

Harvest takes five months to finish

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Fall harvest, or winter harvest as some have joked, seems to be mostly over, although there are still a few crops left in the field around the area.

While the first load of fall grain came in on Sept. 18 to the Decatur Co-op elevator in Oberlin and Sept. 28 to Hansen Mueller, it wasn't until last month that the last load arrived — a five-month span.

Dalene Horton, grain merchandiser

at Decatur Co-op, said this has been the longest fall harvest since she's been in the industry, more than 30 years.

Ms. Horton said the co-op took its last load by the middle of February. She said she knows at least one farmer who isn't finished, but he has to go through a big draw to get to the crop and it hasn't been dry enough.

The co-op hasn't taken in much since the first to middle of February. Normally, said Ms. Horton, fall harvest is done by the end of November, although last year it did go

until Christmas for some people.

The crop ended up really good, she said. It sounds like everyone was really satisfied with their yields. She added that she doesn't really know any of the numbers, but comments from some of the area farmers were that yields were higher than normal.

At all seven co-op locations, she said, they took in 5.5 million bushels. That's quite a bit more than last year, but since then the co-op has grown to include elevators at Lenora and Edmond, so it isn't a clear

comparison.

Since the first load on Sept. 18, she said, the price per bushel has gone from \$2.67 to \$3.19, with a lot of ups and downs in between.

With the summer wheat harvest not that far away, the co-op has been trying to ship grain out as fast as it can. Fall harvest, for the most part goes out by truck with the grain, corn and milo, going mostly to feed lots. They are trying to move it out now, she said.

The same is going on at Hansen Mueller, with trucks rolling in and out filled with grain.

Officer Manager Janice O'Hare said they have been shipping throughout fall harvest. Hansen Mueller has shipped close to 300,000 bushels of corn, she said, and they have shipped lots of wheat, too. The crops piled on the ground have been picked up, she said.

She said that Hansen Mueller took its (See HARVEST on Page 8A)



Class makes music

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT, and members of the Oberlin Elementary School band were doing just that on Monday. Daniel Lerew (top) played the drums while Myles Sheaffer (left) practiced the trombone and Emily Larson (below) played the trumpet.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Electricity at top of list for city work

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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After a reviewing a list of city priorities Thursday, the Oberlin City Council put beefing up the electric "infrastructure" — the lines, transformers and other gear that brings us power — at the top, with the airport project, street improvements, community relations and water treatment rounding out the top five.

The ranking, said City Administrator Austin Gilley, is based on the average of how each council member ranked the list.

The council brainstormed each of the 26 items and then took the list home and ranked them in order of importance. Their lists were turned back into the administrator, who then averaged the answers.

The list in order from 1 to 26 includes: electric infrastructure, airport project, streets, community relations, water treatment, curbs downtown, a new hotel, the utility billing system, blighted property, a radiator for the power plant, tree trimming, a wall at the new part of the cemetery, circuit breakers for the power system, repairing the band shell, records management, updating the building code, emergency management, land management, city codes, shelter house and Sappa Park improvements, personnel

Council roundup

At a meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Decided to hire an independent contractor to deal with 10 property complaints the city has on file. Story below.

- Looked at a ranked priority list for city projects which put the improving the electric infrastructure at the top with the airport project, streets, community relations and water treatment rounding out the top five. Story at left.

- Approved appointment of eight people to boards, but heard the city still needs a few volunteers to fill other spots. Story to come.

- Signed a contract for JL Construction to do the circle drive at the front entrance to The Gateway. Story to come.

policy, franchise agreements, landscaping at The Gateway, hiring a recreation coordinator, the city web site and the municipal court.

Mr. Gilley asked if the priority list is for him, the city or for both, adding that he's going to present the list (See ELECTRICITY on Page 8A)

Woman to help city deal with properties

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin City Council decided to hire an independent contractor to deal with the 10 property complaints the city has on file.

At the council meeting last Thursday, after some discussion, the council agreed to hire Jan Ackerman of Hoxie to deal with the 10 complaints the city already has on run-down property.

The city had just received the 10th complaint during the meeting, for the house at 711 E. Maple.

Mrs. Ackerman approached the council in February as an independent contractor to deal with complaints about substandard structures. The council decided to not take any action on hiring her at the first two meetings where it came up.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said he and the city foreman are still working on policies for a voluntary program to help property owners but he doesn't think it will be ready until summer or fall.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said there are some procedures to be followed under city ordinances, including having the matter come before the Minimum Housing Board. In the past, he said, the city has hired an inspector to look at a building to see if it is structurally safe.

David Blau, with Miller and Associates, a McCook engineering firm the city uses, said he thought his company had been hired to look at three or four structures.

It's difficult for a lay person to say if something is structurally sound, (See WOMAN on Page 8A)

Special section honors area's working women

THE OBERLIN HERALD'S Working Women

A salute to the contributions made by women in business.



The Oberlin Herald's annual "Working Women" section is inside today's newspaper.

The section includes features about women who work in businesses, government offices and other places in Decatur County.

