



## City wants more, improved water

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

c.haynes@nwkansas.com

After years of studying, equivocating and trying to figure out how to get out of building a water treatment plant, the Oberlin City Council chose a plan that would provide better water for the whole town, do away with rationing and provide a backup system at its meeting on Thursday.

City Administrator Austin Gilley told the council that the state would soon start to punish the city if it does not get started on a treatment plant that will meet current standards.

The city's engineering firm, Miller and Associates of McCook, provided five plans for treating the city's water so that it will conform to new federal and state standards for arsenic and uranium.

Oberlin uses three water wells. Two, Nos. 10 and 12, are on the east side of town on U.S. 36. Both have minuscule naturally occurring amounts of uranium and arsenic, said the engineers, Chris Miller and David Blau, and the water will have to be treated. These wells are close together and can't be used at

### City Roundup

At the meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Approved a plan for a water plant that will serve the whole town and reduce rationing. Story at left.
- Learned the city is using independent contractors to mow the parks this year. Story on Page 3A.
- Approved an ordinance change that would allow the city administrator to aid those who have trouble paying utility bills. Story on Page 3A.

• Heard that Channel 7, the cable community access channel, will not be going off the air. Story on Page 3A.

• Was told that data from a hotel feasibility study has been sent to the economic development director, who is looking at it. Story on Page 3A.

• Learned that a petition is being passed to stop the city from doing improvements the airport. Story below.

the same time.

The third well, No. 11, is south of town on U.S. 83, and has no problem with the toxins but does have large quantities of iron and manganese, common in all water taken from the Sappa Creek aquifer here. A fourth well, No. 13, has been proposed, but not drilled.

The engineers provided a chart showing the five plans, what each would do and relative costs.

The most the city can get in a loan to build the plant is \$6 million, Mr.

Gilley said. Right now the city has asked for \$4.4 million, however the present plan does not cover well No. 11, which serves the hospital and the southwestern part of town.

Of the five plans, only two would provide treatment for iron and manganese for all wells, remove arsenic and uranium from Nos. 10 and 12 and provide a backup if one or more of the current wells has to go off line.

The loss of a well would cause (See WATER on Page 12A)

## County sets tax levy with proposed raise

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

k.davis@nwkansas.com

The Decatur County commissioners approved a county budget with a 2.882-mill increase in the property tax levy at their meeting last Tuesday, but held off on publishing the budget so they could look at it again.

John Mapes with Mapes and Miller, the county's auditors, talked with the commissioners and department heads at the meeting last Tuesday. On Tuesday, Aug. 25, the proposed 2009 budget had the county's property tax levy at 67.121.

At the end of the meeting last Tuesday, that number had increased by .093 of a mill, which is 2.882 above the 2003 property tax levy. Last year, the county levy was set

at 64.332.

Mr. Mapes said he had gone through the county's budget, and a few items jumped out to him. He suggested lowering the amount in debt service, for the Golden Age Center payment, from \$40,000 to \$10,000. That will then go up in the next few years, he said, and stabilize after three years.

He said he increased the county health department \$654, in addition to the \$25,000 the commissioners put back in that fund at the Aug. 25 meeting.

If the county's level of support drops for that department, said Mr. Mapes, the state will cut its support also.

With the additional \$654, he said, it's back up to the point that

the state won't cut any of the match for next year.

Another major item for concern, said Mr. Mapes, is the employee benefit line item that currently has \$251,000 in it.

There's no telling what will happen to the county's health insurance premium next year, he said. Yes there is, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch; it will go up.

Figuring a 25 percent increase in the premium next year, said Mr. Mapes, the county could still take \$100,000 out of the employee benefit line.

Before doing that, the budget was showing a property tax levy at 72 mills, 14 to 15 percent over last year, said Mr. Hirsch. The only way to cut (See COUNTY on Page 12A)

## Holiday spent at City Park

**ENJOYING LABOR DAY,** Tilus Zachary, 9, of Oberlin (above) played on the swings at City Park while Jordyn Beckman, 3, Grinnell, (right) made a sand angel. While the kids played, Frank and Margaret McEvoy (below) enjoyed a swing while keeping an eye on their grandson, Spencer Clay Beckman, 8 months, from Grinnell.



— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

## Museum free to all during Mini Sapa

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

k.davis@nwkansas.com

The Last Indian Raid Museum will be open, free of charge, for people to tour on Saturday, Oct. 3, during the annual Mini-Sapa Celebration.

Last year, the museum celebrated 50 years of business with activities, meals and entertainment. Director Sharleen Wurm said the biggest complaint from that day was that there was so much going on that people didn't have a chance to really tour the museum.

In the past few years, she said, a lot has changed at the museum, with a new office and new sitting area added.

This year for Mini Sapa, said Mrs. Wurm, the focus is going to be on giving people a chance to come to the museum and look around free of charge. With all the changes, she said, this is a perfect time for people

of all ages to come tour it.

The day will start with a pancakes-and-ham breakfast at 8 a.m. in the Bohemian Hall. The DCHS Singers will perform.

From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the board will cook and serve porkburgers and brats at the hall.

New this year, said Mrs. Wurm, the Oberlin Royal Neighbors plan to hold a taco bar for supper. It will be served for a donation and then the group will match the money for the museum.

Both breakfast and lunch will be served for a donation, with money going to the museum. Those meals will not be matched.

Mrs. Wurm said entertainment during the evening meal is pending.

Any vendors interested in setting up on the museum grounds that day should call her at 475-2712.

## Grocery assists schools

Raye's Grocery in Oberlin is launching the "Register Tapes for Education" program, which will help provide free equipment for Oberlin Schools.

The promotion, sponsored by Affiliated Foods Midwest, the store's supplier, began Sept. 1. Final deposit deadline will be April 14, with the redemption period in May.

Students plan to collect and save the receipts through the end of March, said Superintendent Duane Dorshorst. The schools will then earn points from Affiliated for the amount each customer spends.

Those points can then be used to buy equipment, including computers, science, band or sports equipment and more through a catalog, he said.

The receipts can be turned in to any student or dropped off at either the elementary and high school office.

There is also a box on the video counter at Raye's for customers to leave their receipts in.

An individual winner who collects the most points will be eligible for the grand prize of \$500 in free groceries for their parents and an iPod Shuffle. For complete contest rules, visit [www.shoppercredit.com/shoppercontest](http://www.shoppercredit.com/shoppercontest).

"It's our way of saying thank you for helping us enhance the education of our customers' children," said Raye's owner Kirk Brown.

## Fall sports section available in this edition

Inside today's *Oberlin Herald* is the 2009 Fall Sports section, featuring pictures and information on area student athletes.

The section is made possible by our advertisers, who sponsor the students. In it, you'll find pictures of the students at Decatur Community and Golden Plains high schools who are out for football, volleyball, cross country and cheerleading, along with their coaches.

See Section F.

THE OBERLIN HERALD'S  
**Fall Sports '09**

Decatur Community High School - Golden Plains High School



## Airport petition being passed

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

c.haynes@nwkansas.com

A petition to stop the planned Oberlin Airport expansion is being passed by opponents, who need 154 signatures needed to bring the issue to the council.

Oberlin City Administrator Austin Gilley said the city's airport committee has set up a public meeting on the issue for 7 p.m. Thursday at the Morgan Theater in The Gateway.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohofener offered to bring in a mediator provided through Decatur Tomorrow and the Public Square Communities program, but said it couldn't be done that soon.

Mr. Gilley said that the meeting Thursday is informational only. There will be a 30-minute overview of the airport plans and then a question period, but no debate will be allowed.

Former County Clerk Marilyn Horn and her husband Steve, who have been gathering signatures, were at

Thursday's city council meeting.

Later Mrs. Horn explained that the petition, which she said had gathered enough signatures in two days, would require the city council to pass an ordinance saying that it wouldn't use state or federal money at the airport for 10 years for anything except general maintenance. If the council refuses to do so, the matter would go to a vote, she said.

The petition is aimed at stopping the airport runway expansion, she said.

While she and her husband are helping with the petition, Mrs. Horn said, it was originally taken out by Howard and Joanne Lahman, who asked the Horns to help.

The petition will not be filed until after the meeting on Thursday, Mrs. Horn said.

Earlier in the meeting, business owner Frank Black had asked about \$72,000 the council has authorized (See PETITION on Page 12A)