# Lagoon smell to stick around

longer for relief from smelly sewer lagoons south of town. Solar-powered "mixers" which were supposed to have solved the problem by now aren't in, and there's no sign of when work might begin.

In fact, there's no sign right now that the low bidder on the project, Pond Solutions LLC, of Bismarck N.D., can actually do what it promised. The city isn't rushing to spend an extra \$80,000 or more with the other contractor, SolarBee Inc, of Dickinson, N.D., right now,

Engineer Chris Miller, owner of Miller and Associates, the firm which designed the lagoons and the mixer project, told the City Council on Thursday that Pond Solutions had not yet provided him with information on mixers which met the city's specifications.

Mr. Miller said the firm had submitted specs on motors which were rated only for 85 percent humidity and 32 degrees, despite the fact that the mixers will be immersed in lagoons which freeze up in the

The engineer said the problem apparently is common with lagoons built under newer state specifications, which include a full plastic

The idea, he said, is to mix the water all winter to prevent a mass "turnover" in the spring where the lagoons produce an offensive odor. The firm finally came up with a brushless motor, he noted, and that had been another problem with its bid. But he rejected the proposal

Oberlin will have to wait a little and sent the bid book back to the

"I hate to put a motor in that's not

for that environment," he said. The firm sent the book back with his rejection letter in it, he said, but no proposal for a different motor.

The mixers, he pointed out, were to have been installed by the end of February, and the contract calls for the firm to pay damages after

"The contractor's representative stood right here," Mr. Miller said, pointing to the podium, "and said he could meet all your specifica-

Council members asked if the city was stuck with the contract.

"This isn't working and it doesn't look like it's going to work any time soon," said Councilwoman Rhonda

"And it smells outdoors," added Councilman Rob McFee.

"Is there any reason not to cancel them right now?" asked Mayor Joe

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said he wasn't sure of the conditions under the contract which affected a

City Administrator Austin Gilley said he'd recommend giving the contractor a couple of weeks to respond before taking any action on the \$121,400 contract. The council

Councilman McFee said maybe the city could sponsor "smelly canoe" races in the meantime. Someone else suggested that paddle boats might mix the water better.

# Walkers ready to rack up miles

dents have put on athletic sneakers and hit the road for the annual Walk Kansas challenge.

For eight weeks, from March 1 through May 1, the participants are tracking their miles and meals in an effort to walk the distance across

This is the ninth year for the K-State Research and Extension health initiative, which encourages people to enjoy some physical activity with friends and family and to take a look at what they eat.

The walkers form teams of six and elect a captain. Each week, the Jean Hale, Carla and Dave Depcaptain gathers the miles the group has walked and how many cups of fruits and vegetables they consume and turns the information into the

extension office each Monday. While most of the participants are women, a handful of men also signed up to work off the winter blues and see how far they can walk

Outside the Extension office on the ground floor of the courthouse is a map of the state with little shoes marking how far each team has trav-

eled so far

It takes a lot of steps to get all the way across the 423 miles of Kansas from the Colorado line to the Missouri border, but history shows by the end of the eight weeks, most of the teams will have made it. Some members will have walked that far on their own.

After the first week of walking, three teams hadn't reported in yet Henningson, Carol Brown, Sheila but the others had collectively walked 972 miles, or across the state, back and headed for Kansas City one more time.

Walking across Kansas are: **Roadrunners** — Kasey May,

Nicole Sauvage, Stephanie and Kiah Blau, Helen Juenemann and Theresa Ely, 176 miles

and Leanna Bryan, Kelli Bryan, Carrie Morford, Cheryl and Michael Sauvage, 95 miles.

**TARP** — Regina Stanley, Terri

Almost 100 Decatur County resi- McDonald, Gary Walter, Patty Stapp, Linda Wade and Sheree Milnes, 93 miles.

**NXS Speed** — Brenda Peterson, Jennie Anderson, Nancy Vath, Deb Klima, Jolene Dempewolf and Amber Scott, 88 miles.

**Happy Feet** — Marilyn, Steve and Doug Horn, Carol Miller, Pat Fringer and Charlotte Strecker-Baseler, 74 miles.

Nightwatch — Vicky Ray, Patti Hendrickson, Brian Hileman, Cathy Claussen, Dorothy Vacura and Karen Eskew, 65 miles. **Cranky Cruisers** — Byron and

perschmidt, Johanna Mason, Dana Marintzer, 64 miles.

**The Six Pack** — Megan Carter, Candice Ketterl, Diane Barrett, Dori Pauls, Melinda Grafel and Krickit Ketterl, 59 miles.

