

Storms delay corn, milo harvests

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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While it might not be normal for farmers to be in the field picking corn to ring in the New Year, that's exactly what's happening in Decatur County and around northwest Kansas.

Weather at the end of 2009 kept fields in this area wet, leaving farmers unable to pick corn and cut milo. Now it's 2010 already, and farmers are still trying to get their fall crops in.

With the farmers still in the fields, el-

evators are still accepting corn and milo. At Hansen Mueller's elevator in Oberlin, Janice O'Hare said they had taken in 1.9 million bushels as of Sunday. That's 600,000 bushels more than two years ago, she said.

By 2:30 p.m. Monday, the elevator had taken in 7,000 bushels for the day as farmers worked to get more of the grain in before snow forecast for this week.

According to the National Weather Service office in Goodland, Decatur County had a chance for flurries on Tuesday with

a 30 percent chance of a wintry mix that night. Today, the county has a 60 percent chance of snow with a 20 percent chance of blowing snow tonight. Thursday, a high of 4 degrees is expected.

Brian Olson, area agronomist with Kansas State University Research and Extension, said the big concern with the fall harvest now is the quality of the grain. The longer it stays in the field, he said, the more chance there is for fungus damage.

If the crop was only making 40 to 50 bushels, then farmers might leave it in the

field and let their cows out on it, he said, but when it's over 100, most will go ahead and pick it. Some still might choose to use that grain on the farm, because depending on the quality, there might not be a market for it.

No one wants 130-bushel corn going to seed, he added.

Mr. Olson said he can't remember a fall harvest lasting this long since he's been on the job, though he can remember it being like this when he was younger, having corn out in the snow.

There's been some concern about the summer wheat crop with recent storms and the wind. Mr. Olson said he would be more concerned about the wheat if there hadn't been moisture with the cold. Although the wind did blow up some dirt, the frozen ground and the wetness helped the new plants.

Although some farmers are worried, he said, most wheat is still in good condition. However, some wheat on terrace tops, where plants are more exposed, might have some damage.

Time to register for conference on agriculture

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Early registration is still open for the annual Cover Your Acres winter conference in Oberlin.

The conference, put together by Kansas State University Research and Extension and the Northwest Kansas Crop Residue Alliance, will cover topics on no-till farming for area producers.

Cover Your Acres, said Brian Olson, K-State regional agronomist, is designed to provide information on lots of different topics and give farmers a place to ask questions from experts in the industry and with the university.

"It also gives farmers a great place to talk with the guy who lives 60 miles away and get their perspective on something," he said.

After the 2009 conference, said Mr. Olson, he put together a list of 60 topics and sent them out to the farmers who attended, as well as an evaluation form for the conference. From that, he said, organizers developed the topic ideas for the next year.

They are "farmer-driven" topics, he said, adding that he listens all year for anything new or different that needs to be added to the two-day conference.

While the conference will be held for two days, Tuesday, Jan. 19, and Wednesday, Jan. 20, the same topics will be covered both days at the same times, so farmers can choose one or the other.

Some of those topics include weed control in fallow fields, com-

(See WINTER on Page 5)

Group builds home for Mexican family

By **CAROLYN PLOTTS**
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Juarez. Just like the beach without the water.

That's the slogan on a T-shirt worn by one member of our team of volunteers from Decatur and Norton counties which completed a mission trip to the Mexican city in late October.

The team built a house for a Mexican family in Juarez, a city of 2 million across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas.

Making the trip were Deanna Castle, Oberlin; Jim and Carolyn Plotts, Norcat; Ed and Melba Witt and Charla Sprigg, Norton; and the Witts' daughter, Kylie Witt, Manhattan. It took two days to drive to El Paso, where the team met a representative of Casas por Cristo (Houses for Christ), a ministry that pairs volunteer work teams with families and guides them through the building process.

The family of a single father, Juan Carlos, including two young sons, a married daughter and her husband and baby boy, had been chosen to receive a new home. They had all been living in a two-room house about 10 feet wide by 20 feet long, under a leaky roof.

A group of Mexican ministers meets once a month to present

and consider applications from families. Since the unrest in Juarez has received so much attention, the number of teams willing to come to the city has dropped, they said. In previous years, over 400 houses could be built in a year. However, this year, only about 150 went up.

"Sure, we heard about the drug wars," Mr. Plotts said, "but, the staff at Casas por Cristo assured us Juarez is still safe. And I know they would not ask us to come if it wasn't.

"We felt perfectly safe the entire time and never worried, even once, about our safety. Besides, it's even more important now that Christians step up to help."

The team of seven built a simple frame home in about 3 1/2 days. It would have been three, but work was shut down on the third day by a cold spell, complete with wind, rain and hail.

The stuccoed house has a concrete floor, insulated walls and ceiling, electrical wiring, two windows and a door. The house measures 22 feet long by 11 feet wide and has a single-slope roof.

"This year I was able to help with every phase of the building except the roof," said Mrs. Castle, on her second trip. "This trip was different from my first because the family

(See TEAM on Page 5)

Food drive hits goal

The annual Stanley Hardware food drive ended last week 242 items over the goal.

