

Group plans for celebration of city's 125th

Plans are underway for a 125th anniversary parade to celebrate the founding of the City of Oberlin.

In the monthly meeting of the Oberlin Business Alliance on Wednesday, June 3, Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city and the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., reported formation of a committee to plan a parade for the anniversary.

She asked if members thought it should be done the first weekend in October during the museum's annual Mini Sapa Festival, or at a different time.

At a Convention and Visitors Bureau meeting, said Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, and chairman of the bureau board, they talked about recruiting two people from each civic group and agency in town to form a steering committee for the anniversary.

Museum Director Sharleen Wurm said they will open a time capsule at the courthouse, placed 25 years ago at the Centennial celebration, at that time. Mrs. Wurm said she has a list of everything that should be in the capsule.

She added that she would be glad to have the anniversary the same weekend as Mini Sapa. It would make sense to do it then, said Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug Store.

On another subject, Mr. Vol-

lertsen reported that Rusty Addleman had finally received a bill for the fireworks for the Fourth of July for the past four years. Each year's bill is for \$2,400, making the total \$9,600.

It's been taken to County Attorney Steve Hirsch to look into how much the group should pay, he said. The group has been asking the supplier, Flash Fireworks, near St. Francis, for a bill for the entire time.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner of *The Oberlin Herald*, said she thought the group should try to pay for all of the fireworks since they had ordered them and used them - even if it takes a while.

In order to have a fireworks display again this year \$3,000 over what is owed for past shows needs to be raised.

In other business, the members:

- Talked about the group serving root beer floats at the car show cruise-in for a donation to raise money for the sound system.

- Approved paying accountant Warren Bainter \$50 to cover the monthly bills for keeping the books, instead of writing a check each month. The group had been writing a check for \$5 or less each month for the book work; instead they paid the accounting office \$50 and the monthly bills will automatically come out of that.



County to donate for fireworks show

The Decatur County commissioners agreed to pay \$500 for each of the previous three years the county has had a fireworks show and chip in \$500 for this year's show.

Rusty Addleman, who organizes the fireworks display for the Fourth of July, said he received a bill from Flash Fireworks. He said he's been asking for the past shows and just received one for the last four years. Each show cost \$2,400, he said.

Mr. Addleman took the bill to County Attorney Steve Hirsch, who told him the statute of limitations is for three years.

Without a bill for four years, said Mr. Addleman, he hasn't collected the \$500 each year the county and the City of Oberlin voted to chip in.

The past three years of bills will be paid for at \$2,400 each, he said,

for a total of \$7,200.

The Oberlin Business Alliance has around \$3,000 to put toward the bill, he said. With \$1,500 from the county and \$1,500 from the city.

Firework prices, said Mr. Addleman, went up about 30 percent this year. The same kind of show will cost \$3,000.

Additional money will need to be raised to pay for past shows and if the area wants to have one this year.

Also, he said, the company's name has changed to Tri-State Fireworks Inc.

The commissioners had agreed to support the firework show at \$500 a year, said Mr. Unger. The commissioners agreed to do that for the show for 2006, 2007 and 2008. The board also approved the \$500 for the show this summer.

Garage sales abound

IN NORCATUR on Saturday, Denny Lane (above left) sat on a trailer loaded with items he was trying to sell during the Annual Citywide Garage Sale, while talking to Gerry New. Lois Wentz (far right) and her daughter Rebecca waited on customers. Over 18 families took part in the event.

— Herald staff photos by Carolyn Plotts



District requests \$19,000 for next year

Members of the Decatur County Conservation District asked the county commissioners last Tuesday for \$19,000 from the county for the 2010 budget year.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he would like to see the county be able to retain the same amount, but they will have to look at the request with the rest of the budget.

The conservation district received \$16,000 from the state and the county, said Diana Solko, district manager.

In 2009, she said, they helped farmers in the area restore terraces, flat drainage channels, range, pasture and hay lands, install pipelines for livestock and steel-rimmed tanks and other conservation practices. Mrs. Solko said they also administer a cost-share program for failing septic systems.

State officials have talked about combining the conservation program into the Kansas Department of Agriculture. The board here, she said, sent in documents opposing the proposal.