**The Furies** — Shelly McKenna, Elizabeth Sliter, Paula Tadlock, Linda Stanley, Sandra Fowler and Karen Bailey, 55 miles.

**Street Walkers** — Tina Perrin, Lisa Davies Andrea Burmaster, Desiree Vilar, Leslie Nolette and Carla Britton, 55 miles.

The Invincibles — Bridget Corcoran, Sheena Dallman, Karen Nichols, Jori Diederich, Kim Weishapl and Sara Kyte, 54 miles.

**Cannado's** — Montine Alstrom, Lynetta Ketterl, Janice Shobe, Linda Hollowell, Connie Noren and Angela Corcoran, 52 miles.

Walkie Talkies — Jennifer Juenemann, Angie Erickson, Jeni Jansonius and Kelly Shields, 40

We Do It at 4 mph — Anita Ketterl, Margee Wilson, Tiffany Palmer, Kay Matheny, Linda Fox and Becky Tate, no report.

Snow Dusters — Jeniffer Wolters, Danyel Jeffrey, Julie Weigel, Kara Allen, Marsha Morford and **Oberlin Globe Trotters** — Keri Dennis Russell, no report.

> **Motley Crew** — Kimberly Davis, Amy Carman, Janna Leitner, Connie Riedel, Peggy Pratt and Laura Bryan, no report.

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## Workers paint alley STARTING THE

CLEANUP, Greg Lohoefener (above) toted a ladder and carried painting supplies Saturday, March 13, as he and other volunteers including Susan Nelson (left) finished painting the front of the area that will become a bowling alley. Eight volunteers, including high school students Ryan May, Tyler Shields and Gatlin Reichert, spent the first morning of spring break painting the area.

- Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

# Program needs money

The biggest problem with getting an organized, year-around recreation program going in Decatur County is money, county commissioners were told at their meeting last Tuesday. Decatur Community High Prin-

cipal Charles Haag, representing a

group formed by Decatur Tomorrow, told the commissioners that the group is trying to get an organized recreation program for the county. Mr. Haag told the commissioners that the idea is to hire a part-time recreation director who could be

shared with the new theater and

Oberlin, he noted, has good facilities for recreation, including The Gateway, schools and the new senior and activities center down-

Right now, however, he said, the committee is looking for help, both financially and physically, to get started. And money being the big-Once the program gets started,

he said, it's possible it will pay its own way, perhaps by selling memberships.

The group has six weeks to get a plan set up, he said, and will hold its next meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Business Enhancement and Entrepreneurial Center. In other business, the commis-

- Told Weed Control Director Gaylen Huntley to get a couple of bids for the chemicals he needs and buy at the low price. Mr. Huntley told the commissioners he will be buying Milestone, 2-4D and Krobar this year.
- Learned that Linda Bunney and Robert May have joined the fair board.

The board is looking to put railings on the bleachers to make them safer and perhaps pouring some concrete by the stairs, where it gets muddy, said Commissioner Gene Gallintine. The board also is looking a getting some digital signs and but would need help from the Amusement Authority with the expense.

- Heard from Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman that his crews are blading the really bad spots in the roads right now.
- Was told by Chief Dispatcher Marilyn Mack that she had two bids for the new equipment for the 911 dispatch console. The first is from Nex-Tech for \$70,822 plus a five-year maintenance agreement that would add would cost another \$52,048. The second is from Flanigan Communications for \$44,181 plus a five-year maintenance agreement that would cost \$28,800.
- had been tested with mixed results. The Dresden siren did not go off and the siren by the power plant in Oberlin tried to sound the chimes at the same time as it blew the siren alert.

• Learned that the tornado sirens

## Wheat starts to grow

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

c.haynes@nwkansas.com After a long, cold winter, the wheat crop is begining to grow.

"It's starting to wake up," said Brian Olson, area agronomist for K-State Research and Extension.

"It's starting to green up out in the field," he said. "It's starting to come out of dormancy."

This is the time that farmers need to apply nitrogren and herbicide to the wheat, he added, while it's still leafy and before it starts "joint-

The cold this winter hurt some of the crop, especially on the tops of terraces, where the wind really penetrates the soil.

Mr. Olson said his advice to farm-

ers is to get their fertilizer on about three to four weeks prior to jointing, which should start to happen in mid-April, for the best value.

At the Kansas State Extension experimental farm in Colby, he said some of the wheat was burned back from the cold weather but the crop is starting to fill in. There is still a lot of ground showing around the plants, which seem to be smaller than in the past.

The wheat should put on a lot of growth in the next few weeks, especially with the moisture that the area has been getting.

Good soil moisture will help the crop, he said, so if it made it through the winter, it should start to look pretty good out in the fields.

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