



AT HANSEN MUELLER GRAIN'S new elevator on Monday, Joe Derauf (above) opened the back of a truck while Chris Kelley prepared to work on the other side to unload another hopper full of wheat. Two trucks (below) waited to weigh light after unloading.
— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Yields above average

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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A better-than-average harvest, maybe the best here in a long time.

That's what some are saying about the wheat crop so far this year, with reports of yields from 60 up to 75 bushels per acre.

With rain, cloudy weather and high humidity, it might not be the best cutting conditions, but the harvest has pushed on, with farmers and those running the elevators in the area putting in long hours seven days a week.

At D&S Grain and Cattle Co. in Traer, co-owner Dan Grafel said the grain is ripe, but the weather hasn't been the best for harvesting. Farmers are starting to finish up, though.

The yields, he said, have been quite good. There's been quite a few in the mid to upper 60s and some in the 70s as well.



Compared to last year, said Mr. Grafel, the yields are better, probably some of the best he's seen. The numbers are consistent, he added, not just hit and miss.

The price, though, has been on the downturn for the last six weeks. In that time, wheat has lost \$1.50 per bushel.

At Hansen Mueller Grain in Oberlin, things were hopping Monday afternoon, with three trucks waiting to weigh out, two dumping, one in line to dump their wheat and another heading up the drive.

That morning, said Janice O'Hare, they had taken in close to 900,000 bushels already. This year's harvest is better than last year, she said, but the elevator has

a lot more storage this year.

There's still more grain to be cut, she added, especially up north with late planting and wet weather.

Kurt Anderson, general manager at Decatur Co-op, said at all eight locations, the co-op had brought in at least 4.5 million bushels. The Danbury elevator hadn't really started yet, he added.

Yields, he said, seem to averaging around 70 to 75 bushels per acre.

"It's a crop of a lifetime for some people," he said.

The crop is well above last year's harvest, said Mr. Anderson; that can be seen just in the receipts from the elevators. The

continuous-crop wheat is good, he said, but not as good as some of the other fields where crops were rotated with fallow. He added that he's heard some yields close to triple digits.

The price finally went up on Monday, Mr. Anderson said, 14 cents a bushel, so many farmers are calling and selling. Others are going to watch the market for a while and see what happens before they decide to sell, he said.

Although the price is up some and the yields are high, the protein in the wheat is poor, said Mr. Anderson. Almost all of the wheat goes to mills, he said, so the low protein could be a problem. The cause, oddly enough, is good weather.

City wants to maintain its tax level

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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"You shouldn't have left me alone in the truck with a highlighter," joked City Councilman Bill Riedel as he went through a list of questions about the 2010 budget.

City Administrator Austin Gilley assured him that his questions are just what the council needs to make informed decisions on the budget.

The council hopes to hold taxes at their present level this year, using reserves to handle increased expenses, and then raising taxes and or slashing expenses next year, Mr. Gilley told the council as he started the budget discussion at a special meeting on Thursday.

Increases in the budget include a 3 percent cost-of-living raise for most employees, except the administrator, 10 to 11 others, a new front-end loader and a lawn mower. The pay increases will cost about \$32,000, and the loader will cost \$150,000.

Decreases include two fewer part-time employees in the cemetery and street departments and a decrease in hours for all summer help except at the swimming pool.

"Hats off to most of the departments, because most actually cut their budgets," Mr. Riedel said.

Most of Mr. Riedel's questions had to do with line items that showed unusual increases or decreases. In each case, Mr. Gilley and Mayor Joe Stanley said the problem is that the city's old computer system lumped items together strangely and the new one does it in a more organized manner, so that the department heads can actually tell what they are spending.

"The old numbers sometime had no relationship to reality," said City Attorney Steve Hirsch. "Austin is trying to bring things into line."

For example, Mr. Gilley said, in the past, the computer has put all employee benefits under one category instead of under each department, so it was impossible to tell exactly what payroll expenses were for any one department. The new system separates benefits according to department, he said.

