

Rain slows fall harvest in county

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
k.davis@nwkansan.com

Fall harvest is just around the corner, although the rain last week might have slowed things down a little.

At least one Decatur County farmer cut some of his dryland corn crop prior to the storms. At Hansen Mueller grain in Oberlin, General Manager Joe Derauf said they took in 10,000 to 12,000 bushels two weeks ago Sunday before rain halted that operation.

Mr. Derauf said the corn was dry at 15.5 percent moisture or less and had a good test weight, ranging between 55 to 56 pounds per bushel. Industry standard on dryland corn is 56 pounds per bushel, he said, though earlier corn sometimes is a little different.

The grain brought in, said Mr. Derauf, was all from the same farmer in the county.

Although Hansen Mueller does still have wheat in the elevator, he said, they are ready to take the fall harvest.

The rain, he said, has slowed things down, but allowed farmers some more time for maintenance and to get things cleaned up and ready.

In another 10 to 12 days, said Mr. Derauf, he anticipates harvest will be going good, depending on

the weather and the location. Some farmers are going to drill their wheat first, once the fields dry up, then start harvesting, he said.

Downtown at the Decatur Co-op, General Manager Kurt Anderson, said he, too, thought harvest is still a couple of weeks away. This year is unlike other years, he said, with summer's wheat still in the elevators. He said they are making room for the fall crops, including sunflowers, corn, milo and soybeans.

Although the co-op doesn't get a lot of soybeans at the Oberlin elevator, he said, they do in Danbury, Norcat and Lenora, where more farmers have planted them. It's the same with sunflowers, except that crop is mostly planted around Oberlin.

The co-op, said Mr. Anderson, will have all its locations open for fall harvest with the exception of Ludell, which is still full of wheat.

The elevator has seen a sample of corn come in, he said, but they haven't received any loads yet.

With corn, said Mr. Anderson, they are looking for 15 percent moisture or less, while with milo, it's 14 percent moisture or less.

The forecast, according to the National Weather Service in Goodland, shows a 30 percent chance of rain or thunderstorms tonight and a 20 percent chance on Thursday.

Mini Sapa Day scheduled for Saturday

The Last Indian Raid Museum will be open all day Saturday, free of charge, for people to tour during the annual Mini-Sapa Celebration, which marks the 51st anniversary of museum's founding and of the Last Indian Raid on Kansas soil in Oberlin in fall 1878.

Last year, the museum celebrated its 50th Anniversary with events all day for Mini Sapa. This year, the board and director decided to hold fewer events and give people a chance to tour the museum instead.

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

In the morning, a bake sale will be held in the land office. The sale will start at 8:30 a.m. and end when the items are sold.

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

During that meal, said Director Sharleen Wurm, the Decatur County Helping Hands will serve

soda floats. The group helps raise money for county residents for out-of-pocket medical expenses.

That evening, the Oberlin Royal Neighbors will have a taco bar for supper in the hall. The taco supper will be served for a donation and then the group will match the money for the museum.

John Juenemann will play and sing during supper with Myrna Jones, who works at the museum, said Ms. Wurm, jazzing things up.

Breakfast and lunch will also be served for a donation, with the money going to the museum. Those will not be matched.

In the past few years, said Mrs. Wurm, lots has changed at the museum, including a new office area, genealogy spot and a sitting room. Items have been moved into different buildings on the grounds and a new wood awning is being put over the front entrance.

"Mini-Sapa will be a good chance for people to come see it all," she said.

Electric cooperative to finish line work here

By **STEVE HAYNES**
s.haynes@nwkansan.com

Contract power-line construction crews have pretty much departed the area since Norton-based Prairie Land Electric Cooperative ended its contracts with an Oklahoma firm.

C&H Power Line, based in Dewey, Okla., had dozens of workers in Oberlin for most of two years, rebuilding lines damaged in ice storms three and four years ago. The firm bought several houses and a motel, the former Oberlin Inn., to house crew members. It maintained a yard on North U.S. 83, and its trucks were a common sight in town.

Allan Miller, general manager of Prairie Land, said the cooperative has decided to try finishing up its rebuilding process with its own construction crews, now that the bulk of the work is done.

