

Sheriff replaces ex-deputy

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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A former Thomas County undersheriff who quit his job after his boss lost the fall election, started work with the Decatur County sheriff's department as the undersheriff on Monday.

Alan Marcum said he has worked in Thomas County law enforcement for the past 10 years. He received a degree in criminal justice from Colby Community College in 1999, then was an intern for a few months with the Thomas County Sheriff's Department.

The department had an opening, said Mr. Marcum, so he was a detention deputy in the jail for two years, then went on the road for six months as an officer, then to the Colby Police Department for about 2 1/2 years. He went back to the sheriff's office as the chief detention deputy, then became undersheriff about two years ago.

Mr. Marcum said he knew when his boss, Mike Baughn, didn't win the November election that he wouldn't have a job. The new sheriff made it clear that he had his own undersheriff, or right-hand man, coming in. So Mr. Marcum said he decided to resign. His last day was Monday, Jan. 12.



Alan Marcum

He said he knew that Sheriff Ken Badsky had a job opening in his department, since Undersheriff Randy McHugh had recently quit to take a job with the Nebraska National Guard.

Sheriff Badsky said he talked to someone in the county about the job, but they weren't interested. He then talked with Mr. Marcum at the fall sheriff's conference in Topeka and got his resume.

"Mr. Marcum is pretty level-headed," said Sheriff Badsky. "He has the experience and qualifications. Mr. Marcum already has his Kansas Law Enforcement Training certificate. It takes 3 1/2 months to go through the academy, and in the past people have been trained here, worked the minimum amount of time and left."

With a heated campaign in Thomas County, Mr. Marcum has been in the newspaper a lot in Colby as things both from the past and recent months came up.

One of those items was a claim that Mr. Marcum shot an ostrich that he claimed was attacking him. He said Thursday that the bird wasn't attacking him. The sheriff's department received a call that there was

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Time to register for school board, city council seats

Time is almost up for anyone wanting to run for a spot on the Oberlin School Board or city council in four Decatur County towns.

The last day to register is noon on Tuesday at the courthouse.

"If there are any races," said County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, "a primary election will be scheduled for Tuesday, March 3. The general election for school and city offices will be Tuesday, April 7.

Up for election will be seats held by Chris Bailey, Dewayne Jackson and Jerry Chambers on the Oberlin School Board.

In Oberlin, city council seats are those held by Jay Anderson, Marcia Lohofener and Rob McFee.

In Jennings, Mayor Bob Jones, and council members Louise Cressler and Don Bolt face re-

election. Seats held by Mayor Mike Helm, and Carl Lyon and Linda Hunt on the Norcatour City Council and those held by Keith Muirhead, Jackie Douglas and Don Ritter on the Dresden City Council, also are up for election.

As of Monday afternoon, no one had filed for any of the positions.

Filing costs for people running for the school board is \$5 or the candidate must have 50 names on a petition. For those running for council, it's \$5 or signatures of 10 percent of the people who voted in the last city general election or 25, whichever is less.

"In other towns," said Mrs. Geihlsler, "if 40 people voted, the registrant needs four names. If 500 voted, 10 percent is 50 names, so the person would need only 25 signatures."

Group praises Good Sam's efforts

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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One Oberlin nursing home made a statewide "good" list of homes with nearly perfect state inspections.

The Decatur County Good Samaritan Center was on a list from the Kansas Advocates for Better Care which included 15 homes with five or fewer deficiencies for the three most recent annual inspections.

A release issued by the group says

that "none of the most recent inspection deficiencies cited were for actual harm, immediate jeopardy or mistreatment" of a patient.

The Good Samaritan Center listed just two deficiencies on its most recent report.

Administrator Janice Shobe said in 2008, the center had two deficiencies, in 2007 one and in 2006 three. All were considered minor, with no immediate threat to any of the

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Volunteers needed to strip center, theater

Volunteers are needed to start getting items in the Golden Age Center and Sunflower Cinema ready for salvage on Saturday, Jan. 31.

Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., said anyone who wants to help with the salvage preparation should call him at 475-3459 or Kevin Brown, with Sappa Valley Construction, at 475-3130.

Mr. Lohofener said he's talked with people at the high school, with civic organizations and the Oberlin Jaycees. They plan to pair each high school student with an older volunteer.

The crew will start at 9 a.m. and work until about 3 p.m. Volunteers should bring work gloves. A light lunch will be provided, he said.



AT THE GATEWAY last Wednesday, Mayor Joe Stanley (above center), Sid Metcalf and Jay Anderson listened to Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose before a meeting about a training facility at the former youth ranch. Commissioner Gene Gallentine (below) talked with Command Chief Warrant Officer Mark Jensen of the Kansas National Guard during a tour at the ranch.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

General tours ranch

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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Members of the Oberlin City Council, county commissioners, emergency and law enforcement officials, business owners and others talked with a Kansas National Guard general last Wednesday about a training facility at the former youth ranch east of town.

After the meeting and tour, an aide told the group the site probably wouldn't work for a military training area because the Guard would want several hundred acres of land, but it might work for a first-responder training site for police, ambulance crews and fire fighters.

Nearly 40 people attended the meeting at the ranch and at The Gateway.

Mayor Joe Stanley, who welcomed the group to The Gateway, joked. "We are proud that we have failed at more things than most communities have even tried."

"Our thoughts and hopes are that when Lt. Col. Eric Peck was out, he went back with a good report which is why you are here," the mayor said.

Lt. Col. Peck toured the ranch in September or October with Randy McHugh, former Decatur County undersheriff and a few others.

The mayor told the group a little about Oberlin, including the airport expansion project which the city is working on, the fact that three rail lines come through the county, the home-owned carnival, the new movie theater, bowling alley and senior center project, the county-owned hospital and the fact the city maintains and operates a power plant.

"The ranch site," said Lee "Doc" Franklin, a member of the committee, "has about seven to 10 acres,



with a little room to expand. The land has rail and highway access to the south, so any kind of heavy load can be brought in.

"Some of the thoughts," he said, "include training for fire, police, hazmat, Federal Emergency Management Agency, emergency management and other crews."

"We are regional players," said Mr. Franklin. "We would embrace

others coming in. Some of the strengths of the site are the two highways that intersect in Oberlin. It's only 12 miles from the Nebraska line and the facilities are ready to be used.

"The buildings have fireplaces and propane heat, and there are security cameras and lighting in place. There's an indoor recreation area and an outdoor area including

a basketball court, volleyball court and a softball diamond.

"There's a nearby park with a nice wooded area. There's also a nine-hole golf course, skeet shooting range, small arms shooting range, primitive camping, shelter house and beautiful trails in Sappa Park."

Mr. McHugh, who originally

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Committee answers a few questions

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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After a brief overview of what the former Sappa Valley Youth Ranch and the city could offer for a possible first responder or National Guard training facility, community leaders fielded several questions during a meeting last Wednesday.

National Guard Command Chief Warrant Officer Mark Jensen said he and the adjutant general have been working on the idea of a "crisis city" for years. When the National Guard responds to an emergency, he said, they work with emergency first responders from the state, cities and counties, so it's important that they have a place to train together.

"In some cases, first responders were having to go out of state to train," said Chief Jensen.

The National Guard owns land in Salina and decided to build a training hub there, he said. Chief Jensen said they also started talking about regional training "spokes" because some people, many of them volunteers, still faced hours of windshield time to get training.

"The hub," he said, "is focused on Homeland Security training for first responders. The spokes would include more of the military training and those need about 300 acres of land around them."

He said they have looked at other areas — the biggest was 630 acres — but there hasn't been any decisions made and with the state

budget crisis, there isn't any money to build the spokes.

"Crisis City is being built in Salina with a good majority of the resources being donated, including railroad equipment to practice on," he said.