The budget also looks odd in places, he said, because of transfers. Money for things like the airport comes in as a grant and goes out as expenses, making the expense side look high.

Mr. Riedel asked if the city could put off buying the loader.

City Superintendent Dan Castle (See CITY on Page 12)

Volunteers needed to work at fair, carnival

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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With less than a month to go, there's still work to be done and volunteers needed for this year's Decatur County Home-Owned Carnival the first full week in August.

Judy Scott, chairman of the amusement authority, said they need volunteers, even those who already have, to sign up to work games and rides. The group had a sign-up sheet for volunteers in the lobby of the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center, she said, but it disappeared before they could get the names written on the master list.

A new sign-up sheet will be inside the building, said Ms. Scott. If someone signed up for a time they need to sign up again or contact Ms. Scott at 470-7269. The chamber secretary will also have a copy, so people can contact her at 475-3441.

Melinda Grafel, an authority member, said they need people to work the concession stand from 8:30 p.m. to close on Saturday. If there aren't volunteers to run the

stand, she said, they might have to close it that night. Volunteers that night will just do the regular nightly clean up, she said. Authority members will do the year-end clean up on Sunday.

If you're interested in working the shift, call Mrs. Grafel at 322-5234.

The authority has organized work nights at the fairground starting at 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday. The nights, said Ms. Scott, have gone really well, up until the last two, but lately people have been busy with harvest.

She said the volunteers are organizing items in the buildings, cleaning and just getting ready for the carnival. Someone has fixed the little fire trucks for the kids' ride, the Jennings Lions worked on the Twist-Over and it's already been painted.

Last year, the authority decided to close the Twist-Over after hearing it was unsafe. The group didn't have enough time to really look at it, said Ms. Scott. After further (See WORKERS on Page 12)

Donations needed to finish building

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The walls are all up, some windows are in and work on the inside of the new recreation/senior center on Main Street is underway.

The project will replace the former Golden Age Center and Sunflower Cinema, which were torn down to clear the building site. The

project will add a recreation area for youths and a bowling alley.

For all that to be completed, though, there's still some fund raising to be done. Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development Corp., said they are still short of money to finish all phases of the project. Mr. Lohofener has worked on the project for the

development board since its inception.

He said he didn't have a current figure of what was needed, as he had been out harvesting last week.

Mr. Lohofener said members of the development board, along with some from the cinema board and Kevin Brown, with Sappa (See CENTER on Page 12)

Retired Army colonel makes trek in Jeep

By CAROLYN KELLEY-
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Lt. Col. Gary Allen, a retired Army officer, is back from a trek across Nebraska and Wyoming where he and other volunteers had a chance to re-create a little piece of history.

In 1919, a pioneering motor convoy led by Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower crossed the United States from the Capitol to San Francisco.

The U.S. Army was in the beginning stages of changing from horse power to motorized vehicles. The convoy was a way to demonstrate what could be done.

That was in 1919. In an effort to re-create that experience, the Transcontinental Motor Convoy Project was born. The convoy, made up of restored military vehicles, left Washington on June 13 with plans to arrive in San Francisco by July 8.

When Col. Allen, an avid collector, heard of the convoy and the open invitation to former military personnel and restored military vehicles, he signed on. He put his 1950 Army Jeep on a trailer and drove it to Omaha, where he joined the convoy on June 23.

Accompanying him was his brother-in-law, Harold Gaul of Denver, who would drive the support vehicle. Col. Allen has restored two other Jeeps, a 1942 Navy model and a 1955 Marine Corps Jeep. He's looking for Jeep No. 4; one from the Vietnam era.

He said the convoy was led by a 1919 Dodge touring car similar to the vehicle used by Col. Eisenhower as a staff car. It and a 1919 FWD, a huge maintenance vehicle, were the oldest in the convoy. Col. Allen said at times, there were as many as 125 military vehicles in the line.

