

Business group wants to light up nativity scene

Members of the Oberlin Business Alliance decided this month to buy rope lights to fix the metal nativity scene that normally is put up in Centennial Park around Christmas.

For the last two years, the scene hasn't been in the park because it needs new lights.

Gary Walter, with the Bank, said at the meeting Wednesday, Jan. 7, he has looked at a website that sells lights.

He found the rope lights in rolls of 150 feet at \$67 each. Mr. Walter said he thought they could get them from Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, but hadn't talked to him yet.

Mr. Stanley said he hasn't been able to get the rope lights in the past few years, so if they can find them somewhere else, it would be OK.

He added that he thinks the nativity scene makes the downtown look nicer. It might be something to think about with fund raisers in the future.

The group decided to buy the rope lights, though there was no decision on how much to spend.

The group talked about storage for the downtown decorations, which are at the former youth ranch now. Mr. Stanley said if they get the garland loaded up, they could store the items upstairs at his store.

The members commented that in the past, the businesses downtown did a more uniform job of window decorating over Christmas. Mr. Walter said it looked nice when all of the windows were lit up and looked alike. He said he can remember when they all had icicle lights.

There's also been talk about outlining all of the windows along Main Street, said Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug Store.

Maybe the alliance can make an effort to talk with the business owners about doing some kind of uniform decorating next year, he said.

Tina Watson, Chamber secretary, asked the alliance members to pay one-third of the cost for new furniture for the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce office.

The current work space, she said, is insufficient. She handed out a picture and price of the furniture that she found on-line. This would make it look nice, too, said Curator Sharleen Wurm.

Ms. Watson said she did check with RASCabinetry, and they didn't

have anything. Mr. Vollertsen asked if she had checked with Creative Dimensions, another cabinet firm here, and she said she would.

The furniture through officefurniture.com would cost \$1,465, or \$488 each for the alliance, Chamber and Convention and Visitor's Bureau, she said.

In other business, the members:

- Approved a check for \$36 to Sunflower Cinema to pay for the 12 passes to the theater for Aspen Galentine, who won the kids' drawing last month.

- Talked about whether there are any legal reasons someone under 18 can't win the alliance drawing of \$1,000 in Santa Bucks. Mr. Stanley said he would check with the city attorney.

- Heard that the soup lunch on Saturday, Dec. 20, had gone pretty well. Mr. Vollertsen said although there was a little disappointment about the number of people who showed up, soup luncheons don't do as well. Cynthia Haynes, with *The Oberlin Herald*, said the idea was to keep people downtown between the two drawings that day.

- Talked briefly about ideas to fix the speaker system downtown to allow someone to talk outside on a microphone over the speakers on the canopies. Jack Benton has a few ideas. Ms. Watson said she talked with a person from the Phillipsburg chamber that recently put in a new system for \$1,800. She said she would get some information.

- Talked about the financial report, with Mrs. Haynes asking if the money could be shown on the report with which fund the money is designated for.

- Heard \$13,090 worth of Santa Bucks had been sold this year. Mr. Vollertsen said he thought it had worked well to have the imprint on them.

Ms. Watson said she talked with a business owner downtown who was formerly an alliance member, but wasn't able to make it to the meetings and didn't join last year, but still belongs to the Chamber.

She wasn't listed as an alliance member. Ms. Watson said the owner felt out of the loop with the alliance group. Mr. Vollertsen suggested possibly making copies of the minutes and financial reports and delivering or e-mailing them to those members who aren't able to make it to the meetings.



ON THURSDAY, Gerry Neff (above right) and Janeil Commerce set food out for the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet at the Old Bohemian Hall at the Decatur County Museum. — Herald photo by Kimberly Davis

Chamber elects new board members

Six new board members were elected at the Oberlin-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce annual banquet on Thursday at the Bohemian Hall at the county museum:

Adam Kadavy of KFNF Radio, former Mayor Ken Shobe, Cindy Shirley of the Norcat area, Robert Groneweg of R&M Service Center, teacher Cricket Steinmetz and Martin

Burton of First National Bank.

Around 60 people attended the banquet, munching on appetizers and watching a melodrama by the Decatur Area Theater Association.

The board gave the Outstanding Citizens in the Community Award to Chris and Dana Koerperich, who between the two of them vol-

unteer for the museum board, at Lund Covenant Church and for the county ambulance service here and in Sheridan County.

They also gave an award to Kem Bryan, outgoing board president, who has shown enthusiasm and energy on the job, according to Tami Shaw, a former board member.

Wind-driven fire sets Big Timber ablaze

A wildfire west of Big Timber Cemetery kept firefighters from Jennings and Oberlin busy into the wee hours of the morning Monday.

Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said vol-

unteers were called out around 3 or 4 p.m. Sunday when a fire broke out in the trees a half a mile west of the cemetery on Ivis Hanson's land.

Chief Cathcart said he thought

power lines slapping together in the wind created a spark that probably started the fire.

