



Work stops to inspect for asbestos

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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Demolition work on the Golden Age and Sunflower Cinema shut down for two weeks last Monday as the county waited for an inspector to come and get samples to test for asbestos in the theater.

This Monday, Kevin Brown, owner of Sappa Valley Construction, said all of the samples came back OK and work can resume next Tuesday.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said the county found out that it needed to get a permit through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment showing that there was no asbestos in the buildings or on the property.

Demolition started on Monday, Feb. 16, with the windows coming out first. Then on Tuesday, Feb. 17, the crew started knocking walls down.

Mr. Unger said someone had called Monday, Feb. 23, and said the county was going to be turned in for not having the state permit. After that, Mr. Unger said, county officials called the state and turned themselves in.

Last Tuesday, Feb. 24, an inspector from Great Plains Asbestos Control out of Kearney, Neb., came in and took 14 samples.

Tim Stallman, county road and bridge supervisor, said later the state has an asbestos notification form for buildings which are going to be demolished. The form lets the state know that there is going to be a demolition project, the address and what's going to happen, he said. The certification, said Mr. Stallman, is supposed to be done before anyone starts tearing down the building.

Mr. Stallman said county officials didn't know that they needed to get the certificate. All of the samples

Two meters needed

After a call from the City of Oberlin about the electric meter for the county's building project downtown, Decatur County commissioners agreed Tuesday to keep the gas and electric meters for the senior center separate from the theater and bowling alley.

Kevin Brown, with Sappa Valley Construction, said on a phone call there's a 600-amp service coming into the building, so each section can be metered separately on the outside with three city meters or it can be broken up on the inside. It's easy to break that up on the inside of the building, said Mr. Brown. Then there could be one meter for the senior center and one for the other two.

It would be good to have the (See METERS on Page 8A)

came back clean, he added, so work can start again on Tuesday after two weeks of no demolition work.

There won't be any fines for not having the paperwork done before the work started, said Mr. Stallman, although the county will have to pay some costs for the certification, including the investigator. He said he isn't sure what those will be yet.

Mr. Brown said he didn't know that an asbestos certification was (See COUNTY on Page 8A)

Fire burns grassy lot in Traer

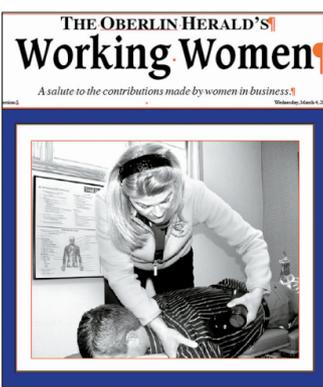
FROM A BRUSH TRUCK, volunteers (above) with the Decatur County Fire Department, knocked down a blaze that started just before 4 p.m. Monday outside the old school in Traer. Other firemen worked with hoses (right) from the ground. The flames ate through grass outside the school and a pile of logs near the stone building. Firemen returned to the station a little over an hour later.

— Herald staff photos by Dave Bergling



Section honors women

The Oberlin Herald's annual Working Women section is inside today's newspaper. The section includes features about about women who work in businesses, government offices and other areas in Decatur County.



Conversation set to help community direct future plans

Mark your calendars for the Decatur Tomorrow Steering Committee's fourth community conversation on Monday, March 23.

Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, said the session will start at 5:30 p.m. in the Decatur Community High School cafeteria. The Spanish Club will serve dinner as a fund raiser, with the money raised going to help the group with their trip to Mexico.

At 6 p.m. the conversation will start, said Mr. Anderson, with Mike Hamilton, a banker from Goodland, as the facilitator. Terry Woodbury, who has been the facilitator in the past, already has a commitment that evening.

The group's "action teams" include committees on Sappa Park, Multi-Generational, Economic Development, Existing Facilities and Leadership. All will report on accomplishments.

The idea is to look at needs for the community again, said Mr. Anderson.

People will determine if the group should form new action teams, if existing groups need to be rejuvenated or if there are any new volunteers.

He said they plan on the meeting being done by 8 p.m. Decatur Tomorrow, formed in

January 2006, has held three conversations. People of all ages are invited to the meeting to say what's important to them about the town.

For the first time, said Mr. Anderson, Decatur Tomorrow is going to include a silent auction in the conversation.

The idea is to raise money to pay for youth items for the new bowling alley and theater. A lot of teens helped do salvage work on that building, he said.

The money is basically to say thanks. It will go for arcade games or game systems for the kids to play at the building.

Anyone who wants to make a donation for the auction call Mr. Anderson at 475-2340 or Kimberly Davis, editor of *The Oberlin Herald*, at 485-2206 or 475-3510.

