

Accident at fire hydrant causes large loss of water

Water ran down the south end of Main Street, thousands of gallons of it, on Saturday after an Oberlin store owner ran into a fire hydrant.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said Kary Anderson, owner of Decatur County Implement, ran into the hydrant on the east side of Penn Avenue while moving a piece of equipment around 3 p.m. Saturday.

The blow knocked the hydrant off

center and water flooded out of it.

The city doesn't have a shut-off valve anywhere near that spot, said Mr. Gilley. The only way to turn the hydrant off was to turn off the whole town, so the crew let the water run for about 24 hours. Mr. Gilley said they estimated losing around 300,000 gallons.

The city ended up calling a plumbing expert out of Hastings, Neb., who came Sunday and inserted a

temporary valve so the water could be shut off.

The crew now is replacing the pipe and hydrant, said Mr. Gilley. They are also looking into getting some equipment so that when an issue like this arises, the crew can fix the problem.

Mr. Gilley said he thought it would cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 for the entire event.



AT THE FAIRGROUND last Wednesday, Kyleana Blau tried her best to win during the Farm Bureau pedal pull. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Kids try out the pedal pull

Girls and boys tried with all their might last Wednesday to pedal the little green tractor attached to the weighted sled.

The carnival hadn't yet started, but kids and their parents stood in the parking lot of the Decatur County Fairground watching and waiting for their turn during the Farm Bureau pedal pull.

Forty kids signed up to try their legs out on the tractor, with medals

and carnival tickets given to the top three in grades 4 through 12. There were no participants from the 11th grade.

The winners were:

• **4th grade:** Lukas Diederich, Jaren Adelman and Shakira Cook.

• **5th grade:** Matt Seeker, Hannah Jones and Libbi Puga.

• **6th grade:** Gavon Uehlin, Toby Korte and Makenzie Urban.

• **7th grade:** Brandon Vacura,

Ethan Beagle and Kade Caspersen.

• **8th grade:** Jyle Adelman, Rileigh Korte and Cori Isbell.

• **9th grade:** Brett Soderlund, Drew Juenemann and Catherine Marak.

• **10th grade:** Quinton Cook, Matt Vacura and Jeff Juenemann.

• **12th grade:** Troy Juenemann, Joseph Marak and Keagen Blau.

State official discusses insurance

An assistant state insurance commissioner traveled through north-west Kansas recently, talking to people about health and homeowners' insurance.

Bob Tomlinson said he was in Oberlin on Wednesday, July 29 because he needed to talk with lawyer Steve Hirsch about the Kansas State Firefighters Association. The state, said Mr. Tomlinson, gives \$9 million a year in firefighter relief, although he didn't know how much of that Oberlin or Decatur County get. Mr. Hirsch is secretary of the association.

While in Oberlin, he stopped at *The Herald* to talk about health care and home insurance.

There's a movement in Congress to regulate health insurance at a federal level, he said. Until the federal government acts, the state can't do much.

Mr. Tomlinson said his boss, Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger, has been testifying before committees on three main points. There are things the federal government can do with health care that would actually hurt, he said, including adverse selection, meaning that a company could pick and choose who they will cover. Instead, there would be a guaranteed issue, meaning that a carrier has to give insurance to everyone, regardless of any pre-existing conditions.

Another issue is accessibility to health care, said Mr. Tomlinson. The key there seems to be the reimbursement rates hospitals and doctors and

other providers can get.

Thirdly, he said, she talks about maintaining state regulation of insurance.

There has been a big increase in the cost of health care, he said, pretty much across the board because of usage.

He said Kansas has enrolled more kids on its subsidized family insurance, Healthwave, although he doesn't attribute that to the economy. It seems schools are identifying more kids who would benefit from the program, so the numbers are up.

One of the discussions that comes up with health care, said Mr. Tomlinson, is using health insurance at the basic level. People go in earlier and find medical problems earlier if they have insurance, and that keeps down the cost. With higher deductibles, he said, people usually make a better choice because they are spending their money up front.

Another issue, he said, is that there's been an increase in homeowners insurance premiums, mostly because of losses during storms last year.

In 2008, he said, the office estimates there were \$6 million in storm losses for 131,284 claims, while the previous year there was just over \$3.2 million on 32,290 reported claims.

Lots of those losses were roofs ruined by hail storms, including many in Oberlin. Mr. Tomlinson said 80 percent of the insurance risk to a home is the roof.

City meeting canceled

The Oberlin City Council meeting set for Thursday night has been canceled since at least two council members plan to be gone.

The meeting was planned for 7 p.m. Thursday and was not only the first meeting of the month, but also would have served as the public hearing for the budget.

City Administrator Austin Gil-

ley sent an e-mail last week saying that with two of the five members planning to be gone, the mayor had decided to cancel the meeting.

The council will hold the public hearing for the budget that was published in *The Oberlin Herald* on Wednesday, July 29, at the next regular meeting, scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 20.

Groundbreaking set Thursday

A groundbreaking for the Sappa Park Wetlands will at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at the park.

Everyone is invited to come out for the ceremony and to hear the

plans for the wetlands, a project at least three years in the making.

The ceremony will take place in front of the shelter house, near the steps which led to the old lake.

