

State finds restrooms at park bad

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Oberlin city administrator is looking for options for restrooms at Sappa Park after finding out the old ones seem to have no bottoms.

Whether the city rents portable johns or builds new facilities, though, it could get expensive.

With the outhouses at the park, Administrator Austin Gilley told the City Council on Thursday, people essentially are defecating in the drinking water.

He said an inspector from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment had checked the restrooms at Sappa Park and at the golf course, and discovered they were just outhouses.

Mr. Gilley said he's checked into renting portable restrooms, with the cost at \$140 a month or \$25 a day. That's \$1,680 a year.

The administrator said he wasn't sure if he has the authority to make a decision. There are some questions to be answered, he said, including whether the city is obligated to provide restrooms and whether there needs to be some kind of fee to the users.

Mayor Joe Stanley asked what the city needs to do.

If the restrooms are closed, said Mr. Gilley, the city could build new ones with holding tanks.

Once the state is involved, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, then the restrooms will have to be done the way the state wants them.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer noted that the hospital has a community walk scheduled for Thursday, May 14.

Mayor Stanley said the city needs to find out what's the least they can do.

There may be some clean-up with the olds ones, said Foreman Dan Castle.

The portable unit at the golf course, said Councilman Bill Riedel, is serviced once a week. It's kept clean, he said, adding that he could probably find out how much the golf club pays.

Council Roundup

At a meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Made plans to hold a special meeting at the beginning of May to discuss whether to allow people to drive golf carts on city streets. Story on Page 3.

- Talked with the city administrator about options for restrooms at Sappa Park after finding out the old ones seem to have no bottoms. Story below.

- Gave the OK for the Decatur County Hospital Board to put a sign pointing to the hospital and welcoming people to Oberlin in the park on the west side of U.S. 83. Story on Page 2.

- Decided to give the Decatur Tomorrow Steering Committee \$250 a year for three years, although the whole amount, \$750, will come out of this year's budget. Story to come.

- Talked about the city's informal airport committee becoming a Decatur Tomorrow action team, which the mayor said would be OK. Story on Page 2.

- Heard that the city received 258 surveys, or 27 percent, back in the mail from utility users. Story at left.

- Talked about bids for heating, ventilating and air conditioning units for The Gateway, but asked the administrator to get more information. Story to come.

In other business, the council:

- Named Rob McFee to serve as the council president in a 3-2 vote, with Mr. McFee and Ms. May voting against it.

