

County tax rate to go up 7 percent

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Decatur County commissioners approved publishing a 2010 budget last week with an increase in the property tax levy of around 7 percent.

Officials estimated that the increase in the county levy, 2.8 mills, will cost someone with a \$50,000 home about \$16.10 extra in taxes next year. The actual increase will be a little more than that, however, around 4.8 mills, which will cost that same homeowner about \$26, maybe a little more.

That's because the county last year had to pay for the Extension program, with a levy of 1.567 mills, but this year it won't have the program. The new Twin Creeks Extension District's proposed budget is published on Page 5A of today's paper. The property tax levy is set at 1.976 mills which will bring in around \$60,000 from Decatur County, said Agent Byron Hale, and a total of \$137,994. That is an increase in the Extension tax rate of 26 percent over the county levy this year.

With a 19.7 percent drop in county valuation this year, the commissioners went into the budget process knowing taxes would have to be increased or cuts would need to be made to keep spending in line.

At the beginning of the meeting last Tuesday, Commissioner Stan McEvoy said they had started at a 22 mill increase, but ended up with just a 2.8-mill increase. (Not including the Extension money.)

The increase, he said, is just enough to cover the added cost of general obligation bonds issued to pay for the new Golden Age Center in downtown Oberlin.

Last year, the county had a big jump in valuation, mainly because of oil production. At that time, he said, the commissioners lowered the property taxes slightly.

The county will have some cash in departments that can be carried forward to the 2010 budget year and used. Mr. McEvoy didn't have that information available.

That wasn't all, though. Mr. McEvoy said the county was able to save money in the emergency medical services department. The county had a full-time manager and then hired a part-time manager, which is shared with Sheridan County.

The extension district has become its own taxing entity, so the county won't be raising money for that program. That cut about \$70,000.

The sheriff decided to cut his budget by \$5,000, said Mr. McEvoy. The appraiser has been budgeting \$20,000 for new maps, and he decided to cut that for this year, too.

Every bit helped the overall bottom line, the commissioner said.

The county didn't discuss raises during (See CUTS on Page 5A)

Students head back to class this Monday

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Morning may seem to come a little earlier Monday as kids return to classes in the Oberlin School District.

Classes start at 8:20 a.m. that morning for the first day of the 2009-2010 school year. While students have been able to hold down summer jobs, attend camps and go to the pool, staff at the grade and high schools have been working to get the buildings ready for the kids to return.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst, also the principal at Oberlin Elementary School, said they have upgraded two computer labs, one at each school, with new equipment bought with money from the 2008-2009 budget.

At the high school, the water and gas faucets in the science labs are new.

The computers in the library were upgraded and the scholarship room is done, paid for by Col. Delbert Townsend.

Belinda Jones, who taught at-risk students at the high school, said Mr. Dorshorst, will move to the grade school this year to teach English and spelling in the fifth and sixth grades.

The high school also has a new teacher, Josh Williby, a Decatur Community High grad hired to teach industrial arts.

Last year, the grade school started holding all-day kindergarten with two sections, he said. This year the school will continue with all-day kindergarten, but only with one section, with not as many kindergartners signed up for this year.

This year, the district is going to focus on a mission station which the school board developed three years ago during a goal-setting session, said Mr. Dorshorst. The statement

Shopper will win a grand

It's almost time to find out which lucky shopper will win the Oberlin Merchants' annual Big \$1,000 Shopping Spree.

For the past five weeks, people have been signing up to win the \$1,000 in scrip money. Registrations have been picked up weekly from the sponsoring businesses.

The contest closed at 4 p.m. Tuesday, with the drawing set for tonight at the Back-to-School Picnic in City Park.

The picnic starts at 6:30 p.m., and the drawing will be held a little later. The winner has to be present to win.

The winner then has until Monday, Aug. 31, to spend the money at the sponsoring businesses, including Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Culligan Water, Ward Drug Store, Stanley Hardware, Raye's Grocery, Shear Creations West and Day Spa, Rocking R and *The Oberlin Herald*.

The winner agrees to notify *The Herald* so a photographer can snap some pictures of them shopping and agrees to an interview.

No change will be given for the scrip money.

If the weather is bad, everything will be moved to the high school cafeteria.

hasn't been focused on before, he (See SCHOOLS on Page 5A)

Carnival brings in more cash this year

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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All of the bills aren't in yet, but preliminary numbers show that Decatur County's Home-Owned Carnival, run by the Amusement Authority, brought in about \$10,000 to \$12,000 more than last year.

Last year's carnival made \$50,000 before the bills were paid, said Jennifer Schissler, treasurer for the authority. This year, that amount was \$60,000 to \$62,000, but the bills aren't in, so they won't know how much the carnival actually made

until the last one is paid.

Mother Nature, said President Judy Scott, was good to the carnival this year, with five nights of good weather. The crowds were steady, with some nights a little busier than others.

The big rides went up a ticket, costing five tickets or \$1.25 to ride, while the train stayed at three and the Merry-go-Round at one.

For the most part, things went well, said Ms. Scott. On the first night, the fire truck ride for the little (See CARNIVAL on Page 5A)

Jennings plans Firemen's Fun Day

For a full day of fun, from "train" rides to dinner and dancing, make plans to attend the 18th Annual Firemen's Fun Day, scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 22, at Jennings.

Activities will start at 8 a.m. with the Health Fair at the Senior Center. Two new tests, C-reactive protein and hemoglobin A1C, will screen people for risk of heart disease and provide a look at maximum blood sugar levels of the previous two to three months. These two tests,

valued at \$135, will increase the cost of the health care profile to \$35, said Marge Hartzog, one of the organizers.

The cost for the prostate screening antigen remains at \$20. Dr. Elizabeth Sliter will be available to discuss swine flu issues. Fasting is required for the blood profile.

Kolaches, coffee and tea will be offered following the blood draw for a donation. This will also give (See JENNINGS on Page 5A)



WITH A PINK LEAD ROPE, Skylar Brown (above) led her bucket calf around the ring during the bucket calf show last Wednesday at the Decatur County Fair. Jacob Larue (below) helped pin a number on his sister, Annamarie Larue, during the show.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

4-H'ers favor food as fair entry

The Decatur County Fair has come and gone, with around 92 4-H kids taking part in the various activities.

That doesn't include those who entered items in the open class division, said Byron Hale, county Extension agent, who helps run the fair.

The biggest two events for the kids are foods and arts and crafts judging. On Tuesday, the kids entered cookies, brownies, snack mixes and all kinds of cakes to be judged. Three women sat behind long tables, tasting the treats and then talking to each youth about the item that afternoon. That evening, the kids sold the treats to family members and businesses at the annual food auction.

One of those 4-H members was David Noren, who has been a member of the Star Valley group for the last five years. This year he entered in horse show on Saturday, Aug. 1, photography, foods and arts and crafts and brought a few chickens to show.

Mr. Noren said he liked the food section and horse show the most.

This year, he said, he made an angel food cake and "apricot almost ring" for the food show. He said he sold both at the auction. (See 4-H'ERS on Page 5A)

