

Hail clears out fields near Selden

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
k.davis@nwkansas.com

Quarter-size hail may have cleared out some wheat fields around Selden last week, but other fields are expected to produce a big harvest with hot weather predicted this week to speed the ripening process along.

Last Monday, a storm that formed north and west of Selden covered the ground in white hail stones. Jacquie Boultinghouse, emergency management director for Decatur and Sheridan counties, said much of the hail fell about three miles east of the junction of U.S. 83 and K-23, east of Selden in the "Y" between K-23 and K-383. Along both highways, she said, a two to three mile stretch got hail.

Some of the hail was quarter size, she said, adding that she isn't sure

Countdown to end with harvest

With temperature heating up and wheat fields starting to look a little less green, it's still anyone's guess when the first load will be delivered at participating Decatur County area elevators during the Oberlin merchants' annual Harvest Countdown contest.

This is the third and final week of the contest. Deadline to enter is 4 p.m. on Friday, or whenever the first load of wheat comes in. Boxes will be picked up and the judges will begin checking the entries.

The top three guessers will share \$100 in prizes. The person who guesses closest to the minute, hour and day the first load is taken to one of the participating elevators will win \$50 for first prize; the next closest guesses will win \$35 for second and \$15 for third.

All prizes will be in scrip money to be spent at sponsoring businesses. No change will be given. (See HARVEST on Page 5A)

in some of those fields what's left to cut. From Leoville on east, she added, the hail wasn't as big.

In Selden, mostly pea sized hail fell with a little bit of quarter size mixed in. Ms. Boultinghouse hasn't heard of any reports of damage in town.

Vickie Bailey, with Decatur County Title an Abstract, said she hasn't received any insurance claims yet on hail-damaged fields, but she has heard of some. Most were in the west and southwest parts of the county, near the Rawlins County line. The storm cell

formed there before moving toward Leoville.

At Fredrickson Insurance Agency, owner Tami Fredrickson said, the agency has received about 10 claims so far for either hail or multiperil insurance, a policy people can buy that covers most things

that cut crop yields, not just hail. Mrs. Fredrickson said the claims have been on fields around the Lund Covenant Church and near Selden on Tuesday, June 2.

Damage reported to her office so far amounts to about 900 acres, she said.

In Thomas County, a storm on Thursday, June 11, left 70,000 acres partly destroyed or totaled, said Ross Sloan, county executive director for the U.S. Farm Service Agency. He added that about one-third of those acres were a total loss while others received 10 to 20 percent damage.

Brian Olson, area agronomist with K-State Research and Extension, said he's heard lots of reports of hail damage, including a bunch in southwest Thomas County. It seems with the recent storms, he

said, there's been quite a bit of hail, though many fields that remain untouched.

The wheat is looking really good, said Mr. Olson. There was some late leaf rust, but with the temperatures up, he said, the heat should take care of the disease before harvest.

Overall, he added, the area should have a pretty good harvest, but we won't know for sure until the wheat is in the bins.

Mostly, he said, the harvest will depend on the yield numbers and how much is left laying on the ground because the weather.

That National Weather Service in Goodland is forecasting a 20 percent chance of a thunderstorm tonight, but other than that, the weather is expected just to be hot, between 94 and 98 degrees every day this week.

U.S. 36 group begins study of wider road

Members of the U.S. Highway 36 Association heard details of an economic-impact study being done by the Docking Institute at Fort Hays State University when they held their annual meeting in Atwood this month.

On Friday, June 12, directors and members from most of the 13 counties in Kansas along the highway held their annual meeting near Lake Atwood. The study marks the beginning of a push by the group to have the state consider widening the road to bring more traffic and business to the northern tier of Kansas counties.

Board member Bob Strevey said the group heard reports from the Kansas Department of Transportation about work on the highway that is coming up and what's been done in the last couple of years.

Most major projects along the road are finished, he said, including major rebuilding east of Norcat

into Norton, east of Atwood and either side of Mankato in Jewel County.

From Troy west to the Colorado line, the road has been brought up to modern standards and the surface mostly refinished, said Steve Haynes of Oberlin, president of the group.

