

Volunteers needed for salvage

Plans are underway to start salvaging items out of the Sunflower Cinema and Golden Age Center on Saturday.

Anyone wanting to volunteer with the job can contact Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., at 475-3459 or Kevin Brown, with Sappa Valley Construction, at 475-3130. The idea is to pair up a high school student with an older volunteer, said Mr. Lohofener.

After the pre-salvage work is done then the building will be torn down and work will start to put the new one up.

For over a year, Mr. Lohofener, members of the economic corporation and others have been working on raising money to build a new center that will house the Golden Age, Sunflower Cinema and a new bowling alley.

On Sunday, Sunflower Cinema showed its last movie. The seats

from the building are now up for sale at \$5 a piece. Those who are interested can contact Duane Dorshorst, who sits on the cinema board, at 475-2122.

The Golden Age members plan to move their items out of the existing building on Friday to the building across the street which the county will rent while the new one goes up.

No one said for sure when the new building will be completed although there's been some talk of it being done in August, depending on the weather.

Last week, Mr. Lohofener said, he received the deed to the land south of the existing building, which was one of the puzzle pieces they were waiting on. The land is owned by Perry Case.

Volunteers will start the pre-salvage work at 9 a.m. on Saturday and work until 3 p.m. People should bring work gloves.



Students practice play

IN THE AUDITORIUM, Ethan Merrill (above left) and Jay Wessel took part in play practice last Tuesday for their upcoming performance of "Evening of Culture." Jacinta Carter and Heather Ploussard (right) sat on the ground after they fell off a bench on the set. See details on Page 6B.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Tax money will pay rent at new site

The Decatur County commissioners agreed to pay rent and utilities for the building which members of the Golden Age Center plan to use while the new building is going up.

Helen Gee and Dorothy Moore talked with the commissioners about the rent and also about getting a few volunteers to help move the meal site items across the street to the Great Vine Cafe or former donut shop on Friday.

There are expenses across the street at the building that will be used while the new one is being built, said Ms. Moore. They need to pay for utilities as well as rent. She said the utilities will be around \$250 to \$300. At the present location, she said, the county pays about \$550 a month.

Ms. Moore asked if the difference could be used for rent for the building.

"Wouldn't it be simpler if the county just paid the owner of the building directly," said Commissioner Ralph Unger, "and then they can pay the utilities and then the difference can go to them for rent?"

"It may be simpler for the utilities to stay in the building owner's name," said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, "then the county can just write one check to pay the bills and rent."

"The owner also wants to know," said Mrs. Gee, "if they would do some kind of 11-month lease."

County Roundup

At the meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked briefly about the governor's plan to cut money to the counties including the motor carrier property tax which could mean almost \$250,000 less for the road and bridge department. Story to come.

- Talked with the noxious weed director about a state push to put prairie dogs on the endangered species list. Story to come.

- Agreed to continue paying the insurance for the errors and omissions for economic board members under Kansas Worker's Risk Cooperative for Counties. Story to come.

- Talked with the interim emergency management director about getting a sample ad to hire a new director. Story bottom right.

- Agreed to pay rent and utilities for the building the members of the Golden Age Center are going to use while the new facility is being built. Story at left.

"The owner's liability for the building is around \$92," said Ms. Moore. "I was told that the county (See COUNTY on Page 5A)

Winter conference draws farmers

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

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Close to 800 people attended the annual Cover Your Acres winter conference at The Gateway last week learning and gathering information on farming practices for this area.

Brian Olson, multi-county agronomist, said the conference went pretty well. They fed 410 people the first day and 375 the second.

He said he's heard a lot of positive comments and enjoyed having the Monsanto Technology at the show, which was something different this year.

"The good sponsorship from people in the industry," he said, "allowed us to give away several

free registrations."

In a month or so, he said he will be sending out a survey to those who attended. Then it's time to start planning the next conference for winter 2010 at The Gateway.

Mr. Olson said he's glad they have a facility like The Gateway, although he knows that such a big event can be a little burdensome on the city staff.

