample ordinance for turbines. Current zoning at the school allows a 35-foot tall tower, City Attorney Steve Hirsch said. The proposed turbine is 100 feet tall, said Mr. Barton.

The turbine would be educational too, said Mr. Barton. Students could see how much power the turbine is producing in real time.

This isn't just about the school, but the economy of the community, said Mr. Nedland. One-third of the city budget comes from selling power. If the city doesn't get that money, taxes would go up.

"We actually live in this town," said Mr. Nedland, "and have to look at the big picture."

If the city can buy power at 2 cents per kilowatt, but has to pay 7 cents per kilowatt on what's produced in the turbine, then that means less money for the city, said Mr. Nedland.

When looking at those numbers, said Mr. Barton, the transmission cost needs to be looked at too.

"We would love to have wind, but not if it has a negative effect on the community," said Mr. Grafel.

The board has talked about wind before, said President Dewayne Jackson, adding that this looks like a positive plan.

School board tables job descriptions

The Oberlin School Board decided to table the job descriptions put together by the superintendent for the September meeting to get some feedback from the staff.

The board's been asking for job descriptions for the staff for the last five or six years, said President Dewayne Jackson.

If the descriptions are approved, asked member Monte Moore, how rigid are they and what does it mean? Looking through the descriptions, he said, there are some good things and ideas of what the job entails, but some of it reads like evaluation items.

Can the document be changed after it's approved? he asked, or maybe it could be more of a work in progress.

It seems like the descriptions would have to be reviewed every time someone new is hired, said member Barb Olson. It would be easier to evaluate staff members if they knew exactly what they are responsible for doing, but it also has to be flexible.

Mr. Moore said he thought the board would get more of a job description, and this seems like both that and an evaluation item.

"I agree with you on some of that," said member Dan Nedland.

Is this just a starting point, asked Mr. Moore, or is this a finished

product?

Maybe someone needs to just go through the document and make it a little more uniform and consistent, said member Jerry Chambers.

How does the document apply to current employees? asked Mrs. Olson. Does it apply to them right away?

This could be considered the first reading, said Mr. Jackson, and then the employees can look at the documents.

Would the document be re-visited at evaluation time? asked Mrs. Olson.