The group has hired the Docking Institute to do a study of the costs and benefits of widening the highway four lanes across the state. Present to report on the study were Dr. Gary Brinker, director of the institute, and Dr. Preston Gilson of Lebanon, Mo., who did a similar study of U.S. 50 a few years ago.

"As the four-lane highway is completed across Missouri," said Mr. Strevey, "pressures are growing to extend the four lanes across Kansas. We were reminded that in the larger picture, with a rapidly growing population in Colorado,"

(See PLAN on Page 5A)

Cost of motel plan put in council's lap as groups pay part

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
k.davis@nwkansas.com

The Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau approved paying a third of the cost for a motel feasibility study if the city and the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. match the contribution.

At a meeting last Thursday, Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city and the development corporation, said the corporation has already agreed to pay its third.

The cost, said Ms. Grafel, will be \$2,500 with no more than \$275 on expenses for a total of \$2,775. Each group would then pay \$925.

Carolyn Burtis, owner of RJ Metcalf Real Estate, said the town needs to find out if a new motel would work here.

This proposal is from an Omaha consultant, said Ms. Grafel, but he knows rural areas. She said she has contacted another person to see if he or she would be interested in doing a study.

The bureau members talked briefly about the upcoming 125th anniversary of the city, which would be celebrated in 2010. The group talked about the possibility of inviting a drum and bugle corp here, and kicked around some other

(See CITY on Page 5A)

Man wants county to fix bridge and culvert

A Jennings Township resident talked with Decatur County commissioners about fixing a culvert and bridge near his home at their meeting Tuesday.

Dennis Ritter said one of the bridges, a wooden span, has a cracked stringer, although another stringer has been put in for support. He offered I-beams to be put in the middle of the bridge for support.

The bridge is over Prairie Dog Creek approximately 4 miles west of Jennings on Road H Lane.

The culvert, around the corner from the bridge 2000th Road, fills with silt because of his feed lot, Mr. Ritter said. Water can't move through the culvert and runs over

the road. He said he's been working with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment on moving the feed yard north and just received a permit.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said the I-beams would need to be welded together, as they are too short for the bridge.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine asked what the county's liability is if the bridge is subpar. It isn't subpar, said Mr. Stallman. It is a restricted bridge, rated as safe for three tons.

Stallman said the crew may need to put up a sign for low tonnage.

"If you drive over a three-ton

(See MAN on Page 5A)



AT THE GATEWAY Friday, Kay Brown (above) walked outside to get her balloon with husband Doyle behind her. Cancer survivors and a few others at the Relay for Life let purple and white balloons go as part of the opening

ceremonies. Carol Brown (below) walked with Gary Jensen, one of the survivors at the event.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Walkers raise money

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
k.davis@nwkansas.com

The audience fell silent as those dressed in purple shirts set out around a loop lined with small white paper bags.

Men and women of all ages walked with purpose, staying within the course, following three men carrying a large banner.

The audience watched, reflecting on what those walkers had gone through and what their own relatives had gone through or were going through.

At the eighth annual Decatur County Relay for Life, those purple shirts identified the men and women who had fought cancer and survived. The names of those registered were read as they entered the man-made track in the arena of The Gateway on Friday night.

They had fought a variety of cancers, each a different battle,



a different course of medicine and different memories of their situations. Each, though, was the same in that they had survived the disease and now were being celebrated for what they had

conquered.

After two laps, finished with a standing ovation from the audience, they were joined by their caregivers, including parents, children, grandparents, friends

and other relatives.

Finalizing the kickoff of the event was a balloon release in front of the building. Members from the five walking teams, (See CANCER on Page 5A)



IN CENTENNIAL PARK on Wednesday, Jolene Fortin had to sell during the first Farmers Market of the season. looked at the vegetables and baked goods Penny Fringer
— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Farmers Market planned for Wednesdays

Gardens across the area are starting to produce vegetables and fruits, giving some people an excess to sell at the Oberlin Farmers Market.

The Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce sponsors the market, starting at 8 a.m. Wednesday mornings at Centennial Park

downtown.

