

## Play plan top topic for group

Around 40 people talked about recreation needs for the county last Wednesday, with the most popular item being a year-around recreation director or a "go-to" person, a central location or a person in charge of the program.

The meeting at the Golden Age Center started with a program by representatives of the recreation program in Greeley County.

Christy Hopkins, community development director, said they have been fortunate to be able to build a recreation program from the ground up.

With her she brought Angie Woelk, who serves on the recreation board and is the high school counselor, and Melissa Woelk, the recreation director.

Ms. Woelk said people didn't like the fact that kids had to go to other towns to find something to do. People wanted to keep them in town and wanted to get more use out of existing facilities. The first focus was on a recreation center, she said, with a workout room, pool and walking track.

The community found that was maybe too big an idea for the small town, however.

Instead, said Ms. Woelk, they started out with another program, summer softball. They asked the county commissioners to pay for a part-time director. The commissioners said OK, but wanted the group to take the money for the swimming pool and find someone to manage it.

The league was a success, she said, with seven adult teams.

The next year, they went back to the commissioners and asked for \$17,000 for the part-time director. The board got \$120,000, but had to be in charge of the pool and golf course. That's when the recreation board was formed.

Ms. Woelk said they didn't focus just on sports, but all activities that improve the quality of life for the

## County offers activities

During the Decatur Tomorrow Community Conversation, participants received a list of recreation programs or projects done in Greeley County, including activities from sports to playing in the park.

- Items on the list included:
- coed softball.
  - youth baseball.
  - "From Couch to 5K."
  - softball scorekeepers' clinic.
  - Wii tournament at the library.
  - play day in the park.
  - sidewalk chalk contest.
  - mud volleyball tournament.
  - paintball adventure.
  - watermelon eating.
  - "Wallow in the Mud" and mud castle contest.
  - dodge-ball tournament.
  - lawnmower race.
  - horseshoe tournament.
  - barn dance.
  - youth soccer.
  - adult coed soccer.
  - adult coed volleyball.
  - youth soccer camp.
  - "Teaming for Kids Day" programming.
  - potato bake fund raiser.
  - carefree day.
  - Court Appointed Special Ad-
- (See GREELEY on Page 5A)

people.

This year, she said, the board receives \$142,000 from the commissioners. That includes the money for running the pool and the country club.

(See CONSENSUS on Page 5A)

## Wrestling coach earns top honor

By CYNTHIA HAYNES  
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Longtime Decatur Community High wrestling coach Joe Dreher was honored by state officials with a sportsmanship award during the Class 3-2-1A state tournament in Hays over the weekend.

Coach Dreher, who has taught and coached at Oberlin for nearly 15 years, was honored by Kansas wrestling officials for the sportsmanship he regularly displays on the sidelines.

"While many coaches jump up and down and yell at their boys, Coach Dreher sits and watches mostly in silence," said Oberlin Herald sports reporter Cynthia Haynes, whose son wrestled for

Oberlin in the late '90s. "He doesn't scream. He doesn't get mad. He tents his fingers under his chin occasionally, and when the match is over he congratulates the winner, whoever it is. Then sometimes he talks quietly to his wrestler."

Oberlin Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said the wrestling officials chose Coach Dreher for the award. The superintendent said he thinks it's well deserved.

"If you have ever watched Coach Dreher on the sidelines he is one of the coaches that doesn't yell or scream," said Mr. Dorshorst. "He is well respected by the wrestling officials."

Mr. Dorshorst said he isn't aware (See COACH on Page 5A)

## Census forms sent out to homes

Census forms were mailed or delivered Monday to roughly 12 million American homes as the government begins its once-a-decade count of everyone living here.

People are urged to fill them out and return them. Those who do not mail the form back can expect a visit from a census taker at their door to ask the questions from the form.

The form has 10 questions about residents' ages, date of birth and whether or not the head of household owns the home. The head of household's Social Security number is not needed and never asked.

