

Airport ordinance backer answers questions

To the Editor:
The time is drawing near for the citizens of Oberlin to cast their vote on the airport ordinance, so some items need to be cleared up.
The propaganda floating around by those in favor of the airport expansion seems to be using scare tactics by saying the air ambulances cannot land at the present airport. As we learned at the community meeting at The Gateway, there are four such airplanes that can land here now flying in from Denver. But the helicopters are mostly being used and they land directly at the hospital.

Another scare tactic has been the idea that we cannot do anything for 10 years if the voters stop the runway project at this time. That is not true: someone can have another ballot drawn up and again put it to the vote of the people.
Some of the same scare tactics were used to get The Gateway built. It is costing the Oberlin taxpayers an average of \$75,000 to \$100,000 a year to operate the Gateway, but yet the information put out back then was that it would be self supporting. An article on the front page of *The Oberlin Herald* issue of Feb. 28, 1991, said it would

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cost about \$20,000 a year to run and receipts would be coming in at around \$400,000. Those same receipt dollars are stated in the airport information.
Citizens of Oberlin, it is time to wake up and face the facts. As our ad said last week, we need to vote YES to stop the high cost to the citizens of the 7,000-foot runway project.
The propaganda sheet also said doctors would not come here. One

reason they said we needed The Gateway so the doctors could have access to special fiber-optic Internet, being able to tie up with the Mayo Clinic and other hospitals so we would be just as medically ready as the larger hospitals. Is that happening today?
I hope to show citizens what it will really cost us, the taxpayers, if this expansion happens. The airport will have to remain open round the

clock, so we will need at least three shifts of workers, and that will be added employees with added benefits as well as special training for the maintenance and operation of the new facility.
And what about the fact that in getting grant money, the city first must pay for all of the costs out of its own pocket and then hope that there are dollars so the city can be reimbursed with the promised state and federal money. Does the City of Oberlin have those dollars saved up to do this?
We have had the Y2K virus scare, the Bird Flu virus scare and now

the Spond virus scare. The only antidote for the Spond virus is a dose of common sense, and you get that by hard work and watchful care of your savings and spending.
This virus has hit the East and West coasts, and now it is trying to hit Oberlin. More dollars can be printed in Washington, but we are not allowed to do that, so the City of Oberlin must raise taxes to cover the normal maintenance of streets and utilities. We do not need to add more with this pipe dream. Vote YES to stop spending on the 7,000-foot runway project.
Stephen E. Horn, Oberlin

Woman says to vote 'no'

To the Editor:
Sunday when having lunch, I saw the table tents (about the airport election). They are confusing!
In order for Oberlin to grow, we have to make a start. Let the runway be built. Don't put a 10-year construction freeze on it. Vote no!
We don't know what tomorrow might bring. Someone out there might just bring to Oberlin the business and extra revenue to keep

Oberlin going.
Maybe we won't need the extra airport footage, but maybe, just maybe, we will.
And with it, we might be offered the opportunity to strengthen and save Oberlin's economy as well as give its people jobs. Oberlin just might see our children stay and flourish in their hometown.
As an over-50 adult, I would hope that my children and my grand-

children would benefit from the continuing life in Oberlin which will only be possible if we open our eyes and hearts to new possibilities.
Most times in business, you know you have to spend money to make money. I can't tell you that we will instantly recognize the benefit of the longer runway. I can't see into the future. But my heart is open to the possibilities.
Tamara Sporn, Oberlin

Reader wants expansion

To the Editor:
Perspective is good. The Kansas Department of Transportation studied the air transportation maps and decided Western Kansas needed a regional airport, and it might as well be at Oberlin.
In their words, "It's going to go in somewhere; Oberlin is the best location/first choice."
That's excellent news, by the way, if you or a loved one need to be flown out for medical emergencies.
Accordingly, the state is willing to spend \$1 million of our tax money we've been paying for years on establishing this vital infrastructure for us. The Federal Aviation Administration is willing to put up most of the rest, which finally brings a part of our federal taxes we've been paying back home.
This means the project will produce an incomparable return on investment for us, approaching 40 to 1. No stock can do that. And it gets better.
The 5,500 ft. runway will be even better news to our young people, as an access point for new businesses to fly in, and see how we can provide quality of life and a far better cost structure than they're experiencing now. Well selected companies bring real living-wage jobs that young families can build a future on.
Also, an airport is important to growing our own new businesses and connecting to world markets that value our quality. How we enhance our raw agricultural products, before we sell them will be a priority. Selling all raw products, such as wheat, corn, cattle, then buying back finished items such as combines doesn't work!
Companies that own aircraft tend to be successful. Successful business owners don't have time to drive out to see us, so the runway is the first vital signal to them that we're in business to land them. Proximity to Colorado is a huge plus.
The new runway at the airport is the best insur-