He said the convoy would side-arrive in San Francisco by July 8. (See MAN on Page 12)



LT. COL. GARY ALLEN, a retired Army officer, lifted the canvas top of his 1950 Willys Jeep after his return from four days on the road with the Transcontinental Motor Convoy Project. Col. Allen drove the Jeep from Omaha to Cheyenne, Wyo., as part of a re-creation of a 1919 convoy led by Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower. — Herald staff photo by Carolyn Plotts

Council discusses man's job

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Oberlin City Administrator Austin Gilley prompted the City Council to go into closed session during a special meeting Thursday when he said he did not feel his performance evaluation had been done correctly and charged that he was being set up to fail.

Mayor Joe Stanley called a 10-minute closed session that stretched into 15 after Mr. Gilley told the council that he had been told that he was doing too much, that he should watch what he says to "the media" and that he had been told that his contract "probably" would be renewed in December.

"How do I plan for after December," he said, "knowing one person on the council wants me fired."

(See COUNCIL on Page 12)

*Center needs money

(Continued from Page 1)

Valley Construction, met with Sonic Equipment of Iola, recently to work on what they will need for theater equipment. Mr. Lohofener said an order hasn't been placed on the equipment yet, as the final price isn't in, but that should happen soon. When the equipment is ordered, he said, they will have to put some money down.

"If someone is thinking about making a contribution," he said, "it would be great."

He said his wife Mary Jo has been working on getting the 110 theater seats paid for. She sent letters to Decatur Community High School alumni who don't live in the county. So far, alumni have paid for 34 of the seats at \$150 each. Anyone can make a donation to buy a seat, said Mr. Lohofener.

After the building is done, he said, they will put up a recognition plaque thanking those who supported the project, but there won't be a plaque on each seat.

With the cinema equipment, he said, some of the cost will go up, but other things that have been budgeted for that part will actually cost less or shift a little with the supplier doing some more of that part of the work and Sappa Valley doing less.

Also, he said, they can save a little money by getting volunteers to help install the seats when the time comes.

Actually, said Mr. Lohofener, they are still looking for volunteers to help do other inside work, like painting and hanging ceiling tiles. Those dates haven't been set up yet, he said, but anyone interested in working can call him at 475-3459 or Connie Grafel at 475-2901.

Part of the fund raising left to do will go to pay for the bricks for the outside of the building. Mr. Lohofener said they want to order all the bricks at the same time, so they all look alike. That will cost around \$20,000.

Other than labor or a cash donation, people can also give grain at any of the area elevators. Mr. Lohofener said he set up accounts at the Decatur Co-op, Hansen Mueller, D&S Grain and Hi-Plains Co-op so people can donate grain, which will then be sold to help finish the project.

It seems the wheat, other than in hailed spots, is making better than people thought it was going to this year, said Mr. Lohofener. If growers wanted to give some of their excess, he said, that would be great. Basically, he said, if farmers gave 3 to 5 percent of their excess, that is, what they harvest above their target or normal yield, that would pay for everything the project is short.

It's an excellent way to make a donation, he said

*Workers needed for fair

(Continued from Page 1)

inspection, they found that the ride was fixable, and that has been done.

The Octopus will be stabilized and people are working on painting the buckets.

They were going to try to paint the Ferris wheel this year, she said, but with a late harvest, that might be postponed until next year. They are working on getting a new hydraulic motor for the ride as well.

All of the rides will be open this year, including the large slide the group rented for the first time last year, which will make a return appearance.

If someone wants to help, said Ms. Scott, but just can't make it on a Wednesday night, they can call her to try to work out another time.

Ms. Scott said they plan to offer a one-price wrist-band deal for the rides and games on the first night of the carnival. The price hasn't yet been set. After that, it's all by tickets — which cost 25 cents each — except for food and the Ricochet game, which takes nickels.



CHECKING THE OIL on the dipstick was part of routine maintenance during the four days Lt. Col. Gary Allen spent with the Transcontinental Motor Convoy Project. The convoy left Washington June 13 and arrived in San Francisco on July 8. Col. Allen traveled with the expedition from Omaha to Cheyenne, Wyo.

*Man joins convoy project

(Continued from Page 1)

track off the main route to drive through little towns, following dirt roads that served as the highway in those days, at least where it could. He said police would escort them, non-stop, through the towns.