The bureau uses the information strictly for statistical purposes. By law, personal information cannot be shared with anyone. Using this information, the bureau can provide a portrait of the population through the census, which helps determine the number of seats states get in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The census also helps communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal money each year for things like hospitals, job training centers, schools, senior centers, bridges and other public works projects and emergency services.



AT THE GRADE SCHOOL Monday afternoon, Celianna Shobe and Cassidy Gillespie (above) held the U.S.A. banner high as they paraded through the gym.

Connor Milton (below) got ready to take a big bite from his chocolate-chip cookie.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

## Students win gold at school

Oberlin Elementary School students waved flags and carried banners for the countries they researched over the last two weeks during the Manners Olympics.

The students started the Manners Olympics the Monday after the Winter Olympics kicked off in Canada.

Kids in kindergarten through sixth grade had the chance to earn medals, said Mardi Lohofener, the school's special education teacher, for their good manners and behavior in music, gym, art, library and band classes and at lunch or by keeping their classroom lean. At the end of each day, medals the students earned were tallied up and a running count was kept in the hallway outside the gym.

Each class had a country they learned about during the week, and that class then represented that country.

Monday afternoon, the students paraded around the gym with homemade flags and banners of their countries before finding out which one had won.

The kindergarten through third grade competed against each other, with Kimberly Witt's second grade receiving the most medals.

The fourth through sixth grades also competed with Belinda Jones' fifth grade winning.



The winning classes, said Mrs. Lohofener, earned a banquet that will be served one day at lunch with special decorations, desserts and punch.

Each class was asked to research and make an estimate on how many medals their country was going to win at the Olympics, she said. Mrs. Witt's class won, estimating that Germany would win 30 medals — which turned out to be right.

Mrs. Lohofener said they decided to do the Manners Olympics at the grade school because teachers thought the kids could stand some improvement in their behavior and manners. She said they thought having it coincide with the real Olympics would make it fun.

The students' manners and behaviors did improve, she said. Even better, at first, the kids wanted to do well to win a prize, but

they found that the good manners and behavior will then carry over into everyday life.

Teachers on the committee besides Mrs. Lohofener were Cindy Sattler, Sandy Ketterl, Mrs. Witt and Linda Glaze.

All of the students received cookies at an assembly Monday afternoon for participating in the Manners Olympics.

## Mayor looking for volunteers to serve city

Oberlin's mayor is looking for people who want to serve on the City Council.

With Councilwoman Marcia Lohofener resigning, there will be a seat open at the end of the month.

Although the appointment is on the agenda for the council's

meeting Thursday night, Mayor Joe Stanley said he won't appoint anyone for at least two weeks. He said two people have said they are interested. Anyone else who is interested should contact him.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said the city received a complaint

about a blighted property, and that will be on the agenda. He didn't say where it is, but that will be discussed at the meeting.

Also on the agenda are council priorities and an update on the city's committees and boards.

Mr. Gilley said he received a

contract from J.L. Construction for the circle drive on the south side of The Gateway, in front of the main entrance.







**COACH JOE DREHER** sat on the sidelines at the state wrestling meet Friday and Saturday in Hays. On Saturday, he received a sportsmanship award from Kansas high school wrestling officials. — Photo by Jordan Dreher

## \*Coach receives sportsmanship award

(Continued from Page 1A) of another wrestling coach here who has received this award. Coach Dreher started out in Oberlin as the wrestling coach and a full-time substitute in the fall of 1995. Since then he has taught physical education, seventh-grade science and study skills

and coached track and field. He was named activities director for Decatur Community Junior/Senior High in 2007 after the resignation of Randy Olson. This year, along with being athletic director and head wrestling coach, Mr. Dreher will also be assistant track coach. In the past,

he has coached the track teams for both the junior and senior high students. Coach Dreher graduated from Fort Hays State University in December 1994 with a bachelor's degree in physical education. He was a substitute teacher in Plainville and Hays in the spring of 1995

before coming to Oberlin. He is married to Melissa, a secretary at the high school who coaches junior high girls basketball. They have two children, Jordan, a junior at Decatur Community High, and Dayton, who is in junior high.