ance against ever-rising taxes, due to fewer people and fewer businesses to support needed services. Former and new residents are moving here, bringing their business experience and contacts. Together, we won't rest until taxes can come down!
By investing a little now, Oberlin and Decatur County would gain in both the short and long run, not to mention the wages and large cash flow into the economy here during construction.
The negative case is critical as well. If Oberlin and Decatur County were to abandon this project, we would never again get the time of day from either our U.S. or legislators, who have gone to bat for us. We would become the "poster child" for failure throughout the region. Young people would pack their bags to leave, and competing towns would cheer their new airports, built at our expense!
Successful completion of the airport project adds a major asset to our community. Like any other good property, you can make it earn income by leasing parts of it, locating income-producing business on it and using it to attract other valuable assets, like new transportation-based business, air-freight handling facilities and specialty business requiring an air commute. One councilman recommended designing an airpark, where busy executives can build second homes and business facilities near the airport, open their garage, and taxi their plane onto the runway instead of driving.
State and national governments are on our side in this, and we're being evaluated by outside business and new pioneers every day. Let's land this well for a better tomorrow for all of our current and future generations!
Lee E. "Doc" Franklin
Jennings
Decatur Tomorrow

Man argues for new runway

To the Editor:
Who would have thought the advocates and initiators of the proposed city ordinance to halt any and all improvements to the airport for 10 years would resort to half truths and deception to try to influence the citizens of Oberlin?
That is exactly what is happening, as illustrated by the ad in last week's paper urging citizens to vote "yes" on the ordinance. The ad, paid for by Stephen and Marilyn Horn and Howard and Joann Lahman, conveniently forgets to mention:
•The ordinance, if passed, would prevent even studying, planning or using any private money for airport improvements. Funny they would leave that part out.
•The ordinance, if passed, is in effect for 10 years. They didn't

mention that either.
The heading of the ad is deceptive in stating "Vote yes to stop the 7,000-foot airport runway expansion for the city of Oberlin."
The 7,000-foot runway is not being considered today, and the advocates for the ordinance know that. A 5,000-foot runway is being considered, and the Kansas Department of Transportation has advocated a 5,500-foot runway due to our northwest Kansas location.
The state has pledged to pay \$1 million to extend a new runway 500 feet, from 5,000 feet to 5,500 feet. I am sure everyone is aware that the Federal Aviation Administration would pay 95 percent of the cost of the proposed runway.
Unfortunately, the current so-called modifications and mandates

by the agency for the old runway will result in it being shortened by 300 feet, making it the next to shortest runway in all northwest Kansas. The lie of the land makes it prohibitive to extend the current runway.
A "yes" vote would prohibit Oberlin from determining its destiny and assure its premature demise. A "no" vote lets Oberlin determine its own future. A "no" vote is not a vote for the airport expansion but a vote to let Oberlin control its future.
The City Council makes the decisions if there are any airport improvements. Don't let a "yes" vote take away your and the council's voice in determining Oberlin's future.
Jim Wesch
Oberlin

900
The ~~800~~
pound
Gorilla



Just got a whole lot bigger!

That's right. The Gorilla has been growing. Already the biggest and most effective advertising medium in the Tri-State Region, **The Country Advocate** has been adding readers all year.
No more 800-pound weakling. Now **The Advocate** is the 900-pound gorilla of Northwest Kansas advertising!
First, **The Advocate** added nearly 1,550 new home-delivered households in Sherman County with readers of the all-

new, all-local *Goodland Star-News*.
Then, the Gorilla picked up 1,750 new home-delivered households in Norton County when *The Norton Telegram* joined the club.
When you need to sell something, find something or notify someone, the Gorilla is your best friend. Reaching 18,200 households with nearly 42,000 readers across northwest Kansas and eastern Colorado, the Gorilla packs a punch. It can move your

refrigerator or your old car. A house? No problem for the Gorilla. And all at rates that save you money.
And **The Advocate** is nearly all home delivered. Some "shoppers" count on people picking them up at the filling station. It's cheap, but it can't compare to home delivery reaching nearly every house in the area.
Just try it! The Gorilla will work hard for you. Call today with your ad.

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THE NORTON
TELEGRAM
215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
(785) 877-3361

THE OBERLIN HERALD
170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749
(785) 475-2206

Bird City Times
Box 167, Bird City, Kan. 67731
(785) 734-2621

The Saint Francis Herald
Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756
(785) 332-3162