

Mental health agency hit hard with state cuts

Representatives of High Plains Mental Health talked with the Decatur County commissioners about service over the past year and requested the same amount of money in the budget for 2010.

The county has budgeted to give the agency \$29,000 this year, but that amount depends on whether taxes are paid.

Karen Schuler and Dan Sturgill with the agency talked with the commissioners.

Linda Manning, county ambulance director, who serves on the agency's board, was also at the meeting. Sheriff's Deputy Jay Tate, who is also on the board, was absent.

The agency was hit hard by cuts from the state, said Ms. Schuler, and more could be coming. It looks like the federal stimulus program could actually hurt the agency.

The problem, said Mr. Sturgill, is that in this area, fewer people here qualify for Medicaid compared to an urban area like Topeka. There are some who don't qualify, he said, but some who do who are too proud to get on the service.

After the cuts last year, said Ms. Schuler, the agency had to eliminate five jobs. The agency is under a hiring freeze, she said.

Although there has been talk about having to shut down a branch office, she said, there isn't any plan to do that.

She said they aren't asking for any additional money over this year from the counties, but for counties to maintain what has been given.

County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Decided to give a concrete bill for the new senior center, theater and bowling alley to the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. to pay. Story below.
- Received a request from High Plains Mental Health for the same amount of money the organization received last year from the county. Story on at left.
- Talked with the emergency management director about a grant, but didn't make any decisions, as they want to wait to talk with the chairman. Story to come.

Mr. Sturgill said he worked with 44 clients in the county over six months last year. Eleven of those he saw just once, but one family was seen 19 times.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he hopes the county can maintain the level it has been giving, but that all depends on tax collections.

Mr. Sturgill said he's glad he's able to come here and work with clients. He added that the women at the county health department, where he sees clients, always do a good job.

Heating things up



JUST NORTH of the U.S. 36-U.S. 83 intersection, workers with Venture Corp., under a contract with the Kansas Department of Transportation, was putting an overlay on the east side of U.S. 83. — Herald staff photo by Kim Davis

Don't miss Webkinz birthday party

It's just about party time.

That's birthday party time for Webkinz stuffed animals at the LandMark Inn. Owner Gary Anderson said he decided to hold a birthday celebration for kids with their stuffed animals. The little creatures come in every size, shape, color and animal, and they come with a game code allowing kids of all ages to enter the animal's world online, playing games, earning play money and taking care of them.

The party will go from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 2, at the LandMark. Along with the party, sponsored by the LandMark Inn, Carolyn Burtis, owner of RJ Metcalf Real Estate and *The Oberlin Herald*, there will be a coloring contest.

Kids up to age 8 will have the chance to color a "Ms. Birdy" picture, while kids from 8 to 14 can color a "Chef Gazpacho" picture.

The coloring sheets will be inside next week's *Oberlin Herald* or can

be picked up at any of the sponsoring businesses on Monday.

There will be prizes given in both age groups, with first prize a \$25 gift certificate for a Webkinz, second a free retired animal and third a Li'l Webkinz.

Everyone who enters the coloring contest will get a free pack of trading cards.

All of the coloring sheets need to be at the LandMark by 2 p.m. that Saturday. Winners will be an-

nounced at 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Anderson said he will be serving birthday cake for all the kids. He will also hold a jelly bean contest, where kids can guess how many pieces of the candy are in a jar, and another game where each child gets to spin a wheel to win a prize.

For questions, call Mr. Anderson at 475-2340.

Commissioners pass concrete bill to economic development

The Decatur County commissioners talked about a concrete bill for the new senior center, theater and bowling alley on Main Street on Tuesday, but decided they needed to give it to the economic development corporation to pay.

The county received the bill for \$26,808 from Nelson Concrete and Construction, but decided the development group should pay it.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said the county paid the initial \$20,000 on the contract to lock in the price and will pay \$46,808 at the end of the project. He added that after the county pays for the building, he thinks the money will be pretty much gone.

Since the county paid the down payment on the concrete, asked Commissioner Gene Gallentine, why isn't the county responsible for the rest of it?

With it being a joint project, said Mr. Unger, it's understood the county won't pay for all of it. There probably needs to be a master list with the expenses and what's been paid and by which organization kept in the commissioners' room, he said.

Although the county has paid for a portion of the new building to hold the price, it still owes \$287,000 to pay off the balance of the building through Wick.

At best, he said, after the building is paid, there will be \$6,000 left.

The concrete bill will be passed to Greg

Lohofener, with the development group, commissioners decided.

Mr. Unger said he and Kevin Brown, with Sappa Valley Construction, plan to take a look through the buildings at the fairground to see what materials stored there can and can't be used in the new structure. Steve and Marilyn Horn offered a place to store some items free of charge, he said, so things could be moved there. Fair and carnival officials would like to get the materials moved.

The commissioners agreed to pay Mick Barth with Barth Dirt Construction \$2,025 for his work in demolition of the old senior center and theater.

The commissioners talked with Peggy Pratt, director of Northwest Kansas Juve-

nile Services, about the services the agency provides. Mrs. Pratt said the agency is again asking for \$1,000 from the county for next year.

The number of juveniles the agency has worked with were up this year, said Mrs. Pratt. Some of that is a change in county attorneys in some counties. When working with the teens, she said, they tell them that it's not OK to break the law and try to keep them from becoming repeat offenders.