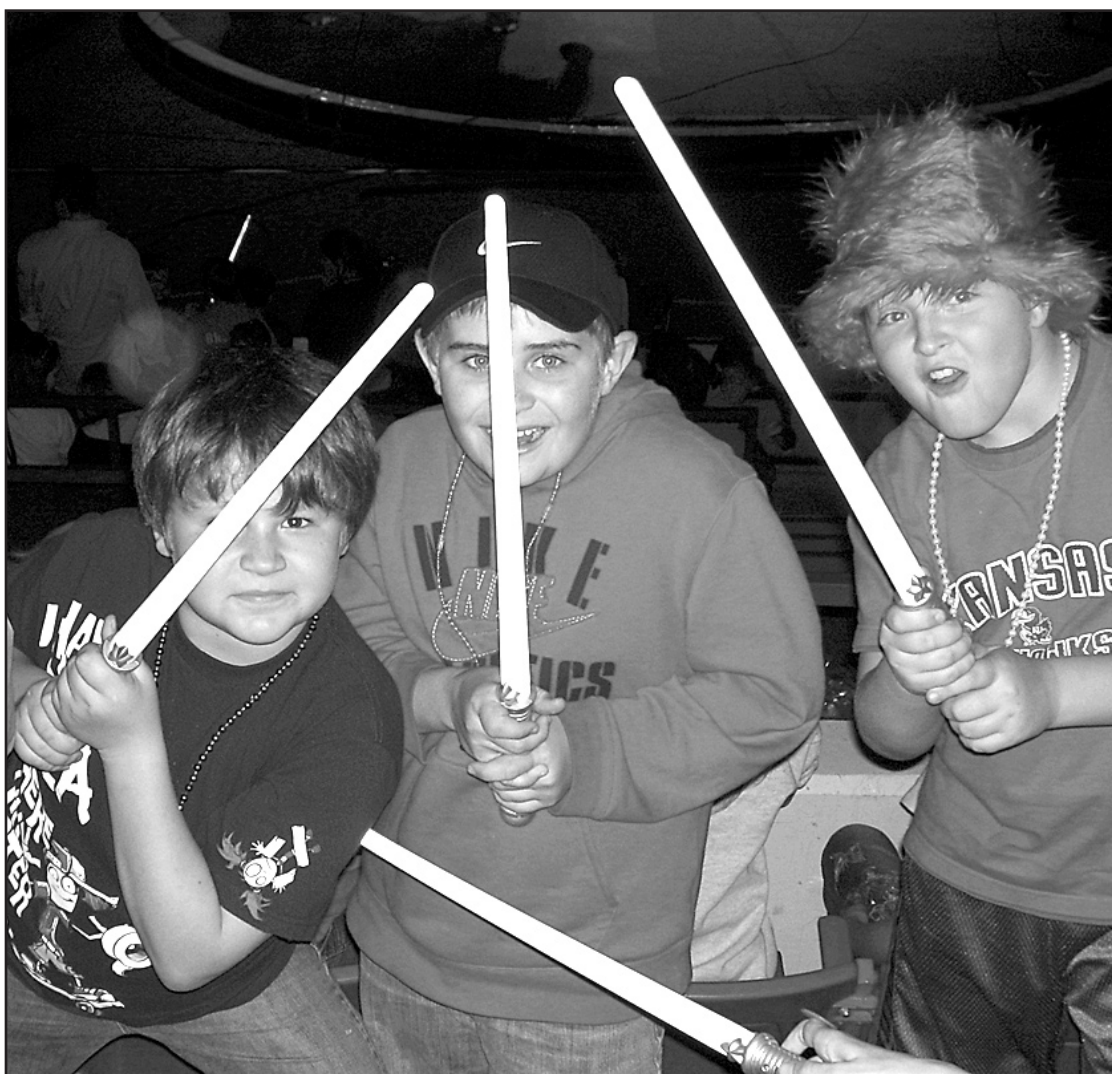
- Heard that The Gateway received a glowing report from a state inspector by Department of Agriculture. Mr. Gilley said the inspector was amazed at how much cleaner and better organized it was.



Students have fun at circus

AT LUNCH on Friday, Emma Green, Alissiya Rhees and Shylo Shields (above) played with red clown noses. Konnor Witt, Kelly Brown and Andrew Wade (right) swung "light sabers" during the Shrine Circus in Salina on Friday. For the past three years, the local Shrine Club has taken the fifth grade class to the circus. The organization pays for the bus and driver, tickets for the kids and sponsors, \$10 for each child to spend, two meals and snacks.

— Photos by Marcia Lohoefer



New Christian station takes over here

Flipping through the options on the FM radio dial, listeners in Decatur County may have found a new station.

On Thursday, April 9, "Positive and Encouraging K-Love" started broadcasting on 91.3 FM. The frequency previously was operated by American Family Radio, which had changed its format from some music and talk to a completely talk station recently.

In 2000, said Bill Duncan, pas-

tor of the Oberlin Church of Christ and head of a local committee for the radio station, American Family Radio filed a construction permit for an FM station in Oberlin. That permit was never exercised, he said, and recently was sold to K-Love, which is out of California.

The station plays gospel music, contemporary Christian music and "praise and worship" tunes. The California station, said Mr. Duncan, purchased the antenna, transmitter,

satellite receiver, satellite dish and the cable to operate the station. The equipment is on the tower south of town, which is owned by the Church of Christ.

K-Love, said Mr. Duncan, is 95 percent music, although there are some devotional talk items. The station doesn't have any staff here, he said, and doesn't carry local public service announcements or news.

It is, however, tied into the emergency alert system, so on Monday

mornings when the tornado sirens are tested, the station will run the emergency system. If the weather is bad and alerts are put out, the station will pick up the National Weather Service emergency feed.

The station is a full-powered, not just a translator, as American Family Radio was, Mr. Duncan said.

With the change, he added, there should be a Christian radio station in Oberlin for the foreseeable future.