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING							
The governing body of TWIN CREEKS EXTENSION DISTRICT #9 DECATUR COUNTY							
will meet on the day of August 14, 2009, at 10 a.m. at the Decatur County Courthouse, Jury Room, for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of all funds and the amount of tax to be levied. Detailed budget information is available at and will be available at this hearing.							
BUDGET SUMMARY							
Proposed Budget 2010 Expenditures and Amount of 2009 Ad Valorem Tax establish the maximum limits of the 2010 budget. Estimated Tax Rate is subject to change depending on the final assessed valuation.							
Fund	Prior Year Actual for 2008		Current Year Estimate for 2009		Proposed Budget 2010		
	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Expenditures	Amount of 2009 Ad Valorem Tax	Estimate Tax Rate*
General	192,622	NEW	227,000	NEW DIST	267,100	137,994	1.976
Debt Service							
Totals	192,622	0.000	227,000	0.000	267,100	137,994	1.976
Less: Transfers	0		0		0		
Net Expenditure	192,622		227,000		267,100		
Total Tax Levied	NEW		151,563		xxxxxxxxxxxx		
Assessed Valuation	0		0		69,840,322		
Outstanding Indebtedness, January 1,							
G.O. Bonds	0		0		0		
Revenue Bonds	0		0		0		
Other	0		0		0		
Lease Purchase Principal	0		0		0		
Total	0		0		0		
*Tax rates are expressed in mills							
Patsy L. Maddy, Clerk							

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING							
The governing body of DECATUR COUNTY							
will meet on the 25th of August, 2009 at 10 a.m. at the Courthouse in the Office of the Decatur County Commissioners for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of all funds and the amount of ad valorem tax. Detailed Budget Information is available at the Office of the Decatur County Clerk and will be available at this hearing.							
BUDGET SUMMARY							
Proposed Budget 2010 Expenditures and Amount of 2009 Ad Valorem Tax establish the maximum limits of the 2010 budget. Estimated Tax Rate* is subject to change, depending on the final assessed valuations.							
Fund	2008		2009		Proposed Budget 2010		
	Prior Year Actual Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate	Current Year Est. of Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate	Expenditures	Amount of 2009 Ad Valorem Tax	Estimated Tax Rate*
General	1,241,398	19.771	1,179,000	18.914	1,262,850	555,402	17.978
Debt Service	32,629		126,107		127,844	46,832	1.516
Road & Bridge	1,093,324	10.439	965,000	12.380	1,040,000	443,433	14.354
Special Bridge	156,016	2.000	250,000	2.000	230,000	61,778	2.000
Home for Aged	24,264	0.463	79,000	0.369	64,000	8,686	0.281
Fair Premiums	3,369	0.090	3,800	0.086	3,400	2,905	0.094
Fair Maintenance	17,362	0.463	21,500	0.501	20,000	17,514	0.567
Conservation District	19,832	0.478	24,000	0.496	23,000	18,907	0.612
Hospital Maintenance	220,222	5.786	235,000	5.063	200,000	161,150	5.216
County Health Nurse	108,366	1.097	112,000	0.914	97,000	9,477	0.307
Extension Council	67,015	1.790	66,750	1.567			
Mental Health	26,786	0.716	29,000	0.627	26,000	21,280	0.689
Mental Retardation	28,477	0.761	31,000	0.666	28,000	22,796	0.738
Noxious Weed	152,672	2.088	165,000	2.481	167,000	61,388	1.987
Election	47,537	1.492	50,000	1.045	50,000	21,932	0.710
Employee Benefits	735,772	16.613	710,000	15.667	825,000	569,712	18.441
Senior Citizens Levy	131,152	0.776	66,500	0.679	37,000	20,034	0.648
Museum-Historical	20,500	0.496	22,000	0.444	20,500	16,110	0.521
Economic Development	20,000	0.496	20,000	0.433	17,000	14,277	0.462
Spec/Alcohol/Drugs	510		3,500		3,500		
Spec Park/Recreation	1,750		3,500		3,500		
Summer Rec/Gen	8,119		5,000		5,743		
Trans Bus/Gen	26,830						
Spec Equip Reserve					57,649		
Spec Machine/R&B					256,943		
Wireless 911	13,888				13,508		
911 Phone					8,618		
Totals	4,197,790	65.815	4,167,657	64.332	4,588,055	2,073,613	67.121
Less Transfers	0		0		0		
Net Expenditures	4,197,790		4,167,657		4,588,055		
Total Tax Levied	2,206,293		2,463,842				
Assessed Valuation	33,529,587		38,297,600		30,893,310		
Outstanding Indebtedness, as of January 1st	2007		2008		2009		
G.O. Bonds					435,502		
Revenue Bonds					650,000		
Other							
Lease Pur. Princ.							
Total	0		0		1,085,502		
Other District Funds	2008		2009		Proposed Budget 2010		
	Prior Year Actual Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate	Current Year Est. of Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate	Expenditures	Amount of 2009 Ad Valorem Tax	Estimated Tax Rate*
Ambulance Dist #1	163,500	2.125	168,000	1.880	181,000	56,061	1.815
Total Tax Levied	71,241		71,992				
DC Valuation	33,529,587		38,297,600		30,893,310		
Rural Fire Dist #1	86,067	1.316	72,000	1.145	82,000	3,659	0.145
Total Tax Levied	37,032		37,324				
DC Valuation	25,632,371		30,432,067		23,125,169		
NT Valuation			2,185,327		2,093,263		
Totals		3.441		3.025		59,720	1.960