## \*Consensus is for recreation director

(Continued from Page 1A) The board charges for the activities, she said. For instance, if someone wants to play softball, it's \$20 for the first person in the family and an additional \$5 for each relative. The definition of recreation, said Ms. Woelk, doesn't say sports, and it doesn't say that a person's hands have to be busy, either. As the recreation director, she said, it's her job to respond to community needs. She added that she wants to increase the quality of the life for the people who live in Tribune and the county. Ms. Woelk said she gets a lot done by teaming up with community businesses, organizations and individuals. When she plans, she likes to think about how she can add to something that already exists. The recreation department borrows a lot of equipment from the school, said Ms. Woelk. That keeps the cost down. The most expensive part then is the T-shirts for an event or league. Ms. Woelk is the contact person for recreation. She is the central person and people know that. Young families are moving back to Greeley County, she said, and

the recreation program has helped because it gives them something to do. There's been nothing in the last four to five years, said Ms. Hopkins, that has changed the attitude of the community members as much as the recreation program. Joe Dreher, activities director at Decatur Community High, whose served as the summer recreation director the last few years, asked if the community didn't have a summer ball program before. There was one at one time, said Ms. Hopkins, but it died out. Kids were going across county and state lines to play ball. Ms. Hopkins said they haven't really seen much burn-out of volunteers, even with the amount of activities, because different people help with the ones they are interested in. Most of the activities are in town, said Ms. Woelk, but for others, such as wrestling, the kids do fund raisers. Sports programs go from preschool age to junior high. Stephanie Blau, Oberlin swim team coach, asked if the county has a swim team. Ms. Woelk said they have looked into it, but found their pool is a foot too shallow for

meets. What's the relationship with the schools? asked Oberlin Superintendent Duane Dorshorst. Ms. Woelk said the recreation department has a great relationship with the school and uses the school gym as long as there aren't games or practice going on. The 40 people broke into small groups to discuss what they would like to see happen in Decatur County. Many of the groups came up with the same ideas. Those included:

- Re-energizing existing events.
- Coed youth ball.
- Adult basketball and volleyball.
- Making fund raising not the responsibility of someone other than the coaches.
- Have someone head up the recreation program.
- Utilizing existing facilities better.
- Get people from other communities to come to Decatur County functions.
- Aerobics and runs at Sappa Park.
- Adult fitness activities.

There was some discussion about whether there was money available

to hire a director or have a recreation department. The county budget is \$9,000 for the summer ball program, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy. The city, said City Administrator Austin Gilley, has a parks and recreation budget and a pool budget, although he isn't sure how much money there is. It depends on how it's set up. In Greeley County, said Ms. Hopkins, they used money that was pretty much already being spent on recreation. It seems like there is a good consensus on where to go from here, said Gary Anderson, Decatur Tomorrow steering committee member. In the short term, he said, they will form an action team that will probably meet weekly for six weeks. At least that was what was done with Sappa Park to come up with a plan. He asked each of the tables to come up with a name of someone who should be involved. After the next steering committee meeting, he said members will be contacting people.

## \*Greeley County offers lots of programs

(Continued from Page 1A) vocates poker run.

- haunted house.
- pumpkin decorating and carving.
- Halloween downtown event.
- youth costume party and dance.
- fund-raising cakewalk.
- wrestling.
- new playground equipment.
- open gym.
- dart tournament.
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation class.
- youth basketball.
- ice cream social at the community

talent show.

- "Bal-a-vis-x."
- karate.
- adult coed basketball league.
- casual adult coed basketball league.
- youth basketball.
- father-daughter date.
- baseball field renovation.
- pool tournament.
- community volunteer appreciation celebration.
- bicycle safety day.
- family sidewalk chalk.
- full moon in June, family run/walk,

5K and 10K.

- Mad Scientist of Greater Wichita program.
- Fourth of July celebration.
- pilates.
- gymnastics.
- Zumba gold.
- ultimate Frisbee tournament.
- "Bowling Rocks."
- monthly community potluck.
- farm safety day.
- community and youth center open

Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

- wrestling clinic.
- youth girls volleyball.
- youth boys flag football.
- Super Bowl party.
- movie, popcorn and craft.
- craft time.
- men's flag football league.
- fund-raising poker tournament.
- ladies tennis.
- foster parenting class.
- Easter activities.