He said other firms which had contracts in Norton and Phillips counties also were wrapping up their work.

"As you know, we got hit by two really hard ice storms," Mr. Miller said, "one in November 2005 and one in December 2006."

He said the damaged lines, about 560 miles in Decatur County and 800 miles to the east, are mostly rebuilt now. The contract crews, he said, focused on the "three-phase" lines that serve most customers, leaving miles of single-phase lines to be done later.

"We wanted to see how much we could do ourselves," Mr. Miller said.

He said he thought C&H had as many as 80 workers in Oberlin at its peak, "especially early on."

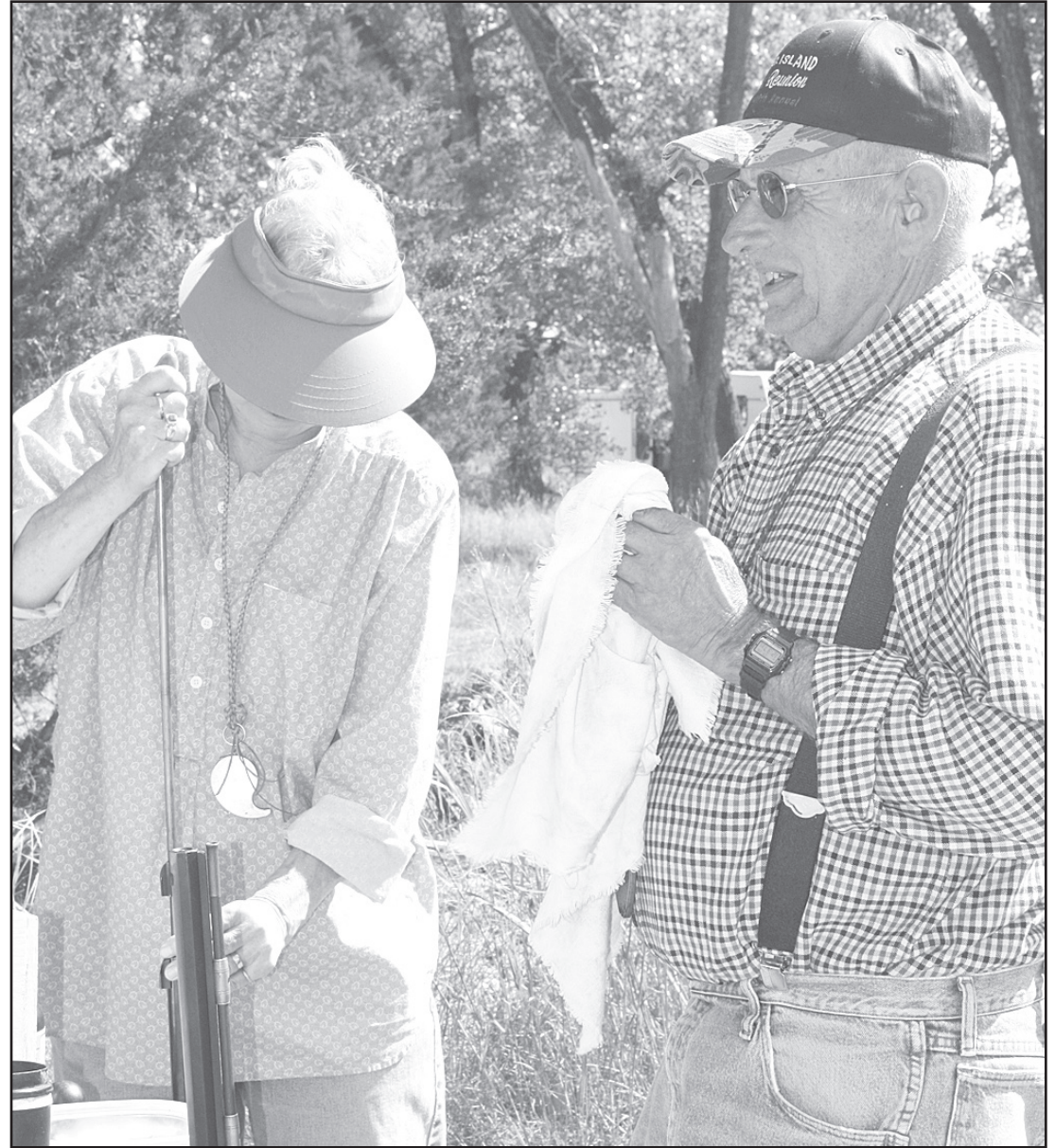
(See POWER on Page 12A)