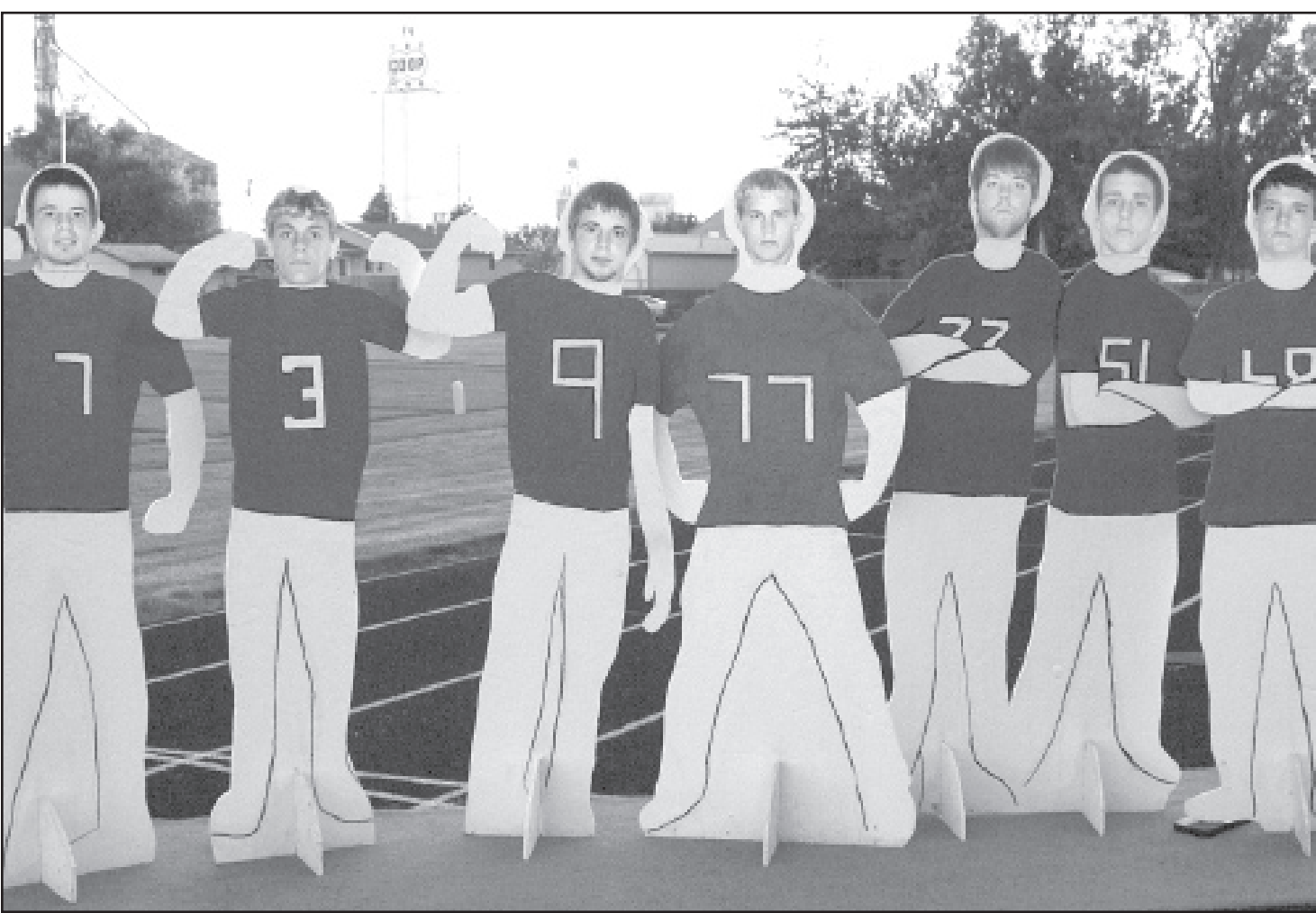
When the document was written, said Dr. Cullen, that was the intention. That's why the information was taken from lots of different sources and combined.

Have all the employees looked at the document and responded? asked Mr. Nedland. The responses from the employees have been put in the document, Dr. Cullen said.

Consistency through the document is a good idea, said Mr. Nedland. Also some things probably need to be taken out for evaluation ideas. For example, he said, he would take out a statement that an employee "must work in complete harmony with the superintendent."

"I think harmony is good," said Dr. Cullen.

Standing strong



CUTOUTS OF THE SENIORS on the Red Devil football team were decorated with enlargements of their photos for Senior Night at the Oberlin-Hoxie game on Friday. — Herald photo by Sarah Fredrickson

*Fair board gets transfer to end in black

(Continued from Page 1A) county computers were down last Tuesday, so Mrs. Hale couldn't get an exact figure.

The fair foundation board members present, including Mr. Long, Mrs. Hale and Mr. Brown, approved the transfer.

After that transfer, said Mr. Long, the fair board is in the hole \$1,056. He asked if the foundation could transfer \$2,500 into the board's account for the board to finish paying its bills.

He said that money would be paid back in January, when the board gets money from taxes.

"I'm not sure that's a fair foundation problem," said Mrs. Hale.

It's a budget problem, said Commissioner Ralph Unger. It could be written up as a budget violation because the fair board spent money that wasn't in the account.

Mr. Long said he feels the fair board had been "taken advantage

County Countdown

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Approved a loan of \$2,500 out of the county general to the fair board account to help the group finish the year and also held a fair foundation meeting in which \$1,092 was transferred to the fair board to pay for the work on the new livestock building. Story on Front Page.
- Talked with the emergency management director on training and

other things she's been working on. Story to come.

• Decided to ask the county fire chief for a report on paperwork which should be filed with the state at the last meeting in October. Story to come.