"Jennings fireman Stann Hartzog, said Chief Cathcart, "saw something and checked it out, so the crews got an early start."

With the wind, the fire moved about a quarter of a mile down the creek. Chief Cathcart said he understands now why the area is called "Big Timber."

"There were lots of big trees burning," he said.

He said they had to disc up some alfalfa to make fire breaks, but the fire stayed mostly in the trees.

"The Oberlin department was back to the station around 2:30 a.m. Monday and the Jennings department around 3:30 a.m.," he said.

"Firemen spent hours wetting down hot spots."

The Jennings department went back out on Monday afternoon to check on some areas that were still burning. Chief Cathcart said they were worried because the forecast was for high winds again and they wanted to make sure the hot spots were out.

About 15 to 20 minutes after the Oberlin department was called out, he said, he heard a call for the Norcat department to Todd Sumner's land just over the Norton County line. Mr. Sumner was burning trash and the grass caught on fire. The dispatcher rerouted Norcat firemen to the scene, and it didn't take long to get the fire out.

Group has fund raiser to pay medical expenses

A new group of volunteers from Decatur County plans to raise money to help people with serious health problems.

People can apply for money from the group to help pay medical bills, travel to doctor's offices and for other financial needs that come with health issues, said Chris Dempewolf.

The group, called the Decatur County Helping Hands for Healthcare, is working with Schwan's frozen food service. Members are taking orders until today and then the food will be ready for pick-up between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Satur-

day at the band shell in City Park.

"Anyone who wants to pre-order food should call one of the members," Mrs. Dempewolf said. "Otherwise, they can stop at the band shell on Saturday to purchase and also pick up food. The percentage of money the group receives depends on how much food is sold.

"The group plans to start selling paper hearts at local businesses. The hearts will cost \$1 each. People will write their names on the hearts and then the hearts will be displayed in the businesses," she said.

Hearts will go on sale in February.

Methodist youth to sell, deliver subs for big game

The Oberlin United Methodist youth group plans to sell six-inch sub sandwiches the first weekend in February for the pro football championship game.

Deanna Castle, who helps with the group, said the sandwiches cost \$4 each with a choice of ham, salami and bologna or turkey and cheese. A family pack, which costs \$17, includes four sandwiches, a bag of

chips and two liters of soda.

The group will start making the sandwiches about 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, in the church basement.

Sandwiches will then be delivered to people who live within a 20-mile radius of Oberlin.

Anyone who wants a sandwich should call Mrs. Castle at 475-3227 or Robert and Robyn Rouse at 475-8987 by Friday.

Bid letter ready to go for weather system

Mayor Joe Stanley agreed to sign a letter and send it out to receive bids for an Automated Weather Observation System for the airport, for which the City of Oberlin got a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration.

The city received a \$90,000 grant from the government agency to buy the system last year.

Airport Manager Phil Fraker said at the meeting Thursday, Jan. 8, that he hasn't sent the formal bid letter out, but has it written. Mr. Fraker said he thought it should possibly be put on city letterhead. He said he wasn't

sure if he should sign the letter or if someone with the city should sign it.

Also, said Mr. Fraker, he contacted Brad Weisenberger with BWR, the consultants drawing up airport expansion plans, to see if there's a site at the airport to put the system up that will work for the new runway as well.

Mr. Fraker said Mr. Weisenberger thought there was a spot that would work. He said he thinks the site is on land already owned by the city, but has to have that confirmed.

student of the week



Name: Amanda Marshall

Parents: Troy and Debra Marshall

Grade: 9

Age: 15

We've nominated this student because: She is a terrific student who works hard and always has a smile on her face. She makes the classroom enjoyable for all.

Student Comment: Being a freshman is a very great experience. Unlike

Junior High, you have more opportunities and freedoms. High school is amazing. I am very excited for all the years yet to come.

Activities involved in at school: Chanté, Kayettes, Drama Club, Jazz Band, Pep Band.

My choice of movies, books, and games: I enjoy fantasy movies and books. When it comes to games I would have to say that my favorite game is Cranium.

After I leave Decatur Community High School I intend to ...: Go to college and become a high school science teacher.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be ...: living here and I will hope to possibly be teaching here.

Favorite Quote: Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited, imagination encircles the world.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PLEASE VOTE!

I would APPRECIATE your vote for
**Prairie Land Electric Cooperative
 Board of Trustees District #5**

R. Kent Anderson
 Concordia, Kansas

- 20+ year resident of north central Kansas
- 25+ year Ag lender
- Previous board experience
- Cooperative experience

You will receive your ballot in the mail from Prairie Land Electric about Jan. 20. Please be sure to mail in your vote **PRIOR TO THE FEBRUARY 11 DEADLINE!**

A Reminder ...

To make your reservations for our annual meeting
 Coming February 2

Deadline is
 Friday, January 23

Please call our Oberlin office at 785-475-3131, Ext. 101

**Decatur County
 Conservation District**

**Fredrickson
 Insurance Agency**

183 S. Penn – Oberlin – 785-475-3883