It's not going to happen this year, said Mrs. Solko, but it's probably something that will have to be fought every year from now on. If

the two do combine, she added, it could end the cost-share programs in Decatur County.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine asked what effects the state budget cuts have had on the matching money the district receives.

From what she's been told, she said, the state is trying to leave the matching money alone. It's a high priority, but the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service did take a hit.

The Local Environmental Protection Group, which helps with the septic systems, took a 29 percent budget hit, she said. That group, said Mrs. Solko, is going to be struggling to help with cost shares.

"It's a tough time for everyone," she said.

With the state matching the county money, said Mrs. Solko, the district needs to know what the county will do by the beginning of August.

Commissioner Unger said he hoped the county could stay the same level. It's an important program that really helps people, he said.

The commissioners just need to review everything before making any decisions, he said.

Group asks that stored items be moved

The Amusement Authority chairman asked Decatur County commissioners again last Tuesday if they could get the items being stored at the fairground out of the buildings so carnival volunteers could start getting ready for the August fair.

Judy Scott talked with the commissioners Tuesday, June 9, and last Tuesday about the items from the old theater and senior center, ranging from seats to furnaces. She said the authority has work nights scheduled at 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday, but it's hard to work when the volunteers can't get to the equipment because there's too many stored items in the way.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he hoped that the items they are planning to use in the new Golden Age Center could be moved into the new building within a week. Later in the meeting, Mr. Unger called the contractor, Kevin Brown of Sappa Valley Construction. Mr. Unger said Mr. Brown told him it would be around a month before the building would have doors and windows.

The theater seats from the former Sunflower Cinema also are being stored at the fairground. Mr. Unger said he hasn't heard anything else about the seats. They need to come up with a fair price for the used furnaces and sell them, he added.

The authority has asked volunteers to come help on work nights, Ms. Scott said, but if they show up and can't get to the items that need to be painted or organized, it won't work. Mr. Unger said the county would work on getting the items out of the way.

At the meeting last Tuesday Mrs. Scott said she wanted to know if there had been any progress.

Mr. Unger said Steve and Marilyn Horn have offered a storage unit for whatever isn't going to be used in the new building. He said he talked with Mrs. Brown, said they could probably move some of the stuff that is going to be used to the building.

"I think we need to get that stuff moved out right away," said Commissioner Gene Gallentine.

Mr. McEvoy called Duane Dorshorst, a member of the Sunflower Cinema Board, who told him no one has said they want the old theater seats. Maybe those could be put outside and left for a certain number of days, said Mr. Unger, and if anyone wants them, they can come get them. If not, they will go to the landfill.

The group talked about selling the used heaters and air conditioners that won't be needed in the new building, but didn't set anything up.

Commissioners put off center loan guarantee

The Decatur County commissioners looked at paperwork Tuesday guaranteeing a \$150,000 loan from the Bank to the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. for the new community center downtown with tax money raised for economic development.

The commissioners didn't make a decision, although they questioned a sentence in the agreement saying that Decatur County wouldn't make any changes to the property tax levy involved until the loan is paid off.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he thought the agreement was OK if it didn't tie the county into a certain amount or prevent changes in the levy as required. If the agreement just said that whatever amount was raised by the county from the levy

would be paid to the Bank for the loan, he said, that would probably be OK.

The paperwork was written up at the Bank, said Greg Lohofener, a development board member who headed up the building project.

The pledge would apply only if the corporation fails to pay on the \$150,000 loan, he noted.

The agreement, he said, doesn't obligate any of the county's other money, only the tax fund that usually goes to the corporation. This is money raised through a property tax levy that the people voted on, said Mr. Lohofener, and it would only be paid to the Bank if the corporation defaulted.

Before the loan can be closed, he said, some kind of agreement like

this has to be signed.

Currently, he said, the economic development levy is at .433 mills, which means if everyone in the

county was to pay all of their taxes, the corporation would receive \$16,600 this year.

Oberlin City Council cancels its meeting

The Oberlin City Council meeting scheduled for last Thursday was cancelled.

City Administrator Austin Gilley sent an e-mail last Wednesday notifying the council and others of the cancellation, saying he expected too many absences. Mr. Gilley said he talked with Mayor Joe Stanley, and

with at least two council members out of town and budget information on the agenda, they decided to cancel the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, July 2, at the upstairs meeting room at The Gateway.

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