Mr. Unger said he was wondering if Decatur County is any worse for teen drinking than others in the state. No, said Mrs. Pratt. If someone with law enforcement catches a kid drinking, they are supposed to call the parents and juvenile intake, she said. Teens

can be put on diversion more than once, but that's up to the county attorney. Parents can hire a lawyer if they want to, she said.

The county has had 23 teens since the beginning of the year working with the agency in some way, she said.

The money requested, she said, will be used for the diversion program and first-time offender program.

Those teens have a monitored curfew, have to do 20 hours of community service, write a letter of apology, be passing in school, have random alcohol and drug testing, pay for all costs associated with the case and follow other rules.

The commissioners said they would look at the request at budget time.

Increase in local sales tax discussed at meeting

The city administrator asked the Oberlin City Council about the idea of increasing the local sales tax half a cent to pay for economic development, but the council made no decision.

Administrator Austin Gilley brought the issue up at the meeting Thursday, March 26, and also at the meeting on Thursday, March 19.

The administrator noted that the city has received a request for \$6,000 a year in free utilities for the Golden Age Center. Mr. Gilley said this is an economic development project, and a sales tax increase could help pay for it.

An increase in the sales tax would also provide a way to better measure what's spent on economic development, he said. Basically the

city would give the money to the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. and the board would manage it, he said. A request like this for the new Golden Age Center, bowling alley and theater would go through that board.

Councilman Rob McFee asked if it wouldn't be better to let the county put half a cent on their sales tax. He noted that the economic development money is spent all over the county.

If the city was going to do this, Mr. McFee added, it should have been done before the election so it could

have been on the ballot.

In the past, the city hasn't given anything on the senior center's utility bill, said Mr. Gilley, but it has done \$100 a month for the theater. The council approved continuing to allow \$100 a month for the theater.

The Golden Age Center, said Mr. McFee, gets federal money. It will also be metered separately from the theater and bowling alley.

At the last meeting in March, the council approved giving \$7,500 in transformers for the senior/recreation center project.

City Foreman Dan Castle said

the project includes a 600-amp and 400-amp service, which costs more. With the transformers, he said, it will cost around \$10,000. Mr. Castle didn't say what it normally costs for a new service. Businesses normally put down a \$190 deposit.

Although the city plans to donate the transformers, it doesn't plan to pay for the hook-up fee and service line, which will cost around \$2,500.

Subscription prices going up

With the rising costs of everything from paper to gasoline, *The Oberlin Herald* also will cost a little more next week.

As of May 1, the subscription price for *The Oberlin Herald* will be \$38 a year in Decatur, Rawlins, Norton, Thomas and Sheridan counties in Kansas and Red Willow County in Nebraska; \$42 elsewhere in Kansas; and \$48 out

of state. A student (nine-month) subscription will be \$33 in state and \$36 out of state.

The price of single papers will increase to \$1 per paper starting next week.

The last time there was an increase for a single copy of the paper was 14 years ago, in 1995, when the price went from 50 cents to 75 cents.

Fashion show set for Friday

It's just about time to pack up those jeans and sweaters until next year and pull out the spring and summer clothes.

The Dresser is ready to help people determine which of those warm-weather clothes are still in style and show off some new ones at a fashion show Friday.

The show starts at 6 p.m. at The Gateway, with wine and hors d'oeuvres served.

Tickets are \$6 each. The store will be open after the show.

Enjoy evening of jazzy music

Bring a lawn chair and prepare for a swinging night of jazz music as members of the Bethany College Dixieland Band and the Red Devils Jazz Band will perform at 6 p.m. Friday in the Oberlin City Park.

Burgers and hot dogs will be available in the park as a money-making project for the band.

Band teacher Sarah Bricker said if the weather is bad, the entertainment will be moved into the high school auditorium.

student of the week



Name: Adam Zillinger
Parents: Anthony and Jenifer Zillinger
Grade: 7
Age: 13

We've nominated this student because: Adam treats his peers with respect and always has a good work ethic.

Student Comment: Great. Thank you.

Activities involved in at school: Football, wrestling, track and basketball.

My choice of movies, books, and games: Action.

After I leave Decatur Community High School I intend to ...: serve in the military.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be ...: Wherever life takes me.

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Rawlins County Health Center
RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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Bringing Specialized Healthcare To Your Community

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Mammograms Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	2	3 MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	4
5	6 Cardiac Rehab	7	8 Dr. Charles E. Frankum Surgery Brandi Ihrig Dietician Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	9 Dr. James E. Reeves Podiatry	10 Dr. James E. Reeves Podiatry MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	11
12	13 Cardiac Rehab	14	15 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	16 Dr. Saba Orthopedics	17 MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	18
19	20 Bone Density Cardiac Rehab	21	22 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	23	24 MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	25
26	27 Dr. Martin J. Rubinowitz Oncology Cardiac Rehab	28 Dr. Frederick C. Miller Cardiology	29 Dr. Jeffery L. Curtis Cardiology Diabetic Clinic Cardiac Rehab	30		



TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A VISITING PHYSICIAN, PLEASE CALL (785) 626-3211 Cheryl Banister, RN Specialty Clinic Director