Turn clocks ahead one hour on Sunday morning

The evenings have already started to grow longer as spring arrives and Daylight Saving Time gets closer. The sun seems to hang in the sky later and the days are longer.

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday,

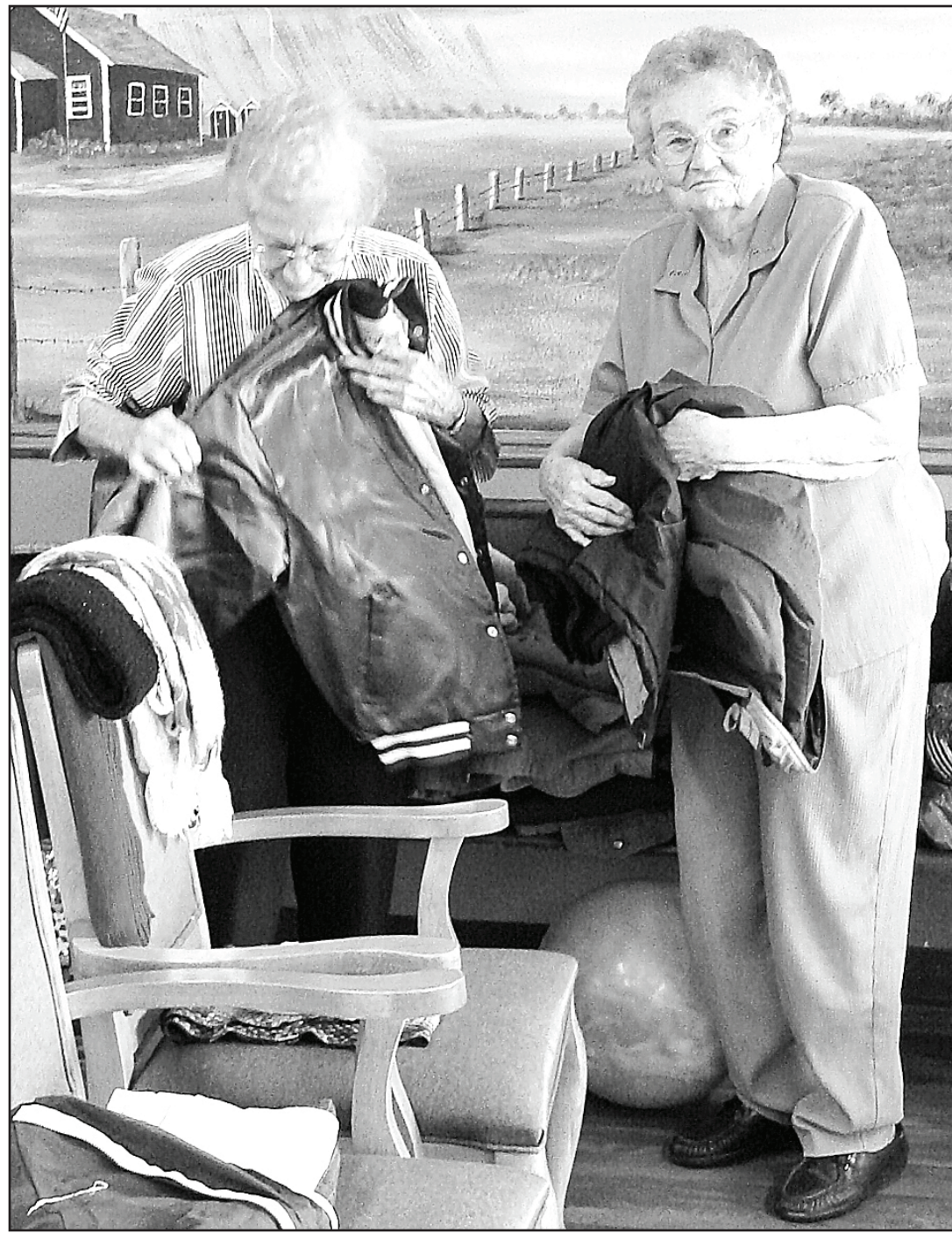
although most people spring their clocks forward Saturday night before they head to bed. If not you, you might miss church on Sunday.

While Daylight Saving Time use to come later in March, even in April, last year was the first

time under federal law that it began the second weekend in March.

The time change means that as the weather gets nicer, people will have more time to enjoy after work or school.

Some helping hands



GOOD SAMARITAN CENTER residents Alice Bobbitt (left) and Evelyn Olson folded coats and warm clothes collected by the Decatur County Ministerial Association for those in need, especially transients.

— Photo by Lisa Paulson

BULL SALES

Additional Sales on Page 6A

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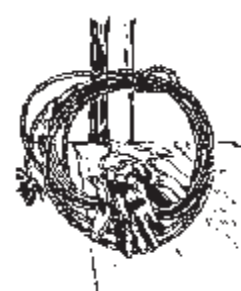
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* Electricity top city priority

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at a meeting of the Monday Evening Club. The answer was "both."