Event draws shooters

AT SAPP PARK on Saturday, people from Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado tried their skills during the annual Black Powder Shoot. Bob Willis (above) of Benkelman, Neb., held his gun up after he took a shot while Eldon Roesener and his wife Edwina (right), also of Benkelman, loaded their guns for another try.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Petition back on council agenda

The Oberlin City Council plans to discuss a petition to bar spending any money for a new runway at the airport when it meets at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Morgan Theater at The Gateway.

The council decided to table a decision on the petition at the Thursday, Sept. 24, meeting, to allow time for a public meeting to get all the information about the project out to the public. That meeting will be held at 7 p.m. tonight at The Gateway.

At the meeting Thursday, the council will have three options on the petition. The council could approve it, which would approve the wording of an ordinance. The city wouldn't be able to spend any city, state or federal money on a new runway for 10 years.

The council could vote not to approve the ordinance, which would send the question to a public vote. The third option

would be to do nothing, which also would send the ordinance to a vote.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said the council will have the last mowing contract or agreement for the City Park and the north state park to approve. Larry Fought is the provider for those parks, but the contract hasn't yet been signed.

The city, said Mr. Gilley, received a review from the U.S. Department of Agriculture about a loan and rates for the waste water treatment plant. The department, he said, does an annual audit and analysis on the project. Basically, he said, the report shows that the city needs to review and possibly raise sewer rates, said Mr. Gilley. It shows a tight cash flow and a negative revenue in 2008, at least according to the department's numbers.

The meeting is open to the public.

Airport meeting set for 7 tonight

The Decatur Tomorrow steering committee will hold an information "conversation" tonight about Oberlin's airport expansion project.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the high school cafeteria. Gary Anderson, with the committee, said the group thinks it should be over by 8:30 p.m.

The setup for the night, he said, includes short point-of-view presentations from the airport committee and backers of a petition to block spending on a new runway. Then they will open the floor for questions.

Terry Woodbury, with Public Square Communities, who helped create Decatur Tomorrow, will moderate the questions.

This will not be a debate, said Mr. Anderson, but a positive conversation on the airport, regardless of anyone's point of view.

The steering committee encourages people to come talk about the project.

Questions answered

If you want to ask a question about Oberlin's proposed airport expansion project, proponents have an e-mail service anyone can send a query to.

The address oberlinairport@gmail.com has been set up for that purpose. Marcia Lohofener, a councilwoman who also serves on the airport committee, said an answer will be e-mailed back.

The group has also set up a page on the Facebook.com networking site called Oberlin Airport Committee with information about the project and the cost, she said.

Time in the sun



AT RECESS on Monday afternoon, Isabel Grafel played fall sun at Oberlin Elementary School.
—Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

*Power crews return home after two years

(Continued from Page 1A)
"I know they had quite a team of workers there and that can really help the economy," he said. "We had about 165 contract workers with three large contracts."

Mr. Miller said the co-op's construction crew had been tied up the last few years hooking up new oil wells and other connections, but with the drop in oil prices, that has died down.

In replacing the lines, most of which were repaired quickly after the storms, they are using bigger poles and shorter spans, along with stronger braided wire, so the lines will withstand more wind and ice.

"Ice forms on the line," he said, "and it's like an airplane wing. It just puts tremendous force on the poles."

Storm repairs, both temporary and the permanent replacement lines, are being paid for with \$70 million,

much of it from federal programs. The co-op received loans from the Rural Utility Service, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By comparison, Mr. Miller said, the normal construction budget runs about \$10 million a year.

The new lines have been upgraded from a design meant to withstand a "50-year event" to a "100-year event," Mr. Miller said.

"It's going to take a lot more force to bring these lines down," he said. "There are no guarantees, of course."