Just after lunch on Monday, the store had 2,242 items of non-perishable food, cleaning supplies and toiletries showcased in the south window.

The goal was for 2,000 items by

the New Year. The drive started just after Thanksgiving with 185 items delivered before the official start of the drive, said Owner Joe Stanley.

The items were to be taken to the Decatur County Food Pantry in the basement of the United Church. Mr. Stanley said he was going to try to set that up for Tuesday.

Wrong picture printed

A picture printed on the front page of the Dec. 30 edition of *The Oberlin Herald* last week wasn't of Lora Marietta, but her sister Loni. The picture was mislabeled in the paper's data base. This was a reporter's error.

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The Oberlin Herald will cor-

rect or clarify any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at 475-2206 to report errors. We believe that news stories should be fair and factual, and appreciate your calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.



AT THE SUNFLOWER CINEMA on New Year's Eve, before the movie started. Susan May (above) volunteered at the concession stand. Kurt Anderson (below) watched his daughter Elli play air hockey

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Theater rings in new year

More than 70 people spent part or all of New Year's Eve at a movie marathon and party at the new Sunflower Cinema.

The theater opened for three movies that night, with video games in the lobby. Some people, said Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., attended more than one movie, while others just came for one.

Opening the theater for New Year's Eve, he said, just gave people another alternative for the evening. The earlier movies probably drew more people than the late one, he added.

Members of the corporation's board and Duane Dorshorst, with the theater board, volunteered to work the concession stand and box office.

Kids and adults played on the arcade games, air hockey and a Wii, and then piled into the new theater for the shows.

This is probably the first of many New Year's Eve celebrations at the theater, he said.

The evening made a little over \$600, which will go into the operating account for the theater.

So far, said Mr. Lohofener, at least half of the shows at the new theater have been sold out. People need to come early to get their tickets, he said, but they can play games to fill in the time.

The next few weeks' movies have



already been selected, with Disney's "The Princess and the Frog," rated G, showing Friday, Saturday and Sunday this week; "Avatar" rated PG-13 the weekend of Friday, Jan. 15; and "Alvin and the Chipmunks - The Squeakal" rated PG starting Friday Jan. 22.

Regular show hours are 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday. Regular movies cost \$5,

while 3D movies cost \$6.

To the north of the theater is the last part of the new Main Street community center.

Mr. Lohofener said he thinks they have about 40 percent of the \$40,000 needed to complete the youth recreation on that side, but still need to raise the rest of that amount, plus money to finish the bowling alley.

People can make cash donations by contacting him at 475-3322 or Connie Grafel, marketing director for the corporation, at 475-2901. People can also make grain donations at Oberlin elevators.



County signs application for exemption

The Decatur County commissioners signed a tax exemption application and mailed it to the state for the new Golden Age Center.

While the center is owned by the county, that doesn't make it automatically exempt from taxes.

Appraiser Alan Hale brought in the application for the commissioners to sign. He added that the county needed a \$50 check to go with the application.

Mr. Hale and County Attorney Steve Hirsch talked about the application and the need for a fee structure for when people rent or use the building. Mr. Hirsch said the commissioners didn't have that. The application asks for that fee schedule, Mr. Hale said.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said the county needs to say that there is a fee schedule and that the money helps pay for maintenance and utilities.

The other part of that, said Mr. Hirsch, is that the schedule needs to be attached to the application. Also he asked, does the Area Agency on Aging pay the center anything for using the building for the senior meal site. At this time there isn't a charge to the agency.

Mr. Hale went to talk with the representatives at the Golden Age Center about the fee schedule. Later, the schedule was attached to the application and the commissioners signed it and sent in the application.



MISSION TEAM MEMBERS (above) worked to level the building site before the concrete foundation could be poured for the house they were building for a Mexican family.

Deanna Castle (below) wore the electrician's hat as she drilled holes to wire the house she helped build in October. This was Mrs. Castle's second mission trip to Juarez.

*Team builds house

(Continued from Page 1A) spoke pretty good English. We were really able to communicate with them. They were a really neat family.

"Juan Carlos, his sons, Irvin and Diego, and his son-in-law Jesus really pitched in and helped. They wanted to learn all they could about the building process. Juan Carlos' daughter Brenda loved to paint and she helped when she wasn't at work or taking care of baby Andres. It was a great experience and I can't wait to go back."

Cost of materials to build the house was \$4,100.

This money is raised by the team and sent to Casas por Cristo a month before arrival in El Paso. The agency buys all the material and has it waiting at the site when the team arrives.

The agency also provides all the power and hand tools, so team members don't need to bring a thing.

One thing this team did bring, however, was a box of 15 Spanish Bibles and 15 children's evangelism packets. Christians in Oberlin provided money to buy the materials to be distributed to people in the neighborhood.

On completion of the house, a dedication ceremony is held. The keys to the home are presented to the family along with a Spanish Bible.