Radio tower and shed need a new home

The tower which holds the equipment needed to have a Christian radio station in Decatur County may have to be moved to another location.

Bill Duncan, pastor of the Church of Christ and head of a local committee that raised money to build the tower, said the tower and radio building next to it are owned by the Church of Christ. The tower is about 50 yards straight east of the lighted cross south of town.

He said the landowners, whom Mr. Duncan didn't name, contacted him almost a year ago about moving the tower. The lease for the ground has been year to year, he said.

For the past year, he said, he has worked with the committee to find a place to move the tower. Those on the committee are Mr. Duncan and his wife Carol, Gary Anderson, Larry Smith, Dr. Mark Olson, Steve and Marilyn Horn, Steve and Anita Hirsch, Sam Mack, Jim and

Carolyn Plotts and Ken and Christie Morris.

When the tower moves, Mr. Duncan said, the little building next to it will go, as will the equipment to operate the new radio station, K-Love.

Mr. Duncan said they have made contact with a landowner for a new home for the tower and are in negotiations.

The station is still operating via satellite signal on the tower south of town, he said.

Chamber director quits

The Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce Board is looking for a manager/director after Tina Watson, who had held the job since November, quit last week.

Deanna Castle, a Chamber board member, said Ms. Watson didn't give any notice, but turned her keys in on Thursday after working her last day on Wednesday.

The board had just had its regular monthly meeting and hasn't met since Ms. Watson quit, she said.

Mrs. Castle said the board is running ads for the job. The manager/director would be responsible for the office from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and would plan and help with Chamber activities.

This is a great part-time job, said Mrs. Castle. The board wants someone who cares for the community, has good organizational skills and basic computer skills in Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word. The person also needs to be a good communicator, she said.

The manager/director will attend meetings in the area and help organize chamber events.

Until someone is hired, she added, the Chamber Ambassadors, a group of mostly retired women who have volunteered to help the Chamber, will fill in.

When none of them is able to fill in, she said, board members will work the office.

City survey shows most are satisfied

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The City of Oberlin received 258 surveys back in the mail, or 27 percent of those sent out to find out how utility users perceive the city, its employees and the city government.

At the City Council meeting Thursday, Administrator Austin Gilley went over the results and what he thinks they mean.

Of the surveys returned, he said, 62 percent were filled out by people who live in Oberlin and are age 20 or older.

Numbers that Mr. Gilley presented included:

- 87 percent said that they agreed or strongly agreed that Oberlin is a great place to live, while 13 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

- 57 percent agreed that in the next few years, Oberlin will be an even better place to live, while 43 percent disagreed.

- 59 percent agreed that overall, Oberlin city government is effective, 41 percent disagreed.

- 84 percent agreed that city employees are courteous and professional, 16 percent disagreed.

- 77 percent agreed that city employees are knowledgeable and well-trained while 23 percent disagreed.

- 67 percent agreed that they

are satisfied with the quality of city services, while 33 percent disagreed.

- 20 percent said they would serve on a city board or committee while 80 percent said no.

The numbers showed that priority items out of the given choices were improving water quality, with improving streets second and motel/hotel development third. The list included airport expansion, cleaning up blighted property or improving the cable system, The Gateway, city streets, the cemetery and water quality, lowering taxes or utility bills, putting more information online, senior programs, youth programs, motel/hotel development and Sappa Park renovation.

Mr. Gilley said he hadn't thought the top choice would be water quality. He added that he thought the airport expansion project, which came in No. 13, and the motel/hotel development, No. 7, would rank higher.

Maybe people mean really improving the water, said Councilwoman Rhonda May. Maybe the city needs to find out what the people really want.

Of course there are limitations on the survey, said Mr. Gilley. Just because the airport project didn't

(See SURVEY on Page 5)

High Plains Artfest open this weekend

Walls in the arena at The Gateway have been decorated with art from area professionals and students for the High Plains Artfest on Saturday and Sunday.

Sponsors of the show will have a chance to see the pieces at an opening gala on Friday night for a \$100 donation.

Others can view the art from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday or from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday for free.

The show boasts at least 140 artists with numerous pieces of work, said organizer Connie Grafel. This is the fifth year for the event.