Construction work, he added, has started to pick back up this summer, with a little more oil activity, plus new grain bins and elevators.

C&H officials did not respond to calls about this article. Oberlin real estate agents said the firm apparently has its property here for sale through a company employee, but it's not listed locally.

City OKs payment for part of sidewalk

The Oberlin City Council approved a part payment for sidewalk work at the new Golden Age Center.

The council had already approved paying for the job, which was supposed to cost a little over \$3,000. Only part of the project is finished, he said, and the city has received a bill for \$2,800.

Mr. Gilley said at the meeting Sept. 17 that he didn't think it's good procedure to do a part payment, but he thought it was best for the council to make the decision.

Mayor Joe Stanley said he talked with Dallas Johnson, the contractor on the job, who said they have to wait to do the other sections of the sidewalk until the bricks are put on the building. That could be three weeks to a month, he said.

Councilman Bill Riedel said he would like to see Mr. Johnson paid for the work that's been done. The council agreed to do the part payment.

Mayor Stanley said he and Mr. Riedel had gone to a recent planning session for the 125th Anniversary of the city. There are lots of events in the works, said Mayor Stanley, and some that the city could possibly help with, including a free barbecue during the county fair.

The council could do something else if they would rather, he added.

Another idea, said Mr. Riedel, was seeing if some of the downtown businesses wanted to cost share the cost of plaques and do a walking or driving tour of some of the historic buildings in town, businesses and homes.

In other business, the council:
• Heard that the city made \$493

during the county auction at the end of August. Mr. Gilley said he would recommend putting the money in The Gateway fund, since most of the items came from the building. The council's consensus was to put the money there.

• Heard there's faulty wiring in The Gateway, which isn't helping the computers. Mr. Gilley said when the center was built, there was no building or electrical inspection. He said they have an electrician exploring the problem.

• Heard the city office will be closed Wednesday, Oct. 7, through Friday, Oct. 9, for training. Mr. Gilley said it will cost around \$3,500.

• Talked about the drainage ditch near Cole and Victoria, built a few years ago to drain the area around the hospital. Mr. Gilley said the city crew can't completely clean out the ditch, but it's been mowed. There aren't any flooding issues there, he said, but there are some farther east.

• Gave kudos to the water department and a round of applause for the work they've done at the Golden Age Center.

• Heard from Councilman Rob McFee, who asked about a dog he was told had been "arrested" at the school. He said he was told that it was the dog's second offense, but the dog was only 6 months old. It wasn't the dog's second offense, said Jeff Johnson, animal control officer, but it didn't have city tags and was loose.

• Heard that a councilman has received complaints about missing bricks on Cass Avenue that need to be replaced.

Schools to participate in swine flu vaccination

The Oberlin School District plans to send information home to parents about upcoming swine flu vaccine clinics at the schools.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst talked with the school board at a meeting Monday, Sept. 14, about the idea. He said the state is predicting that the H1N1, or swine flu, outbreak won't probably be as big as they initially thought. The vaccine targets people from 6 months to age 50.

This is the first flu, said Mr. Dorshorst, where the prevention campaign hasn't targeted the elderly.

The state's advice that he is getting is that they shouldn't shut the school down until they don't have the staff to run it. If a student has flu-like symptoms, they should be quarantined and then a parent will have to pick them up.

Another tip, he said, was as they progress into flu season and more people get sick, the schools might want to shut down their drinking fountains and have kids bring their own water.

In order to give the vaccines in school, he said, they will need written permission from a parent.

Commissioners approve 2008 audit

The Decatur County commissioners approved the 2008 audit at the meeting last Tuesday.

John Mapes, with the accounting firm of Mapes and Miller, presented the audit to the commissioners. Before he started the presentation, Commissioner Gene Gallentine said he wondered if the county can use the interest earned on certificates of deposit or if that goes back into the certificate.

Normally, said Mr. Mapes, the interest earned goes into the general fund, unless the treasurer has it set

up differently.
"If the county got into a pickle," said Mr. Gallentine, "it can't use the money in the CDs."

No, not without getting into no-fund warrants, said Mr. Mapes. In order to get no-fund warrants, it has to be for an unexpected expense, something that's not planned. It can't be that the county just spent too much.

