

Grant started to replace van for the county

The Decatur County commissioners talked with the former county clerk about a grant she's working on through the Kansas Department of Transportation to get a new county bus.

Marilyn Horn, who retired from the clerk's position in January, still helps the county with the transportation grant, through which the county got a Chevy minivan in August 2003.

The county does need a new one, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy at the meeting Dec. 15, adding that since buying the minivan, the county has done \$6,000 of work to the 2002 vehicle.

At the end of November, said Mrs. Horn, the van had 70,000 miles on it. It's supposed to have 100,000 miles on it before it's replaced. By the time in 2011 when the grant would provide a vehicle, said Mrs. Horn, the van should have that many miles on it unless it just sits.

As part of the grant, she said, she is circulating letters for people who use the van to write what they use it for and why. Those letters can then be sent in with the grant application.

At a recent Kansas Association of Counties conference, said Commissioner Gene Gallentine, there was

talk about doing a regional transportation system for northwest Kansas. Buses and vans would be dispatched to pick people up and take them places, much like it's done by the county, but at a regional level.

That's just a farce, said Mrs. Horn.

The regional system, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, would use the buses and vans from all of the counties.

Mrs. Horn said the county bus here no longer goes out of town for trips. She added that she will include that in the grant information. It doesn't go out of town, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, because it's unreliable.

The transportation van has had work to the lift, the frame fixed and a variety of other repairs since it was delivered to Decatur County. There's a trick to get the doors open, said Mr. McEvoy, which he suggested to Mrs. Horn should be included in the information for the grant.

The county bought a former school bus from the Oberlin School District for \$1,511.

Mr. McEvoy suggested Mrs. Horn find out the trick needed to get the doors open and include that, too.

County signs to get flu money

The Decatur County commissioners signed a grant application for the county Health Department to receive \$14,763 from the state to pay for response to the H1N1, or swine, flu.

The Public Health Emergency Response grant has three phases, said Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin at a meeting Tuesday, Dec. 8, with the first for \$4,245, the second \$1,000 and the third \$9,518.

The commissioners had County Attorney Steve Hirsch look at the contract, then signed it after he made a few changes.

So far, said Ms. Gamblin, the county has had three confirmed cases of H1N1 flu, but only people who are hospitalized and have the symptoms are tested.

Ms. Gamblin said she had planned to be at the school that morning doing H1N1 vaccinations, but with the snow storm, school was canceled.

She also said her office should be getting some more regular flu vaccine for those still interested.

Randy Dicks, with Kaw Insur-

ance, was back with a bid from Corporate Plan for employee health insurance. The bid matches the current deductible and what the current drug card offers under Blue Cross and Blue Shield, he said.

The commissioners decided to wait until they could talk with Commissioner Gene Gallentine, who wasn't at the meeting.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said the county had received a supplemental bill for \$5,208 for the recycling program. He said he thought they had decided that Decatur County wasn't going to pay anything extra.

The commissioners tabled a decision to talk with Mr. Gallentine.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved the minutes from the Tuesday, Dec. 1, meeting.
- Mentioned that the ambulance director collected 87 percent for the bills for this year and 90 percent for 2008, which they said is amazing considering how low collections has been.

Businesses to close for New Year's Day

By MARYLOU OLSON
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Most Oberlin stores and businesses plan to be open during the day on Thursday, but nearly everything except convenience stores will be closed Friday for New Year's Day.

Federal, state, city and county offices, as well as all banks and the credit union, will be closed on Friday. The Decatur County Treasurer's office will close at noon on New Year's Eve and be closed all day Friday.

Post offices will be closed on Friday, but the mail will be delivered and offices open regular hours on Saturday.

Crossroads Express and Ampride convenience stores will be open regular hours both New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Dollar General will close at 6 p.m. on New Year's

Eve and be open New Year's Day.

D & M Sinclair and A&W Root Beer will close at 6 p.m. on New Year's Eve and be closed New Year's Day.

Raye's Grocery will be open until 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve but closed on New Year's Day.

The Frontier Restaurant will be open regular hours on New Year's Eve and closed New Year's Day.

Pizza Hut and Subway will be open both New Year's Eve and day.

The LandMark Inn's Teller Room and the Re-Load will be open regular hours on New Year's Eve but closed New Year's Day.

The Oberlin Library will close at 3 p.m. on New Year's Eve, be closed New Year's Day and open on Saturday.

City to meet New Year's Eve

The Oberlin City Council plans to hold an end-of-the-year meeting at 7 p.m. New Year's Eve at The Gateway.

The council will pay final bills, vote on amendments to the budget

and look at renewing beer licenses for Ampride, Crossroads Express, the Re-Load and Raye's Grocery.

The meeting, in the upstairs meeting room, is open to the public.



Snow, snow go away

ON SUNDAY, Phyllis Cramer (above) shoveled the driveway in front of his home on Hall Street, while on Christmas Eve, Vicky Ray (left) cleared the sidewalk in front of her store downtown. Snow showers and wind on and off all last week kept people busy trying to keep things cleaned off.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Marketing director looking at motel ideas

The Oberlin City Council heard from the Economic Development Corp. marketing director that things are moving forward on a new hotel, but slowly.

Connie Grafel said at the meeting Dec. 17 that she's talked with Sonny Patel from Colby, who has been here several times to look at the town.

There are several financing options for the project, she said. A bank here is asking for a feasibility study, so hopefully the city can work with Mr. Patel on that.

He is interested in the land at the southeast corner of The Gateway property. Mr. Patel has a Budget Inn in Colby, she said.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said he e-mailed the council members about the slope of the proposed circle drive on the south side of The Gateway. The slope as planned would be less than that on the roads into the center, he said.

The city will be publishing a bid notice for the project in the coming

weeks and opening them on Tuesday, Feb. 2.

The council held a 30-minute closed session with the mayor, council, administrator and attorney to discuss applicants for the city treasurer position, but made no decision.

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