Mr. Anderson said they are asking for items with a value of \$50 or more.

They will display the items at businesses with a bid sheet from Wednesday, March 18, until the day of the conversation. People will use the last four digits of their phone numbers to make a bid. The auction will end at the meeting.

Mr. Anderson added that if someone decides to donate a big item, they will have a live auction to sell it.

Spring forward for Daylight Time

The evenings will seem a little longer starting Sunday, and the sun will seem to hang in the sky later, as Daylight Saving Time begins.

Clocks will spring forward an hour at 2 a.m. Sunday. It's the first time this will happen the second

weekend in March under a new federal law. Remember to set your clocks forward before going to bed Saturday night — or you might miss church. The time change means people will have more time to enjoy after work or school.

Representative, senator to be in town Saturday

If you want to ask your state legislators a question, come to the Decatur County courthouse in Oberlin on Saturday. You can ask in person.

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, a Grinnell Republican, and Rep. John Faber,

a Brewster Republican, will talk with constituents in the court room of the Decatur County Courthouse from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Decatur County Farm Bureau will sponsor the event and provide hot pizza for lunch.

Big cat could be rare breed

By ANDY HEINTZ
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There are few Barbary lions left in the world, but Jeffrey Harsh claims one has been living in Thomas County for some time.

Harsh, the owner of the Free Breakfast Inn north of Oakley, owns three lions and two tigers that live in a cage near the motel.

Harsh said Samson, the male lion, is part of the tiny Barbary lion population still living today. His two females, Lady and Angel, are half Barbary and half Cape lion, he said.

Lady became a household name in Thomas County after she attacked Bradley Buchanan, who reportedly was drunk and put his hand inside her cage.

Harsh said he is working with the county to find new homes for his animals, which he has had for many years.

On his web site at theamericantailor.org, Harsh has stories about protecting and working with prairie dogs and big cats and on alternative medicine. He also has information on Barbary lions, which are reportedly extinct in the wild, the last known one having been shot in the Atlas Mountains in northwest Africa in 1922, according to both Harsh and the National Geographic Society.

May about the animals, which were being held in what she called "a (See LIONS on Page 8A)

*Lions need new home, group says

(Continued from Page 1A)
junk yard."

The group, she said, contacted former Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn, who began working with the group, the county and Mr. Harsh to find new homes.

"Officials have bent over backwards to get this situation resolved," she said. "They've just been wonderful."

However, she charged that Mr. Harsh has impeded the process.

The Detroit Zoo has long been interested in taking the three lions — one male and two females.

The zoo has offered to pay all the expenses for getting the lions tested for disease, transporting them and their future care, she said. It had been reported earlier that the

animal-rights group was planning to pay for blood tests on the lions.

While the group isn't going to pay for the lions' tests, Ms. Wathne said, it would pay for testing the tigers, which don't have anyone to take them right now.

It's a sad fact, Ms. Wathne said. All accredited captive tiger facilities are full. In fact, she said the United States has an overabundance of captive tigers and the two in Oakley may be killed if no new home can be found for them.

"PETA has put out an appeal to the accredited zoo community," she said. "We can only hope for the best outcome."

Ms. Wathne also said that she doesn't think that any of the animals owned by Mr. Harsh are Barbary

*Meters would help keep track of use

(Continued from Page 1A)
senior center metered separately, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy.

Commissioner Ralph Unger asked who pays the bill on the construction electric drop.

Normally there is a provision in the agreement if the contractor is supposed to pay for it, said Mr. Brown, but that wasn't done. Otherwise, the owner pays for it, he said, and the county owns that land for now.

The consensus was to keep the power and gas for the senior center separate from the other parts of the building.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine said he wanted to know more about a cornerstone ceremony planned by the Masonic Lodge. He said he has had people ask him why the county doesn't just do a ceremony. Why the Masons?

Jerry Lohofener, a member of the lodge, offered a cornerstone ceremony at a recent commission meeting, but no decision was made.

Sheriff Ken Badsky, who also is a Mason, said it is just a traditional ceremony. It's the way things used to be done, he said.

The cornerstone on the courthouse, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch, who also is a Mason, was put in by the lodge.

County roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Asked the sheriff to get bids to fix a 2004 Dodge Durango before making a decision to keep it or replace it. Story on Page 3A.

- Came to a consensus that they want to keep the electric meter and other utilities for the new senior center separate from those for the new bowling alley and movie theater. Story on Page 1A.

- Agreed to a \$100-a-month pay raise for the interim emergency preparedness director to stay on indefinitely. Story on Page 3A.