"First responders training at Crisis City or the hub from Kansas won't pay for the training. They will still be responsible for paying for the travel to the facility and hotel accommodations."

"Will the Guard do all four spokes, in the four regions of the state, or will it be done at a time or just one?" asked Administrator Austin Gilley.

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*New officer starts work

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 an ostrich running in the ditches, median and roadway on I-70. He said he went out there and kept chasing the large bird off the Interstate.

"Ostriches," said Mr. Marcum, "are seven to eight feet tall. If a vehicle had hit the bird, the body could go right through the windshield."

At the time, he said he didn't know where the bird came from. Later, said Mr. Marcum, he found out that a farmer outside of Menlo owned the bird.

He said he chased the bird off the freeway several times and it just kept coming back. Afraid that someone would hit it and not knowing where it came from, he said, he put the animal down.

At the same time, a truck driver passing him saw him shoot the bird and called People for Ethical Treatment of Animals. The owner later told others he found the body inside his fence, not on the right of way.

Jay Leno talked about the story on the *Tonight Show* and the sheriff's department received more than 300 letters. About half were from people who weren't happy that he shot the animal and half were from people who said they wouldn't have wanted to hit the bird.

Another allegation has been that he drives fast and parties with kids.

"There are times," he said, "with a deputy's job that you have to drive fast."

Mr. Marcum said he wouldn't deny driving fast. Sometimes you use lights and sirens and there are other times that you don't. "That's part of the job."

He also said he does have a good relationship with people and with kids in the county. He said he thinks the young people there have a lot of

respect for him because he went to college in Colby and became the undersheriff. He said he doesn't drink with them or do anything else like that.

He said he does get out of the patrol vehicle and talk with the teens and might even stop and play ball or Hackie Sack for a few minutes with the kids and added that he would rather see teens doing that than out partying.

More recently, his purchase of a rifle from the county was in the news. He said he bought the precision rifle from the county. He had trained on the rifle and used it for the last three years.

He approached the Thomas County commissioners about buying the gun. The commissioners called gun dealers on speakerphone and got quotes on what the gun was worth, ranging between \$900 and \$1,200.

Mr. Marcum said he paid the county \$1,100. The former sheriff had nothing to do with the purchase, he said.

"The rifle," he said, "was originally acquired with trade-ins of guns owned by the department and bought with drug forfeiture money."

Sheriff Badsky, noting that he'd heard the reports, said he's not worried about any of that. He said Mr. Marcum starts with a clean slate working for Decatur County.

Mr. Marcum said he and his wife Stacy hadn't made plans to move yet. He said they have three dogs, but no children.

"I went into law enforcement because it's something that I've always wanted to do. It's a respectful job and a way to serve the people,"

