

Restrooms maybe out at park

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.

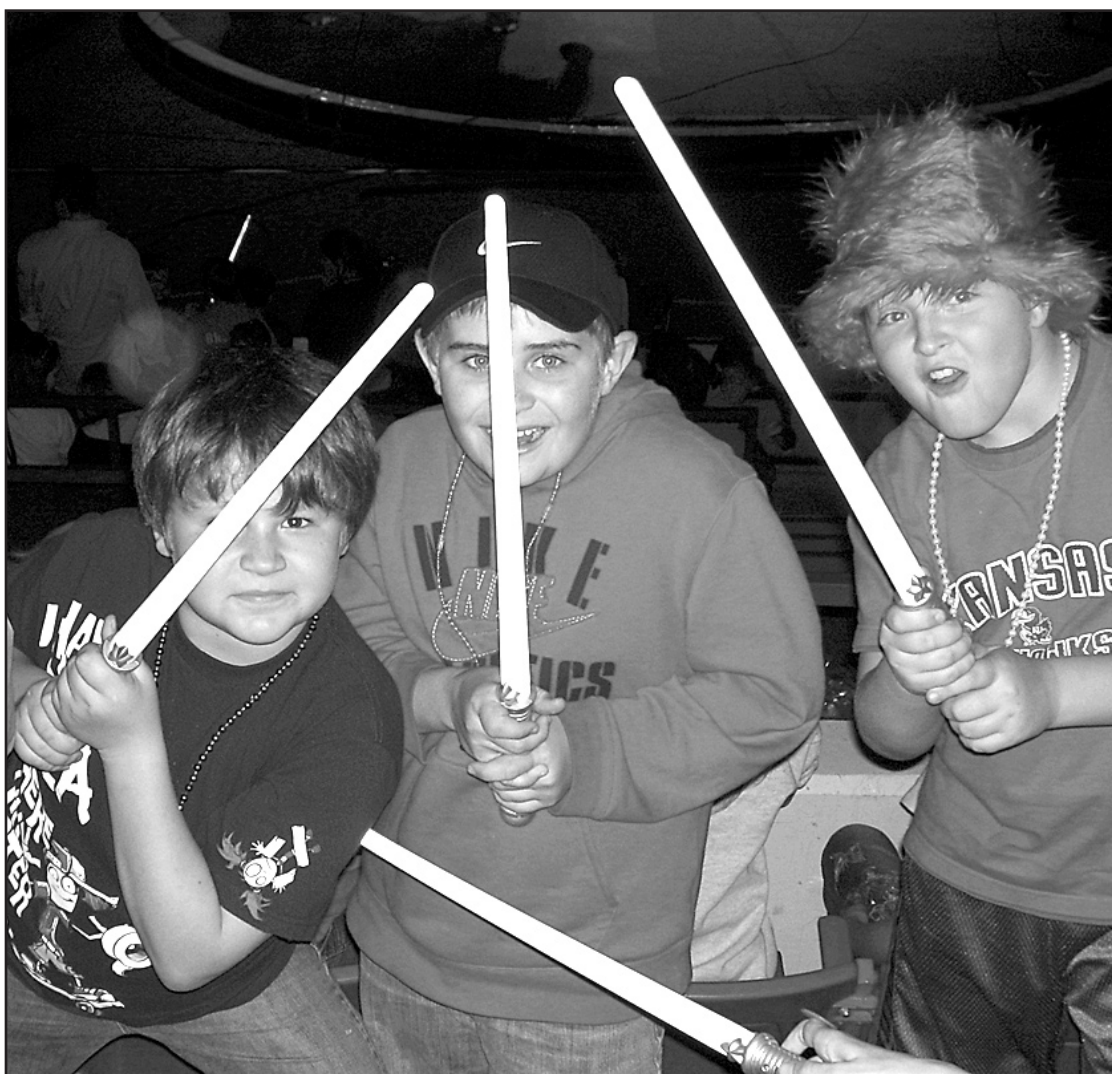
- Heard that The Gateway received a glowing report from a state inspector by Department of Agriculture. Mr. Gilley said the inspector was amazed at how much cleaner and better organized it was.



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, the Oberlin city government is effective while 41 percent disagreed.

- 84 percent agreed that city employees are courteous and professional while 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 people's 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.

Playing in the wind



ON THE PLAYGROUND last Wednesday at Oberlin Elementary School, Dayton Kempt held a kite in his hands before taking his turn flying it. All of the students at the grade school had a chance to fly a kite during the “extended

learning family” day. The “families,” or groups of kids from different grades, do an activity once a month together. This month it was kite flying.

— Photo by Carol Dixon

County debates how to do contracts

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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 The Decatur County commissioners talked with the contractor and a representative from the Economic Development group last Tuesday about future contracts for work to be done on the new senior/recreation center downtown.

Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., asked if the commissioners are going to sign a contract for a fire sprinkler system. He said he could then bring \$20,000, which would pay for a third of the system for the Golden Age Center portion of the project, to the county and run the money through its books.

When the county signs a contract, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, the money probably needs to be on hand.

Mr. Lohofener asked if it would be OK if the contract says \$20,000 down and the rest at completion, and the corporation gets the money to county.

Mr. Unger said the way he understands it, the cash basis law says that

County Countdown

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:
 • Talked with the contractor and a representative from the economic development group about how to pay for work to be done on the new senior/recreation center downtown.

Story at left.
 • Talked with the former promoter of the Decatur County Speedway about a settlement check he sent the Fair Board which wasn't any good. Story on Page 2A.

the county needs to have the whole amount on hand before anything is signed.

Another question was whether all of the sprinkler system or other items the county might sign for would be tax exempt.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch suggested that Mr. Lohofener call the state Department of Revenue, explain what's going on and see if there is any kind of exemption for new construction. Mr. Lohofener said the corporation tried to apply for tax exemption from the state, but didn't get it.

The county can't sign a contract and have a tax exemption for a project that isn't the county's, said

Mr. Hirsch.
 So a third of the sprinkler system – the part in the new Golden Age Center – is tax exempt, said Mr. Unger, but the rest wouldn't be. Mr. Hirsch said that's the way he understands it, but suggested that Mr. Lohofener call the Department of Revenue.

The contract could have a clause in it that says that the county money covers the senior center area only, he said.

Kevin Brown said as far as he is concerned, when the building comes in, it will all be owned by the county until the project is split, so everything that's done will be a county project until then. If it isn't that way, he said, then two-thirds of the building needs to have sales tax on it.

Mr. Brown said they are probably looking at better than \$15,000 in sales tax in that case.

Mr. Lohofener showed the group how the money flow for the Golden Age Center is working, adding that all of that money has been raised one way or another.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine asked where the balance for the project is going to come from. That's a corporation issue, said Mr. Lohofener.

The group is going to have to raise some more money. He said they are looking into a state Community Development Block Grant. He said the group also has a list of people to contact who might be interested in donating.

The project can't deplete the senior center fund, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy. Mr. Lohofener said the money on the flow sheet was the carry forward.

The senior center is going through the county money allotted for it rather quickly, said Mr. McEvoy, so that money might not be available.

The consensus was that the county didn't have a problem with the bills coming to the county for the project as long as the money to pay it was there.

The group talked about having an auction, sealed bids or some kind of sale to get rid of the air conditioners from the old building that can't be used, as well as other items.

There was no decision made.

Meeting planned to discuss golf carts

The Oberlin City Council decided Thursday to hold a special meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, May 4, at The Gateway to discuss whether to allow golf carts on city streets.

The council will take public comments on the issue, members said.

The state Legislature, said Mayor Joe Stanley, has changed the law to allow people to drive golf carts on roads and highways. Cities apparently have the option to allow or ban the carts in town.

This isn't the first time the council has discussed the issue, the mayor said, but the change in state law requires the council to start the discussion all over.

Mayor Stanley said the council needs to first decide if the city is going to allow the carts. Then the council will need to come up with any rules needed to control the use

of the carts.
 If they do that right away, he said, the city could have the rules in place by the end of May, in plenty of time for the change in state law.

Effective July 1, the carts can be driven only from sun up to sundown, said Mayor Stanley. They need an orange, triangular slow-moving-vehicle sign on the rear, brake lights and turn signals, and drivers have to have a license.

Members asked whether the carts need child safety seats or are limited to four passengers, but no one knew the answers.

The state law doesn't change until July, Administrator Austin Gilley said, so the carts are still not allowed on city streets until then.

The special meeting will be open to the public.

5th Annual
**High Plains
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Hunter Nedland showing Rhianon Davies his art work.

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9-3 Saturday, 10-3 on Sunday

Features both adult and high school artists from NW Kansas, SW Nebraska and NE Colorado.
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This program is presented in part by the Kansas Arts Commission, a State agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency which believes that a great nation deserves great art, Oberlin Arts & Humanities Commission, Hansen Foundation.

*Survey results show people are satisfied

(Continued from Page 1A)
 rank high, he said, that doesn't mean the city should abandon the idea. Maybe there needs to be some more education on it. People might not understand the importance of the issue, he said.

The city government scores, said Mr. Gilley, are too low for him. Only 59 percent of the people say that city government is effective. In terms of a school report card, that would mean the city government would get a D or F.

The fact that lowering taxes wasn't higher on the priority list says people will continue to pay their taxes, he said.

There were a number of open-ended comments that are critical, said Mr. Gilley. He said he chose to include those in the reports, while he tried to take the names of employees out of the comments, but it's a small town.

Some of the comments include:
 • “The Gateway has broke the city. It needs to pay for itself or close. The airport is fine; expansion will only cost too much and break both city and county.”