- Signed an operational agreement moving the combination of the Decatur and Norton County extension operators into a district another step forward. Story at right.

The plaque won't list the Masons, said Mr. Badsky; it's just a dedication of the building.

It was suggested that the commissioners get a little more information, but nothing was decided.

*County gets OK to demo building

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needed for the county to tear down its own building.

Mr. Stallman said the tests showed that everything hauled south of town to be buried or to the landfill is OK, too. Work can start two weeks after the inspection, officials said.

In a week of work, contractors

Dave Bose and Mick Barth were able to tear out all of the Golden Age building, minus some of the concrete foundation. A hole was started in the back wall of the theater and the doors have been removed.

A message was left with the Department of Health and Environment, but no one returned the call.

Bindery didn't make commerce wonders

A Selden business didn't make the list of the top 8 Wonders of Kansas Commerce, as determined by public vote and announced last week by the Kansas Sampler Foundation.

In alphabetical order, the top eight are Big Brutus, West Mineral; Brant's Meat Market, Lucas; the Frontenac Bakery; Hemslojd Inc., Lindsborg; MarCon Pies, Washington; Moon Marble Co., Bonner Springs; Stafford County Flour Mills, Hudson; and the Vonada Stone Company, Sylvan Grove.

Koerperich Bookbinders of Selden was among the other 16 finalists.

More than 9,800 people casting votes represented every state in the union and many foreign countries, the foundation said. Votes came from schools, nursing homes and worldwide customers. The total of 9,805 was an increase from the previous contests for architecture (8,036) and art (9,149).

One e-mail address could only be used three times to vote, and each person was allowed one paper ballot vote. Of the 9,805 total votes, 1,395 were by paper ballot.

The 8 Wonders of Kansas contests are a project of the foundation, designed to help educate the world about Kansas and encourage travel. Being publicly accessible is one of the criteria. The contest mission was not to find the most lucrative businesses in the state but to showcase Kansas-owned business that set the "gold standard" in their field.

The 24 finalists ranged from manufacturers with a world-wide customer base to small retail stores. One finalist, the power shovel Big Brutus, represented historical commerce.

"What can we learn from the outcome?" asked foundation director Marci Penner. "Maybe that locally-owned shops have quite a loyal following. It had to be difficult to choose between large manufacturers and small niche shops, but in the end, the public showed great affection for small retail shops."

The next contest will showcase Kansas Cuisine, she said. Public nominations will be accepted this month. See criteria at the website www.8wonders.org.

Dustthou art



ONASH WEDNESDAY, Ardythe Cederberg knelt in front of Pastor Charlotte Strecker-Baseler before receiving ashes in the shape of a cross on her forehead at Faith Lutheran Church. Many churches observe the day as the start of the season of Lent, when members prepare for Easter.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Honor Roll board question solved?

Many have asked about what happened to the Decatur County Honor Roll board, which was on the lawn of the courthouse during World War II.

Charles Lincoln, who was work-

ing across the street at Oberlin Motor Co. after the war, said that he believes it was among items which were ruined when water filled the courthouse basement in a flood in the early 1960s. He recalled that

many things were hauled out after the flood.

The Honor Roll board listed veterans of World War I and II, including those who lost their lives in the war.

Extension merger is closer

The Decatur County commissioners signed an operational agreement, which moves the combination of the Decatur and Norton County extension services into a single district another step forward.

At a meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 17, Extension Agent Byron Hale brought the agreement in to be signed. The commissioners decided to wait a week to give County Attorney Steve Hirsch — and the three commissioners — a chance to read it.

Mr. Hirsch said he didn't see any legal problems with the agreement. Commissioner Stan McEvoy said the Norton County commissioners have already signed.

Is there an exit strategy if the joint districting doesn't work? asked Commissioner Gene Gallentine. After looking at the state law, Mr. Hirsch said, the only way out is for two of the three involved parties, including the governing body of the extension district, commissioners and the Kansas State University, to approve the withdraw.

It's pretty unlikely that will happen, he added.

The operational agreement, he said, can't go into effect until it is approved by the state attorney general.

Register so you can vote

Anyone who wants to vote in the April city and school elections needs to make sure they are registered.

The last day to register is Monday, March 23, just 2 1/2 weeks away, said Decatur County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler. Voters can register in the county clerk's office on the second floor of the county courthouse.

If you haven't registered, or have moved or changed your name, Mrs. Geihlsler said, you need to update your voting information before the election Tuesday, April 7.

On the last day of registration, the clerk's office will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Pelton Clockwork
oh/adv
4x10
full color
ad in Goodland