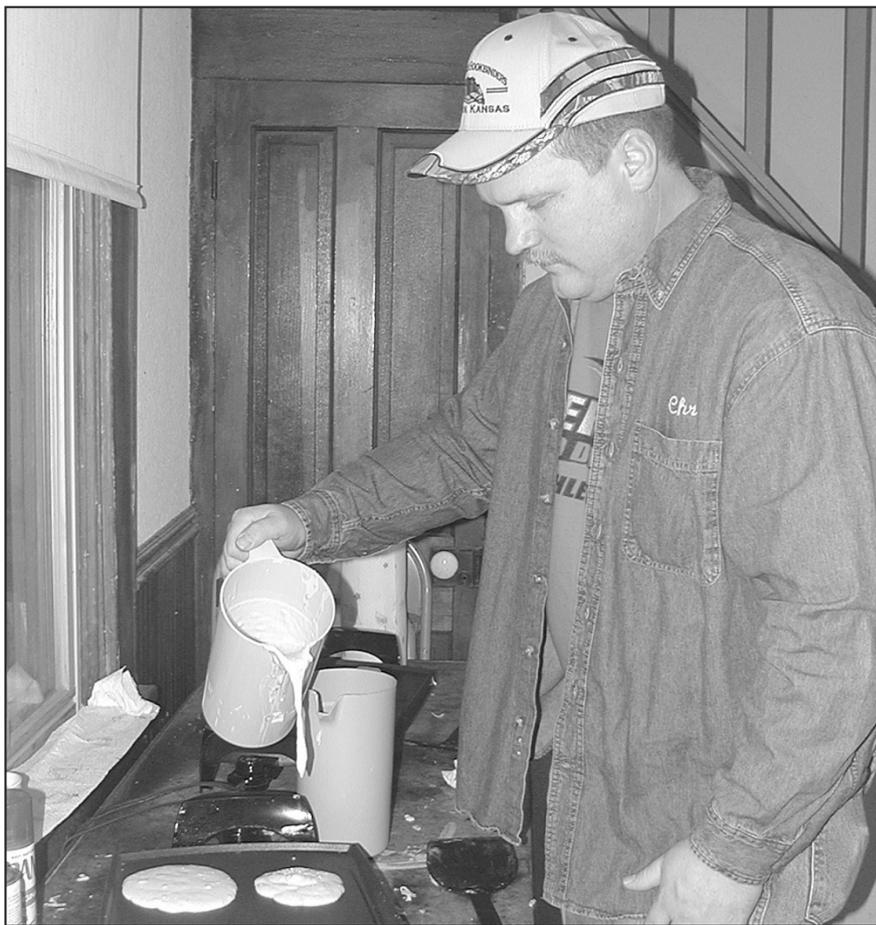
"I enjoy serving and protecting," he said.



Tacos, pancakes provided

ON SATURDAY, supporters of the Golden Age Center ate tacos and taco salad at a fund-raising dinner billed as the last at the old center. The building is to be torn down to make way for a new center this spring. Diners included Delphyn Biggs and Norma Anderson (above). Down the street, supporters of the Last Indian Raid Museum enjoyed pancakes during a fund raiser for building maintenance. Board member Chris Koerperich (right) helped make pancakes on a griddle.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



*Training idea pitched to guard

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 started planning on the training facility, said Oberlin is within a 1 1/2-hour drive for most of the 18-county northwest region. He said he recently went to work full-time for the Nebraska National Guard.

"There's support for the guard moving stuff to the former ranch and training there," he said. "It could be hard to get big trucks into the area because of the winding road, but I talked with a landowner who said they could get access straight from the highway."

"There's over 400 acres that would be accessible," he added. It would be a good area for dog training. Lots of time, dog handlers need a hotel to stay in and the ranch already has an area for people to stay, said Mr. McHugh.

The former county emergency management director, Patti Skubal, said she helped pull the information together and spent some time looking at the community.

"This would be a good resource to provide resources and training for the area," she said. "It's vital that the personnel have the training and ability to respond to any emergency. It's obvious that the people in this

community are looking at what can be done."

"We see a benefit in having the guard here," said Mayor Stanley. "It will help Oberlin grow. We are willing to offer a lease better than you can find on any other land you will look at. We appreciate the time you have spent here."

Gen. Deborah Rose said she wanted to thank the group on behalf of the adjutant general, who is commander of the state's National Guard units and also the state emergency preparedness chief.

"All of you have done a great amount of work," she said. "It needs to be said that we are in a dire financial situation and will be for the next few years."

"You all have expressed such a great desire for this, which is why we wanted to come out. Financially though, (the state) might not be at a time that we can do this, but we want you to know that your voice can be heard."

She added that the hospitality here had been great.

*Center recognized for quality resident care

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 residents.

"Last year," she said, "one of the deficiencies was that the floor in the kitchen needed to be replaced. Since then, the job has been done. In the case of the Kansas Advocates for Better Care, it looks like the group looks for the centers with the fewest deficiencies."

She said she hadn't heard of the group before, but it also issues a list of homes with too many deficiencies.