"The facility is a unique one for western Kansas. There are lots of people who travel in from 100 miles or more for this conference. They always have positive things to say about the facility," he added.

"With the industry people and farmers coming in for the conference (See ARENA on Page 5A)



DR. OBED SAINT LOUIS will start seeing patients at the hospital and clinic on Monday.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Doctor moves to town

Dr. Obed Saint Louis will start seeing patients at the Oberlin Medical Clinic and the Decatur County Hospital on Monday.

Dr. Saint Louis said before signing the contract here he was working at several different hospitals doing contract work. For instance last week he worked in Independence, but that could change on a week by

week basis. Predominately, he said, he's done emergency room work in Kansas, but is a family practice doctor.

Originally from Haiti, Dr. Saint Louis grew up in Brooklyn, New York. He joined the Army and ended his military career at Fort Riley and decided to go to college (See DOCTOR on Page 5A)

Hospital waiting on New Year's baby

With the first month of 2009 just about a thing of the past, Decatur County still doesn't have a New Year's Baby.

Although the little miss or mister of 2009 hasn't been born yet at the Decatur County Hospital, the local merchants participating in the New Year's Baby giveaway are hanging onto the items.

Gifts this year include a \$10 gift certificate from the Dresser, a case of baby food from Raye's Grocery, a \$10 gift card from Stanley Hardware, a \$20 gift certificate from Carol Morford with Mary Kay, a \$25 gift certificate from Addleman Drug Store, dinner for two from Pizza Hut, a gift from Fredrickson Insurance Agency, a \$10 gift certi-

cate from Ward Drug Store, and a year's subscription to *The Oberlin Herald*.

To receive the gifts, the parents must contact the newspaper and agree to be interviewed. All must be claimed within 60 days of the birth.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said the only deliveries they are doing at the hospital are scheduled surgical deliveries or if someone happens to be coming through town and goes into labor. The hospital, she said, doesn't have a surgeon on staff 24 hours a day. In an emergency, they have to be able to provide a cesarean section within 30 minutes, she said, and without a surgeon it's hard to do that during a "normal" delivery.

County looks to hire new emergency director

The Decatur County commissioners asked the interim emergency management director if she could do a sample ad which they could run to hire a new director during the meeting last Tuesday.

After Patti Skubal resigned from the position, the commissioners asked Jacque Boultinghouse to step in as the interim director, which she did. Ms. Boultinghouse told the commissioners that she didn't want to be the director for both Decatur and Sheridan Counties when tornado season gets here. She added that she didn't think she could cover two counties efficiently during that season.

"Has the county run any ads?"

asked Commissioner Gene Galentine. The county hasn't yet, he was told.

"Before any ads are run," said County Attorney Steve Hirsch, "the commissioners need to decide if the job will be part-time or full-time."

Commissioner Stan McEvoy asked Ms. Boultinghouse if she thought Decatur County could get away with having a part-time director.

"Yes," she said. The commissioners asked Ms. Boultinghouse if she had any sample ads. She said she could get one that was used for her job one time when she had decided she wasn't going to do it anymore.

Park brochures put on hold for wetlands

Members of the Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau board talked about holding off on brochures of Sappa Park until the wetlands area is established when they met last Thursday.

Carolyn Burtis, a board member who volunteers at the park, said she thought they should wait to see if any of the trails are changed or reconfigured after the wetlands is built.

"At least one of the trails will for sure change," she said, "I would hate to spend money on the brochures and then have to change them."

Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, said he talked with Rick Pauls, with Pheasants Forever, who said the wetlands and park are creating quite a buzz in Topeka.

Mrs. Burtis said she rode her mountain bike on the "Wilderness" trail, through the trees around the golf course, recently.

"No wonder people come down from North Platte to ride," she said. "It's a great trail. It would be a good idea to get that trail in bike magazines."

The group talked about the need to have a sign near the park entrance for westbound drivers. The large sign now advertises the Last Indian Raid monument in the cemetery on the east side, and the park, on the west side.