"This was the second house I've helped build," Mrs. Witt said, "and it's very emotional for me. When Juan Carlos was thanking us for his new home, he started crying, and I did, too."

"Actually, we were all crying. I know he was very appreciative of what we had done. My husband and I are already planning our next trip."

Casas por Cristo builds houses year-around with teams from churches, colleges and clubs from all over the United States, Canada and some places overseas. Besides Juarez, the ministry group operates



in Acuna, a border town across the river from Del Rio, Texas. To learn more about a short mission trip to Mexico, go to the organization's website at www.casasporcristo.org.

City OKs licenses to sell beer in town

The Oberlin City Council held a brief meeting on New Year's Eve to renew beer licenses, approve amendments to the 2009 budget and talk behind closed doors about a possible purchase of real property.

The council held a 15-minute closed session for "preliminary discussion of the acquisition of real estate" with the council, mayor and city attorney. There was no action taken.

The council approved adopting the amendments to the 2009 budget by a unanimous vote afterward.

Budget amendments were needed in the general, library, water, Gate-

way and Community Growth funds because the city had spent more than was budgeted in each, although not more than the city had available.

City Administrator Austin Gilley invited any of the council members into his office to see all of the financial reports the city's new system can produce.

License renewals to sell beer, or cereal malt beverages, were approved for the Re-Load, Crossroads Express, Ampride and Raye's Grocery.

The meeting was over in 25 minutes.

Council to discuss group's priorities

The Oberlin City Council plans to discuss council priorities at a meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said the council also plans to talk about how to divide up pay increases already budgeted for the

year. Mr. Gilley said a hiring recommendation for the treasurer's job is also on the agenda.

The meeting will be held upstairs in The Gateway and is open to the public.

Tech college students making home efficient

An older white house in Goodland is being transformed into an efficient two-bedroom, two bath home by the carpentry, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning classes at the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

A crowd of more than 80 people including students and officials from the college, the Goodland Chamber Ambassadors, city and school district officials, high school students, former tech college officials and friends of the college gathered for a special 'green' ground breaking at the end of August.

College President Dr. Ed Mills, said he believes the project to rehabilitate the house will be a great benefit to the area. He said students planned to strip the house and convert it into an energy-efficient dwelling that could be a model for the community and the state.

He said he liked the idea when it was suggested when he came to town in May. He said he liked the idea of making it a green project and the college began looking for a

suitable house.

He said Rose Koggie helped locate the house, which was donated to the college by Dennis and Linda Saint.

Six Goodland High students are helping, planning the interior decoration of the house.

Bryant Nemecheck, carpentry instructor at the college, said the electricians are now wiring the interior and the plumbing, heating and air conditioning students will be the next group to work on the inside before the interior walls can be finished.

The house has been stripped. Students added four feet to the south side plus a new roof and porch.

Sarah Short, high school family and consumer sciences teacher, said the six girls in her Career and Life Planning class have been researching things like 'green' paint and efficient fixtures and lighting to help reduce utility costs for the home.

The college plans to have the place completed in the late spring or early summer.

*Winter crop conference scheduled

(Continued from Page 1A) mon production problems, long-term crop rotation results, cover crops of western Kansas, a guide for setting up on-farm research and getting started in agriculture, to name a few.

Early registration closes Tuesday and costs \$18 for each day. It's important to include which day a

person plans to attend and the names of each person being registered, Olson said.

The fee is \$35 for both days for early registration. After the cutoff, it will be \$45.

Registration can be mailed to Northwest Area Extension Office, attention Brian Olson, Box 786, Colby, Kan. 67701.

While a few people have already registered, Mr. Olson said, it seems that 90 percent register in the last two days before the deadline.

The conference will be held at The Gateway, at the intersection of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83. It's the seventh year for the winter conference, Olson added.

This year, "diamond" sponsors

include the Decatur Co-op Association, Pioneer Seed, Hoxie Implement, Lang Diesel, Sims Fertilizer, Crop Production Services, Monsanto, Cargill AgHorizons, the High Plains chapter of the National Sunflower Association and Farm Credit of Western Kansas.

Three arrested for marijuana in Thomas County

Late last Tuesday evening, the Thomas County Sheriff's Office and the Colby Police Department arrested three Colby residents for possession of marijuana with intent to sell.

Sheriff Rod Taylor said that a combined investigation by the

departments led them to the house at 690 N. Cleveland. A warrant was issued and three officers started to search the house about 9 p.m.

Sheriff Taylor said they found 212 grams — about half of a pound — of marijuana, along with \$2,649 in cash in a bedroom.

Dustin Lane Stiner, 27, and Amanda Marie Hanley, 20, were arrested at the house for possession of marijuana with intent to sell or distribute. Copelen Kyle Justice, 18, was later arrested at his home at 1155 Summer Sun.

The sheriff said the search took

several hours, and it was 1 a.m. by the time Ms. Hanley and Mr. Stiner were booked. None of the three had been released on bond as of Monday morning. He said he thought the three would have a first appearance in District Court on Monday.



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