The center just received a five-star overall quality and health inspection rating from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and got four out of five stars for quality measures and staffing. The three areas include health inspection, quality measures and staffing, which altogether make up the

overall quality category. That puts the overall quality for the center at five, which is the highest given. Mrs. Shobe said this is the first time the star rating has been used.

"The awards and stars validate how we see our quality of care," she said.

"The center is full, said Mrs. Shobe, "with 46 residents. It has 75 staff members, including seasonal,

part-time and full-time employees."

She said they are working on consistent staff assignments so that residents and staff get familiar with each other. The idea is to keep the staff in the same neighborhood of the center, working with the same residents over and over so they get to know each other from their habits and what activities or music

they like.

"The center's staff is good at working with dementia patients," she said. "Last summer they brought in a speaker on the subject. Since then, they have started the Butterfly Lounge for severely demented residents. It's in a quiet, isolated area."

"We have a good staff," she said. "All of these awards are because of them."

*First responders could train here

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 "The guard can do just one, said Chief Jensen. "All four don't have to be agreed on or done at the same time. When talking about a military training facility, there are some red flags when you hear wetlands, such as the creek bottom in Sappa Park. There's not a snowball's chance with a wetlands," he said.

Later, someone explained that by wetlands, they meant that the city is allowed to have 15 acre feet of water in the park, a small lake or wetlands area, but the entire park isn't a wetlands.

"Is there any reason the training area couldn't be away from the ranch site?" asked Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer.

"It's in the Guard's best interest," said Chief Jensen, "to have the site be contiguous so the big equipment doesn't have to be moved a lot."

Chief Jensen said he jotted down several questions and things to think about during the presentation. Some were answered and others the committee will have to look at.

The questions included:
 • Who is the administrator of the training facility? Who does the

scheduling, maintenance and security? A training facility would require someone to be there. It would need to be fenced in, because you don't want people taking pictures or stopping in. There's no federal money at this time to sustain something like this.

• When was the facility last used?

Two years ago," said Mayor Joe Stanley, "but it's been fully winterized."

• Where's the closest residence?

"Less than a mile," said Mayor Stanley.

• Who owns the 300 to 400 acres?

"The city," said Randy McHugh.

"The former lake bed area is leased to Pheasants Forever and has walk-in hunting," said Mayor Stanley.

• How long is the lease for? "Ten years," said Mayor Stanley.

"From the city's needs, said Administrator Austin Gilley, we would want to know the amount of traffic or possible revenue from a training facility."

Chief Jensen suggested finding

out if there was a big rubble pile or multi-purpose facility. would it bring 15 first responders once a month or every three months? Are there people who would use the facility?

"Planning a training facility would be a serious commitment to each other," said Mr. Gilley.

Chief Jensen said he isn't committing to anything. He said he doesn't have a single dollar to commit.

"The real question is, what do you want to do with the ranch?" asked Chief Jensen. "What kind of revenue does the city need?"

A training facility might make a lot of money, said Mr. McHugh, and it might not, but it would bring traffic through Oberlin.

After a tour of the ranch, the group talked a little more about leaning more towards a first responder training area and using the buildings more for training than for a place for people to stay.

"One problem could be having enough motel rooms to house crews who come for training," said Chief Jensen.

REHE
Rawlins County Health Center

RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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February 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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8	9 -Cardiac Rehab	10	11 -Dr. Charles E. Frankum Surgery -Brandie Ihrig Dietician -Ultra Sounds -Cardiac Rehab -Diabetic Clinic	12 -MRI's	13 -Cardiac Rehab	14 -Ultra Sounds
15	16 -Bone Density -Cardiac Rehab	17 -Dr. Frederick C. Miller Cardiology	18 -Dr. Jeffery L. Curtis Cardiology	19 -Dr. Saba Othopedics	20	21 -Ultra Sounds -Cardiac Rehab
22	23 -Cardiac Rehab	24	25 -Diabetic Clinic -Ultra Sounds -Cardiac Rehab	26 -MRI's	27 -Ultra Sounds -Cardiac Rehab	28

Happy Valentines Day

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