The members have been trying to contact someone about making signs for driving tours in the area.

"An example," said Mr. Anderson, "would be putting information signs up along the Last Indian Raid tour that was given before Mini Sapa weekend. That way, people can drive the tour and know what happened at the various sites."

He said he hasn't had any luck with the person he thought could make the signs. The members are going to continue looking for someone.

Mr. Anderson said he's had lots of people upset because they haven't been able to reserve a hotel room for the Cover Your Acres winter crop conference at The Gateway this week.

"Another hotel or motel needs to be moved to the top of the economic development priority list," he said.

Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., said board members talk about it at every meeting. She said she's talked to the City Council several times.

"A recent meeting with representatives from the National Guard also revealed that Oberlin needs more lodging if there is going to be a training center of any kind at the former youth ranch," she said.

Signs needed for county roads

The Decatur County commissioners talked with the road and bridge supervisor about signs to mark the roads in the county, but made no decision on what to do at the Jan. 6 meeting.

The roads have all been renamed for the Enhanced 911 address system, but none of them has signs with the new names.

Supervisor Tim Stallman said the county isn't required to put up signs, but it's an option. He said he has an oral agreement with some of the township boards to help pay for number signs to go in front of places out in the county.

Mr. Stallman said he thought they probably needed to start with signs on the highways and then work out from there. He said it might be a two- or three-year project because of the cost, although he wasn't sure how much the signs would cost.

Commissioner-elect Gene Gallentine said he attended a meeting about the National Guard at the beginning of the week. Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose, with the Kansas Guard, would come Jan. 14 to look at the former youth ranch, he said.

Mr. Gallentine said at the meeting at the beginning of the week, Mr. Stallman's name was mentioned in a discussion about whether the county has the equipment needed in case there's an emergency.

Mr. Gallentine said he would attend the meeting, since the state people want all of the groups represented.

City Administrator Austin Gilley stopped in to introduce himself to the commissioners. He said he worked for the state in Oklahoma, although his goal has always been to work in city government.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he serves on the Upper Republican River Basin Public Alliance. Recently an idea was kicked around about putting a reverse osmosis water filtration system in for counties in northwest Kansas with money the state might get from lawsuits against Colorado and Nebraska over water from the Republican River.

Members of the alliance said Decatur County would be a good place to have the plant, which would take water out of the Dakota Aquifer.

"That would take some pressure off the Ogallala Aquifer," he said.

"Doesn't reverse osmosis produce quite a bit of waste?" Mr. Gilley asked.

"The group did talk about that," said Mr. Unger. "but I'm not saying this is going to happen, but it's been thrown around."

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said when he was on City Council, they were told reverse osmosis could make the water in the city too clean.

"What's been said," said County Attorney Steve Hirsch, who also serves as the city attorney, "is that if the water gets too clean, it would become 'aggressive' and scour stuff off the inside of the pipes."

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked with Sheriff Ken Badsky, who said he hired Alan Marcum of Thomas County to replace Undersheriff Randy McHugh. Sheriff Badsky said Mr. Marcum has been in law enforcement for 10 years, so he won't need to go to the academy.

- Talked about signing the contract with Sappa Valley Construction for the new theater, senior center and bowling alley. The commissioners agreed that before they sign the contract, they want the deed, not a faxed copy of it, for the land south of the existing building.

- Heard that the new township directories from Central Publishing are in. Mr. Stallman said the directories look good, but there are some items that need to be corrected for the 2009 version.

- Agreed to repair the radiator tube on one of the John Deere lawn mowers for \$950.

- Decided to hold a check for \$38,300 to Northwest Kansas Planning and Development until Director Randy Hrabec gets the solid waste report turned into the state.

- Held a 10-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege with Mr. Hirsch. There was no action taken.

- Appointed Jim Wesch to the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. board and Pam Wilson to the Decatur County Hospital Board.

- Approved property tax abatements for \$415 for Chuck Harms, for \$820 for Lane Naiman, for \$6 for ASC Towing, \$72 for Murfin Drilling, \$8 for Kay, Ward and Ray Harold and \$8 for Gale Harold. The commissioners also approved adding \$26 for Ward Harold and \$26 for Ray Harold.