The program usually goes into fall, ending when the last person shows up to sell their produce and wares.

Last Wednesday, Penny Fringer set up a table with fresh lettuce, rhubarb, onions and a variety of baked bread, pies and other

goodies.

In previous years, the Farmers Market was held in front of the Chamber office on Main Street, but it's been moved to the park at the northwest corner of Penn and Commercial, around the gazebo, said Chamber Manager Carolyn Hackney.

*Man asks that bridge, culvert be replaced

(Continued from Page 1A) bridge with a heavier truck," he said, "then I think it's your liability."

This bridge is over the Prairie Dog Creek, said Mr. Ritter.

On the culvert, said Mr. Stallman, if it rains a day or two, you don't cross it. There are several roads in the county that are low-level crossings, and when it rains people don't use them.

Mr. Gallentine asked if the road boss had any idea on the cost of a new bridge.

If it isn't done through the federal aid program, said Mr. Stallman, it will cost \$70,000 to \$80,000.

It used to be that the county had the manpower to build bridges, he added, but not for the last five to six years. Although the county crew helps tear down the bridge and prepare the site, they don't have the men to put up a new bridge.

Mr. Ritter asked if they could go to the north side of the channel, where the culvert is, and dig it out. If the county put in a new bridge, he said, maybe the channel needs to be re-aligned.

To realign that, said Mr. Stallman, the county would have to go through the state water authorities. Maybe with the feed yard moved and vegetation planted in the old yard, they could work on getting that channel opened.

Usually, said Mr. Stallman, the crew does bridge work when it's dry, so it's probably not going to happen in the near future.

Mr. Ritter asked what happened to the cement box culverts the county used to use. It seems that would be cheaper and better.

Those get built with federal aid money, said Mr. Stallman, and costs more than a steel bridge, although he wasn't sure what the cost comparison was.

There should be a more economical way to get bridges in instead of catering to the state and federal governments, said Mr. Ritter. Maybe Decatur County could join with another county and hire a traveling bridge crew.

County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Agreed to put up \$500 for each of the previous three years the county has had a fireworks show and chip in \$500 for this year's show. Story on Page 3A.

- Received a request from the county Conservation District for the county to provide the same amount of money it has this year in next year's budget. Story on Page 3A.

- Looked at paperwork guaranteeing a \$150,000 loan from the Bank to the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. for the new recreation center downtown with tax money raised for economic development. Story on Page 3A.

- Received a request from the Northwest Kansas Regional Recycling Center for the county to pay to dispose of electronic waste. Story to come.

- Talked with a man who lives in the Jennings Township about replacing a bridge next to his house and cleaning out a culvert, which fills with silt, allowing water to run over the road. Story on Page 1A.

Mr. Ritter said he told Mr. Stallman a year ago that if the property tax levy increased and that money was used in the road and bridge department to take care of these kind of issues, that it would be OK with him.

"Our roads are good," said Mr. Ritter. "We have good gravel on them and they drain, but I'm sure some of our bridges are waiting for Doomsday."

The commissioners said they would talk more about the two bridges, but didn't make any commitments.

*Plan would widen U.S. 36 to four lanes

(Continued from Page 1A) the need for more highway is sure to grow."

U.S. 36 is an Interstate highway (I-72) from Springfield, Ill., to Hannibal, Mo., said Mr. Haynes, and Missouri expects to complete widening it's part of the route to four lanes next year. In Kansas, however, only the first eight miles to Wathena have been widened, though the next 15, to the K-7 junction near Troy, are close to saturation.

"We want to know how people along U.S. 36 would benefit from more traffic," said Mr. Haynes. "It seems to make sense to provide a bypass around Kansas City and Omaha, rather than trying to push more traffic through those overcrowded cities."

"And northern Kansas counties, all left out of the Interstate system, could use the jobs that would flow with that traffic."

The members also talked about

new weight limit signs placed this year on bridges in Decatur County.

"Some of the bridges are very old," said Mr. Streyve, "and are deteriorating, so weight limits are likely to be lowered."