He said he was impressed by the show of support from American Legion Posts and by signs of patriotism along the route.

He said it was really moving when hundreds of people in little towns came out to see the convoy.

Old vets in their uniforms would come to stand along the route. One time, on a lonely stretch of highway, with no one else around, he

saw an old man and woman seated in lawn chairs along the road with an American flag.

"I'm telling you, it just tears you up," he said.

Col. Allen said he installed a citizen's band radio in his Jeep so he could listen to truckers' conversations.

He said the convoy's top speed was between 35 and 40 mph, and sometimes one of the younger truckers would gripe about how slow the traffic was until an older trucker would come on the air and "straighten him out."

When the convoy would stop for the night, some slept in sleeper-equipped trucks, some camped out

in tents, some used motor homes or pickup campers, and the rest stayed in motels. Col. Allen said travel on the convoy was pretty tiring for the old guys though he was quick to add, "It was still fun."

He said restoring military vehicles is "an old man's hobby." He said mostly middle-aged men were on the trip, but there were lots of World War II vets in their 80s along. He said there were very few in their 30s or younger.

Col. Allen, who left the convoy in Cheyenne, Wyo., after four days, said he had only one regret:

"I just wish I had gone the whole way."

School board OKs transfers

The Oberlin School Board approved transfers from the general and supplemental general fund to various accounts at its end-of-the-year meeting on Tuesday, June 30.

Board Clerk Vickie Lippelman said the state is still making its June payments to the district, which will be broken into three checks because the state is low on cash. She said the district received word that the first payment would post that day, June 24.

As of June 30, she said, the state

still owed the district \$257,660 in state aid.

President Dewayne Jackson asked if the transfer numbers are just estimates. Mrs. Lippelman said they were.

The board approved the estimated transfers. Mrs. Lippelman said she would report to the board when money comes in.

The estimates showed transfers of \$10,000 to the driver's education fund, \$26,539 to food service, \$55,846 to vocational education and

\$161,323 to at-risk from the supplemental general fund; \$121,133 from the contingency reserve to the general fund and \$20,000 to special education from earned interest.

Numbers yet to be announced include transfers to special education, at-risk beginning in 2010 and capital outlay, she said.

Board members Dan Nedland and Jerry Chambers were absent from the 7 a.m. meeting.

Money raised for fireworks show

The Oberlin Business Alliance made plans for the annual Fourth of July fireworks show at its July meeting.

At the meeting on Wednesday, July 1, Rusty Addleman, who organizes the show each year, said he's been out asking for donations to help pay for the past three years and for this year's show.

So far, he said, he's received \$1,500 from the Decatur County commissioners for the previous three shows and \$500 for next year. The Oberlin City Council hadn't

met, but he had asked the city for about the same donation.

Mr. Addleman said he's received donations from businesses and individuals as well. The bill for the past three years and next year's show will cost \$10,200.

He said he thought they could raise the money and plan to ask those attending the show for donations.

The alliance has some money to apply to the fireworks, but it wasn't clear how much.

Connie Grafel, marketing direc-

tor of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., said she's getting a committee set up to plan a celebration for the 125th anniversary of the city. She asked that anyone who is interested in being on that committee give her a call at 475-2901.

She said they will have an organizational meeting at the end of July or August, with the celebration taking place the first weekend in October during the Decatur County Museum's Mini-Sapa Day weekend.

Technical college's state money discussed

Sheila Frahm of Colby, a member of the Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority, was among the dignitaries who stopped by recently to greet Dr. Ed Mills, new president of the Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland.

They discussed issues with the latest state funding formula and the importance of higher education in rural Kansas.

Dr. Lynn Kreider, president of Colby Community College, also met with Dr. Mills. They went over ideas for a collaboration between the two schools and how to improve educational opportunities in north-west Kansas.

Sen. Sam Brownback stopped by on his "105 Kansas Counties Tour." Dr. Mills and former President Ken Clouse gave him a tour of the departments. They told him about budget problems for higher education.