IN THE GATEWAY, Scott Stutzman (above right) talked with Ernest Wicke during the Cover Your Acres winter conference last Wednesday. Greg Lohofener, with Market Data Inc., (below) showed a presentation on his computer. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

* Arena packed at show

(Continued from Page 1A)

ence," said Mr. Olson, "they book the rooms in the LandMark Inn and the Frontier Motel that are available. I would like to see another motel option in town. There are several people who either drive to McCook or Colby to stay over night. Oberlin loses revenue when people have to go to another town to stay the night."

"A lot of these guys are vendors or territory managers for the western half of Kansas. They travel a lot of miles and aren't going to go home and drive back the next day; they are going to rent a room."

The conference brought in 44 vendors this year.

Mr. Olson said the conference had a little bit lower attendance than the past five years, with this being the sixth one. In the past years the conference has grown in attendance each year, with this one being down 60 to 70 people. He added that's pretty normal and what he was expecting. He said he figures the conference will plateau at some point.

"In the future there will always



be a challenge to continue to provide relevant research based material that is new to the audience," he said. "The conference

will also need to continue to offer items that the farmers want to hear about and things that haven't been discussed before."

Heating project needs a few more items

The superintendent told the Oberlin School board that the project to replace a steam-return condensation line at the high school is nearly done, although a few items remain to be dealt with.

At the meeting on Monday, Jan. 12, Superintendent Pat Cullen said the line has been inspected, but there are 16 "points of concern"

that have to be addressed for the project to be complete.

Dr. Cullen said there are some steam valves that need to be fixed and a 30-foot stretch of the steam line that needs to be insulated. The ceiling of the boiler room also needs to be insulated.

The board approved \$3,787 to repair a steam pipe leak in the west crawl space in the junior

high area.

"This is a major break in the big steam line, and it has to be fixed," he said.

The price from Garrett Plumbing, Heating and Electric Co. of Norton was approved. There weren't any other bids.

* Doctor starts at clinic

(Continued from Page 1A)

at Kansas State University. In 1990, he graduated with a biochemical engineering degree and worked with the Amoco Corporation.

Over the years he has also drilled for oil and gas, so he's been in lots of smaller towns.

In 1994, he said, he started medical school at American University of the Caribbean and received his degree.

Dr. Saint Louis said he did his residency at the University of Kansas.

After traveling with his career, he said, he wanted to start looking for a place to create some roots, which is when he found the job in Decatur County. Dr. Saint Louis said he's working on buying a house, but for now is staying at the hospital's Hospitality House. He said he did purchase a four-plex apartment complex as an investment.

He said he has three kids, two girls 12 and 10, and a boy 6, who live with their mother.

Dr. Saint Louis said he plans on doing lots of cosmetic things including using laser treatment for varicose vein removal and acne treatment.

He is working on starting a once a week evening clinic here. The clinic would then stay open until 9 p.m. on that day each week and he would see patients. The day hasn't been decided.

Dr. Saint Louis said he also plans to travel to Atwood on Tuesdays and work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the clinic there.

* County agrees to rent

(Continued from Page 1A)

needs to contact its insurance agent to attach the building. The owner would like a certificate showing that's been done. Also there's been someone in the new building cleaning the carpets and getting it ready so the owner would like half of the gas bill paid for this month."

"Is the Golden Age Center really going to be in the building for 11 months?" asked Mr. McEvoy.

Mr. Unger said he didn't want an 11-month lease if they will be out earlier. He added that he doesn't want to pay rent if it isn't needed. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he will write a contract if they drop off information on what they want it to include. Also will the county call in the workers from the weed department and road and bridge department to help move the equipment on Friday.

Mr. Unger said they might be able to get the workers from the weed department.

Ms. Moore said they talked to Bill Cathcart about getting trash dumpster at the rental site. She also has a phone call into the city about painting a few handicap spots in front of the building.



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