Two state legislators present at the meeting, Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. John Faber, warned the group that the state highway revenue is falling and more budget cuts are likely. With the nearly \$1

billion in revenue bonds used to finance the last 10-year plan coming due, said Mr. Streyve, further borrowing for a new 10-year plan will be difficult.

*Cancer event raises over \$13,000

(Continued from Page 1A) including the Decatur Professional Women, one from Jennings, two from Decatur Heath Systems and one from Decatur County, took to the track as the Oberlin Community Band played.

Throughout the night, one walker from each team stayed on the loop in the arena.

At 10 p.m., the luminaries lining the track were turned on and the names of those being honored or remembered were read.

During the luminary ceremony, a Jennings couple, Doyle and Kay Brown, talked about their experiences.

Each fought cancer and each served as a care giver for the other.

Marilyn Horn, a committee member, said the Browns' talk was heartwarming. Both said that they appreciated their families and friends who stuck by their sides, the kind words and prayers they received.

There were over 700 luminaries, said Mrs. Horn, so when the lights in the arena were turned out and the battery-operated lights in the bags went on, it was impressive.

Dr. Gary Fredrickson sold the most luminaries at \$1,770 worth, or 177. The team that sold the most

was from Decatur County Hospital, said Mrs. Horn, although she didn't know how many.

Overall, the event brought in over \$13,000 through luminaries sales and donations, Mrs. Horn said.

Mrs. Horn said they couldn't do the relay without the support of the community, including everyone who donated, both businesses and individuals, those walking and everyone who helped organize the event.

Everything went smoothly, she said, and people have already said they want to help with next year's Relay for Life.

*City to celebrate 125 years in 2010

(Continued from Page 1A) ideas. There is already a parade committee set up, said Ms. Grafel.

Members have talked about putting up another sign for Sappa Park on U.S. 36 so someone driving west could see it. They decided to hold off to see what happens with the restrooms and with the proposed wetlands.

The city closed the outhouses at the park after a state inspection this spring. They were replaced with portable units.

Something has to happen with the restrooms, said Mrs. Burtis, adding that she's seen lots of campers and trailers at the park, but no one has

any idea how many.

Gary Anderson, bureau board chairman and owner of the Land-Mark Inn, said he asked contractor Wayne Goltl if he still had the plans he drew up years ago for restrooms, and Mr. Goltl said he would look for them.

Mrs. Burtis said Heidi Wiebe, a former Sappa Park committee member, sent her a brochure from the Kansas Trails Council. Mrs. Burtis said it might be worth looking into, adding that maybe there are some grants to help with the project.

In other business, the bureau:

- Heard that the museum's annual car show had a good turnout.

Mr. Anderson said Bill Riedel, a city councilman and vintage race organizer, had all of the vintage race-car owners keep track of what they spent in Oberlin over the weekend so they could see the economic impact.

It added up to roughly \$4,000, he said.

- Approved a \$50 donation to the Last Indian Raid Museum for its work in putting together an ad for the Ultimate Guide.

- Approved advertising on television stations in Colby, Great Bend and Hays for day trips to Oberlin.

*Harvest Countdown to end this week

(Continued from Page 1A) Participating elevators include the Decatur Co-op in Oberlin, Kanona, Jennings, Herndon, Danbury, Neb., Ludell, Lenora and Edmond; Hi-Plains Co-op in Selden and Dresden; and Hansen Mueller Grain in Oberlin and Cedar Bluffs.

Anyone who is 18 or older can try their hand at guessing the minute, hour and day the first dry load — with

moisture content under 14 percent — will be delivered. Those who have won the contest in the last five years and those who have delivered the first load in those years are ineligible. Also ineligible are relatives of the person delivering the first load and employees of the newspaper and their immediate family. There's no purchase required.

The contest is put together by

The Oberlin Herald. Sponsoring businesses include Decatur County Title and Abstract, the Decatur Co-op Association, Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Fredrickson Insurance Agency, Hansen Mueller Co., Hi-Plains Co-op, Hirsch and Pratt, Goltl Home Planning Center, KFNF, Pizza Hut, Raye's Grocery, Southwest Implement and Ward Drug Store.



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