College Board Chairman Rob Loftin and long-time board member Bruce Buck traveled to Stephens Restaurant in Sharon Springs, where U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran was finishing up his Wallace County visit as a part

of his 2009 "Big First" Listening Tour. Congressman Moran emphasized his support for education and rural western Kansas.

The technical college welcomes visitors and encourages everyone to check out the latest improvements throughout the campus, Mills said.

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*City taxes may stay same for next year

(Continued from Page 1)

said that might be possible, but the two machines the city has now are pretty much on their last legs and he worries that one or both will quit at any time. He said he would like to get rid of them while they still have a little trade-in value.

Mr. Riedel asked what will happen next year, in 2011, with sales taxes going down, expenses going up and the reserves no longer available.

"Cuts," Mr. Gilley replied.

Mr. Riedel said that he would feel better if some cuts could be made in the 2010 budget so that drastic ones don't need to be made for the next one.

"I would feel more comfortable cutting this year," he said, "but without historical data, it would be pretty blind."

Mr. Gilley agreed.

"The cash position is pretty touch and go," he added.

Mayor Stanley suggested that the city might budget for half the pay-loader this year and the other half next year but Councilman Ray Ward reminded him that the council has been discussing that piece of equip-

ment for at least two years now.

Mr. Gilley told the council there is no problem with changing the budget.

"I'm not married to any of this," he said. "You won't offend me by changing it.... This is the time for you to go through this line by line and change things."

Mr. Riedel said that he would like to spend some more time going over the figures. Mr. Gilley said that he would get the figures put into the state budget forms.

Mr. Riedel asked if there were any other income sources for the city, suggesting that the council look at what it gets off of crops on city-owned farm ground, increasing the cost of fees and licenses and perhaps selling some city property so that it could go on the tax rolls.

Mr. Gilley said he would get the council a schedule of fees for its next meeting.

Mayor Stanley said he thought the council had done what it could on the budget for this week and thought that the discussion could continue at the next meeting, set for 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

*Council discusses administrator

(Continued from Page 1)

As part of the council information packet, Mr. Gilley had passed out a job description for his position. These included overseeing all city departments, short- and long-range planning and providing information to the council and leadership for the city.

Among the essential functions of a city manager, it said, are enforcement of city ordinances, laws and procedures; examining, signing and monitoring contracts; managing the city's finances; personnel; participating in economic development; fielding questions and complaints from the public; and preparing and planning the budget.

Mr. Gilley asked the council to tell him where he was "doing too

much" and to further guide him on what it wants him to do.

After the closed session, as the council returned to its seats, he said:

"For the record, I got no further direction on job description."

The council, which had previously passed an ordinance allowing golf carts and related vehicles on city streets, went on to discuss the city budget, the main focus of the special meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Gilley had one last statement on his job.

"I thoroughly enjoy working for the city and like my job," he told the council. "If there's someplace I need to cut back, tell me."

Lucky winner to receive \$1,000

Ever wonder what it would be like to go on a big shopping spree?

With sign-up for the Oberlin Merchants' Shopping Spree going on right now, this could be your chance to find out.

Anyone 18 or older can enter the spree without making a purchase. Just fill out the small entry form at participating businesses and drop it in the box.

People can sign up as many times as they want at any or all the participating sponsors. The deadline to enter is 4 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11.

The drawing will be at the Chamber of Commerce Back to School Picnic in City Park at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12. In case of bad weather, the picnic will move inside to the high school cafeteria. The

drawing will also be in the cafeteria if that happens.

The lucky shopper must be present to win. Names will be drawn until a winner is found.

One lucky person will receive \$1,000 in scrip money and has from Wednesday, Aug. 12 to Monday, Aug. 31, to spend the money at participating stores only. No change will be given. The shopper has to notify *The Herald* so a photographer can go with them.

Sponsors for this year's Shopping Spree include Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Culligan Water, Ward Drug Store, Stanley Hardware, Raye's Grocery, Shear Creations West and Day Spa and Rocking R.

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