The ambulance department looks like it's doing well, said Mr. Mapes. The director, Linda Manning, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, is re-

ally on top of getting the bills out on time and getting them collected. She's probably the best the county has had, he said.

The director has about an 80 percent collection rate, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy.

She has really made the bill collecting a priority, said Mr. Unger.

The county did bring in more revenue than had been budgeted, said Mr. Mapes.

The extension council formed a district with Norton County starting this year, said Mr. McEvoy, and

said it would decrease taxes, but the district's taxes actually went up.

Mr. Mapes said he hasn't seen any counties where an extension district started that the taxes went down. In all of the places, the taxes have gone up.

Mr. Mapes asked the commissioners to approve the audit, allowing the firm to send it in to the proper authorities. The commissioners voted to approve it.

District has a long 'to-do' list at school buildings

The Oberlin School Board heard about several projects on the list to be done at the high school and grade school, some sooner while others will be much later.

At a board meeting Monday, Sept. 14, Superintendent Duane Dorshorst talked about several items on the project list. Member Dan Grafel wanted to know if there was anything being done or planned for the gym lights at the grade school. It wasn't the first time Mr. Grafel has asked about the lights. Mr. Dorshorst said they have talked about replacing the bulbs with a type that uses less energy as they burn out.

Items on the list included:
• Repairing the parking lot at the high school. The south lot, said Mr. Dorshorst, is in terrible shape. It can be done in three stages, with the first one this winter after it freezes. He said the cracks will be their widest then and can be filled in. It will cost around \$17,000 to do the whole lot, he said.

• The sidewalks and east steps at the grade school. The superintendent said he had asked contractor John Nelson for an estimate.

• Water stains on the high school building. Mr. Dorshorst said he's checking into the price of soda blasting them off.

• Repairing the west wall of the cafeteria at the high school.

• New flooring in both schools. The floor upstairs at the high school, is peeling in places.

• Upgrading the receptacles in the older part of the high school.

• Replacing the lights in the grade school, as they burn out, with more efficient bulbs.

• Replacing some of the outside doors and locks at both schools.

• Looking for a two deck mower. Thank goodness, said Mr. Dorshorst, that the district has a mechanic who operates those mowers. He's really kept them going, the superintendent said.

The list of future projects included:

• A newer van.

• Possibly a car to use for meetings out of town.

• Taking the additions off the barn at the practice field.

• Expansion of the press box at the football field, which Mr. Dorshorst said will "probably never happen."

• Adding a few more outlets in

the junior high gym, since there are only two now.

• Replacing some windows in the older part of the high school and the junior high gym.

• Server consolidation for the network server room.

• Continue replacing thermostats and valves in the high school heating system.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Treasurer's office and Driver's License office will be closed Tuesday, October 6 for training.

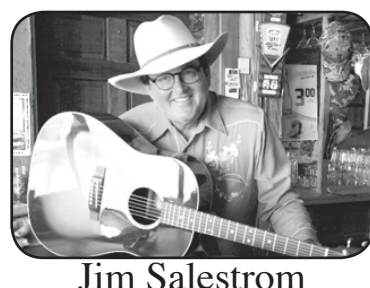
Public Notice

to Residents of Oberlin

The City Water Department will be Flushing City Water Mains Thursday – September 24 and Thursday – October 1 at approximately 10 p.m.

Please be aware that certain amounts of discoloration may appear in your domestic water supply.

Thank you for your cooperation
Austin Gilley, City Administrator



Suzy Bogguss

Concert will be on October 3, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
at Colby Community College Cultural Arts Center
(The college is at 1255 S. Range Ave., Colby, KS. The cultural arts center is on the SE side of the campus)

- The concert features Suzy Bogguss with Jim Salestrom as an opening act
- Sponsored by Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission and Western Plains Arts Association
- Season ticket event or \$20 adults/\$10 students grades 1-12 at the door
- For information call Ella Betts (785) 574-3557 or Mary Henzel (785) 470-0218



This program is presented in part by the Kansas Arts Commission, a state agency, and by the National endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

Classifieds
work!
Call
475-2006!