Mr. Gilley said with community relations, he's been out to as many meetings and functions as he can. He said he writes a monthly column for the newspaper and would appreciate any other ideas.

A lot of community relations, said Mayor Joe Stanley, are just being out and being seen.

Just keep doing what you have been doing the last couple of months, said Councilman Bill Riedel.

It's about getting to know the people, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, and letting them get to know

you, besides what they read about you in the paper. It's just a good idea to get to know people that you come into contact with.

With the priority list, said Ms. May, it is impossible to focus on 26 things at one time, so the city needs to focus on eight or 10 or 12. She said when she prioritized the list, she divided it into two groups. The first group she ranked 1 through 12 and then the other 14 items were ranked No. 26. The idea is to tackle the first 12 and then the rest, she said.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohoe-fener said she somewhat did the same thing. She ranked the most important 1 through 9 and then left

the others blank.

The list was intended to guide Mr. Gilley, said Ms. May, but that isn't the way it's ended up. It's turned out to be more for the city as a whole.

It looks like the city needs to make a few plans, said Councilman Rob McFee, on the items on the list where there aren't any.

Mr. Riedel said he would like to take the top 10 and get an update once a month on whether there is any progress made, nothing elaborate.

Mr. Gilley said he would be happy to go over the whole list every month or just add it to the project update list.

* Woman to evaluate properties

(Continued from Page 1A)
said Mr. Hirsch.

Councilman Bill Riedel asked if a structure is sound, can it still be a blighted property? Blighted, said Mr. Hirsch, is really in the eye of the beholder.

There are some guidelines in the code, said Mr. Hirsch, but it's not an easy thing to tell someone their property needs something done to it.

On the house at 711 E. Maple, said Mr. Riedel, the people who live next door on either side have complained. The next step would be having Mrs. Ackerman see what state the property is in, he said.

There was the thought that this process could be done by city staff,

said Mayor Joe Stanley, instead of spending the money to hire someone. Mrs. Ackerman charges \$40 an hour. He added that he's hearing that the council is saying maybe it should be hired out.

Prior to this complaint, the city already had nine properties on a list that people had complained about.

There's a difference between blighted and how it looks and whether a property is structurally sound, said Councilwoman Rhonda May.

Mr. Riedel said there is some concern if someone is hired that the decision comes down to her interpretation.

Part of this is just having to depend on the process, said Ms. May, because the neighbors have to first

complain before property even shows up on the list.

Mr. Riedel said he would like to have a way to find out if the complaints are legit before they are passed to Mrs. Ackerman. It would be nice to know that the complaints aren't just neighbors upset with each other.

One suggestion was that that the administrator could first drive by a property before the complaint is passed on.

The council approved hiring Mrs. Ackerman for the 10 complaints the city has now, with the idea that Mr. Gilley would have to drive by and look at the subject of any future complaints before they are passed on.

* Harvest took fall, winter to finish

(Continued from Page 1A)
last big load of fall grain on Feb. 16, almost five months since the first one.

She said it was the longest fall harvest she had ever seen. It would snow and then the crops would dry down just long enough to cut, and

then the county would get moisture again.

There are some turn rows around the edges of the fields still standing, she said. Some still have snow and the farmers just can't get in to pick the last of the grain.

Mrs. O'Hare said she hasn't heard

any yields, although she heard several farmers say they were happy.

The elevators here took in almost twice as many bushels compared to last year, she said. This year, the firm took in 2.3 million bushels in Oberlin and Cedar Bluffs, at least 1.3 million over the usual amount.

Study proves Kansas really is windy

A study of the winds at a height common for turbine blades by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory ranked Kansas near the top in the nation for wind energy resources, second only to Texas.

The study, which measured winds at 80 meters (270 feet), found Kansas could generate 3.6 million gigawatt hours of electricity from wind — more than tripling the 1 million gigawatt hours previously estimated. This is the first comprehensive update of states' wind energy potential since 1993.

The winds in Kansas were again proven to be among the best on Earth for producing wind energy.

That doesn't surprise wind project developer Rob Freeman, chief executive officer of Lenexa based TradeWind Energy. The firm developed the state's largest wind project, the Smoky Hills Wind Farm west of Salina. That farm generates nearly 250 megawatts of power — enough to power 75,000 homes.

"The wind resource in Kansas is abundant and it results in electricity costs to the consumer that are lower and more predictable than any other form of electric generation," says Freeman. "Kansas is clearly one of the nation's marquee locations for producing wind."

"Wind-project development

represents an unprecedented opportunity for economic development in the state's rural areas. Over 20 years, the economic impact of the Smoky Hills Wind Farm alone is expected to be more than \$100 million."

Among the financial benefits are royalty payments collected by 120 landowners and the creation of more than 250 construction jobs and 25 permanent positions.

The wind project takes less than 2 percent of the land out of use for 155 wind turbines spread over 20,000 acres.

For more about the study, go to www.windpoweringamerica.gov/filter_detail.asp?itemid=2542.