• “A bigger airport and more hotels will draw more people to Oberlin than anything else on the list. I think that both are very important if we want to keep this town going. Put the city office phone number on the bills that you send out.”

• “Sappa Park renovation is very important because it's something

no other town has. Love the walking trails!”

• “We understand forced regulations and financial realities. We certainly have a great city staff and appreciate the dedication of Oberlin citizens in maintaining and increasing our city pride. Our thanks and gratitude to all those individuals so involved.”

• “Hear and see city employees wasting time, i.e. sitting at shop, sitting in vehicles doing nothing, maybe even taking naps at the fairgrounds. Need to utilize our tax dollars wisely as we are paying about all the taxes we can. Our water is important. Our police department is important. Safety in our buildings is important.”

• “We need wind turbs made.”

• “Didn't know there was a landfill at southwest end of Oberlin especially for wrecked cars in addition to the one northeast of town.”

The report included 11 pages of comments people wrote on the surveys. The document is an open record, Mr. Gilley said, and people can get a copy at the city office for a fee.

The survey, said Mr. Gilley, didn't leave him with clear consensus on what the city is supposed to do.

He ended his presentation by saying that the city needs to “get organized and play nice.” As valuations go down, the council's job and his job are going to get a lot tougher.

Acoustic music offered

Acoustic Eidolon, an innovative acoustic string duo comprising Joe Scott and Hannah Alkire, will appear at 3 p.m. Sunday at the Wallace County High School Auditorium in Sharon Springs.

With five albums to their credit, these artists continue to entertain audiences throughout the world with their acoustic sound, blending

Celtic, folk and classical genres. The duo plays the cello and a custom-built double-neck guitar called a guitjo to bring audiences layers of sound and energy.

Admission is by Western Plains Arts Association season ticket or at the door, \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

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**** Storm date: Monday, April 27th, 2009**

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<p>2000 Peterbilt - 379-XHD C-15 Cat. Engine, 18sp. Trans., 265" W.B. 1982 J.D. 4640 - PWR Shift, (3000hrs. OH) 3-Remotes, Koyker 645 Loader, Grapple Fork, Duals (URCTRP019004) 1981 J.D. 4640 - Quad Trans., New Tires (2500hrs), Complete OH (200hrs), Rear End (6235hrs), 3-Remotes, Duals, S#03153ORW 2004 J.D. 567 Baler, Mega Wide; IHC 3850 Pay Loader, Grapple Fork, (new tires) Brown 12' Speed Mover 2004 Hesston 1365 Discbine, Swivel Hitch, S#HM34110; NH 273 Square Baler, Wisconsin Engine, PTO; NH 1010 Bale Wagon Case 1030 Tractor, 3 pt. M-5 Tractor w/3pt. & 320 Dual Ldr- Grapple Fork Gehl 800 Silage Cutter w/Hyd. Sharpener Strongbuilt 8'x 23' Flatbed Gooseneck, Tandem Axles; 1985 GMC 2500 4x4, 4sp. Trans.; 1973 Ford 700 w/Allison Trans., Rebuilt Engine & Trans., w/14' BJM Mixer Box, Scales 1973 Ford F600 Truck w/15 1/2' B&H 1965 Ford F600 1960 IHC 2-Ton Truck w/Gehl 910 Feeder Box; Farmhand 880 Tub Grinder, PTO; Gehl Dump Box 1972 IHC 1-Ton Flatbed IHC 16'x 10" Drill</p>	<p>Sunflower 5'x 5' Sweep Plow w/Pickers Rundell 4 Shank Ripper M&M 670 Tractor, 3pt. 5 Star M&M Tractor w/F11 Loader; Case 930 Diesel Dual Hyd. Sitrex 12 Wheel Rake, Hyd. 1990 Hesston 4800 4x4 Square Baler (parts) Hesston 30A Stack Hand Flex-King 16' Disc Richardson Dump Box Powder River Squeeze Chute Powder River Crowding Alley WW Calf Cradle Groundhog 6-Yard Scraper Approx. 30 Salvage Vehicles Salvage Tractor Several Tons of Scrap Iron J.D. 7000 6-Row Planter, No Till UFT 500 Bu. Grain Cart Grain-O-Vator 125 Bu. Cart w/Blender Koenig Utility Box 1994 Cub Cadet, 1864 Hydro. 2003 J.D. L120 20hp Hydro, 150 hrs., (like new); J.D. 650 Hay Rake, 3pt. 6'x 16' Stock Trailer J.D. 105 Combine, Diesel Engine, 20' Platform Gleaner A Combine Gleaner C2 Combine 1995 F350 7.3 Diesel, 5sp. Trans., w/Besler 3100 Bale Bed 1972 GMC Truck, 351-V-6, 5sp.-2sp. Trans., 18' B&H</p>
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