# Plan involves replacement of five bridges here

The Decatur County commissioners approved a five-year plan to replace six bridges with help from state and federal money.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said with the plan, the county pays 20 percent and the government 80 percent. That's after the county pays for any right of way work, moving utilities and engineering, he noted.

The bridges included in the plan are located:

- 3.4 miles south and 9.1 west of Dresden.
- 8.5 miles north and 4.4 miles west of Norcatour.
- 4.7 miles south and 4.4 miles west of Oberlin.
- 1.1 miles north and 7.1 miles west of Dresden.
- 1 miles north and 7.1 miles west of Dresden.
- 7.9 miles south and 8.4 miles west of Oberlin.

State engineers will be in the county next week to inspect bridges, said Mr. Stallman. Depending on what the engineer finds, some bridges could need to be inspected more often. That could cost the county \$1,000 a bridge, he said.

The commissioners voted to approve the five-year plan, with no opposition during a public hearing.

The commissioners received a letter from High Plains Mental Health asking for money to help make up a budget shortfall. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said the county would most likely get a

## County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Approved a five-year bridge plan, including six bridges scheduled to be replaced with state and federal money. Story at left.
- Set the annual free landfill week for the last part of April and beginning of May. Story to come.
- Agreed to pay for two emergency medical workers to take classes to become trainers. Story on Page 3A.

second letter, since that one had an extra three added onto the valuation for Sheridan County, making it over \$300 million.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked with Ken Rohr with Pitney Bowes about the postage machine. The five-year lease is just about up, he said. The commissioners decided on a machine that would automatically weigh each piece of mail and put the right postage on it. The five-year lease will cost around \$248 a month.
- Talked briefly with Sheriff Ken Badsky, who had a bid for a new vehicle, but asked him to bring it back next week when they can look at all the bids.

## City might be out money from state

The city shouldn't plan on getting the \$50,000 it normally receives from the state each year for the special highway fund this year, the Oberlin City Council heard in a report on meetings in Topeka.

It was one of the items Mayor Joe Stanley told the council at the meeting on Thursday, Feb. 4, that he brought back from the Kansas League of Municipality City Hall Day in Topeka at the beginning of the month.

Mayor Stanley told the council at a meeting Thursday, Feb. 4, that delegates were told that the state plans to keep that money this year. That's about half of the revenue for the fund, which pays for street repairs, he said.

There wasn't a lot good to say about money or budgets, said Mayor Stanley.

He said he thinks the state has a two-part plan to balance the budget. "Part A," said Mayor Stanley, "was to take our money. Part B was to repeat part A until it's balanced."

The state is \$390 million short at least this year, he said, and possibly more. There was some talk about getting rid of the gas

tax, then charging sales tax on fuel, said Mayor Stanley. That way, revenue would increase with the prices.

Mayor Stanley said he and City Administrator Austin Gilley met with Sen. Ralph Ostermeyer that morning and he said the budget situation doesn't look good. There wasn't a lot of good news.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a resolution not to use Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Mayor Stanley said most city's don't abide by those rules, and the accountants say not to.
- Heard that Decatur Tomorrow is planning a "community conversation" to talk about a recreation coordinator and program at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at the Golden Age Center. Councilwoman Marcia Lohofener said two people from Greeley County will be there to talk about what's been done there recently.
- Talked briefly about a possible new motel. Mrs. Lohofener said she's heard that money to finance commercial ventures is pretty tight.



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## Home show scheduled

You can learn about everything from cell phones to siding to appliances at the annual Farm and Home Show coming to Oberlin. The show, sponsored by KFNF Radio, is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. next Saturday, March 13, at The Gateway. General Manager Bryan Loker

said last year was the first year the station was the sole sponsor of the show. Before that they teamed up with the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce. The station puts on the show as a service, he said. Booths will be selling cell phones, roofing, siding, appliances and more.

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