• Heard members of the Fair Board ask the county attorney for help in collecting money from a race track promoter out of Colorado. Story on Front Page.

of" because he told the Amusement Authority the board would pay for a new ticket booth at the fairground. Mr. Long said he didn't get bids, and the building ended up costing \$4,500 not including the concrete.

"From now on, it's pretty evident that we need to get bids," he said.

The foundation doesn't have

\$2,500 that isn't labeled for something, said Mrs. Hale. There is money that's reserved for the livestock building, she said. Then if you research it back, the foundation originally started to raise money for the open class building.

The money would be paid back next year, said Mr. Long. The board

knows the money is for one of the two buildings.

Is that legal? asked Mr. Unger, adding that the board is really asking for a loan.

The money could come out of the county general fund, said Sheriff Ken Badsky, a fair board member.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said the general fund is looking OK.

The money in the foundation probably can't be touched, said Mr. Unger, because the donors designated that money for a specific purpose.

The commissioners approved transferring \$2,500 from the county general fund to the fair board. The money will be held out of the transfer from taxes from the county to the board in January.

With no plans until spring to do anything on the open class or livestock buildings, Mrs. Hale was given the go-ahead to invest the foundation money.

*Race promoter hasn't paid for 2008 events

(Continued from Page 1A) who wrote a hot check to the fair board? asked Mr. Hirsch. Yes, said Mr. Long.

There were several hot checks written to people around town, said Mr. Hirsch. He said he thought those had been covered, though.

Linda Schroer, fair board treasurer, said she went ahead and deposited other checks from the promoter this past week. The board hasn't heard anything on those, she said.

It seems because of state laws written about tax money the board gets from the county, the board can't use public money to promote entertainment, said Mr. Long. How can the board go about paying to promote entertainment, especially with the amusement authority wanting to merge with it.

It seems crazy that the board continues to let money for the race promoter leave town when all of the work is done by people here, Mr.

Long said.

Mr. Long said he suggested at a recent fair board meeting that the race committee, with the help of the board, promote those races and keep that money here.

Right now, said Sheriff Ken Badsky, a fair board member, the board doesn't have any money to help promote or bring in entertainment.

It might be a good idea to keep the fair board and the amusement authority separate, said Commissioner Ralph Unger. The two don't fall under the same laws, he said.

Is there a plan for the county to come up with the money to help get the carnival rides worked on and certified under a new state law?

asked Mr. Long. The commissioners said there isn't

Mr. Hirsch said the board could keep maintenance money and entertainment money separate from tax money if it gets into the carnival or race operations.

The problem is that there isn't money to start an account, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, who goes to the fair board meetings. Not unless some of that tax allocation is taken to set up the account, which is against the law, he said.

The board netted \$10,000 off grandstand events this year, said Mr. Long. If the board would have known about separate accounts beforehand, the money would have

been handled differently.

If the board goes with a race promoter in the future, said Mr. Hirsch, getting that 1 percent of the gross before they leave town would be smart, instead of waiting until the end of the year.

In 2009, said Mr. Long, the board plans to come back to the commissioners with an idea for a sponsored beer garden for the races.

If the board runs the races next year, asked Mr. Hirsch, where is the money to start things going to come from?

The thing is, said Mr. Badsky, that within the next 20 days or less, a promoter has to sign up for the races scheduled for the year.

Business tour scheduled for next month

The Oberlin Business Alliance's annual Business to Business tour, designed to show owners and employees of area businesses what's available in town, is coming up.

The tour is scheduled for 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 16. Any business can be on the tour by giving a call to the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce office at 475-3441.

After the tour, the Chamber will sponsor a mixer at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center. Refreshments and finger foods will be served for \$5.

Test shows substance is morphine

The lab report on a substance found in the house on South Cass Avenue where friends found Cory Dyer, 18, dead on July 27 showed it was liquid morphine.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said the substance was sent in at the end of July. The chief said he didn't want to talk about how the morphine — a drug used by hospitals and hospices for pain relief, but considered a controlled substance and illegal for most people to use — got there.

Information has been sent to the county attorney, he said.

The chief said a toxicology report on the body isn't back yet.

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