



## Hospital to keep its services

The Decatur County Hospital is stable, still open and still caring for patients, with no current plans to cut back its operations.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said there haven't been any layoffs this year nor has there been talk of layoffs coming up.

The hospital staff, she said, has been cut from 36 hours per week to 34 to save money.

The nursing staff does "call-offs," said Mrs. Doeden, when there are not a lot of patients in the hospital. Before a shift, sometimes a nurse is called and told they don't need to come in.

Unfortunately, with a low census, she said, the nurses are hit the hardest. They try to not call the same person each time, she said, to make the decision as fair as possible.

The hospital does and is continuing to provide all services, said Mrs. Doeden.

With the recent resignation of Jonna Inman, a nurse practitioner at the Oberlin Medical Arts Clinic who has privileges at the hospital, there's been some rumors about the hospital.

Oberlin Medical Arts, said Mrs. Doeden, is a private business owned by Dr. Elizabeth Sliter and Dr. Stelian Andrecu. The physicians are independent and not employed by Decatur Health Systems, which manages the hospital. Decatur Health is owned by the county, said Mrs. Doeden, and the hospital and clinic are two separate entities, even though the county owns both buildings.

Questions about the clinic need

## Medical worker resigns

After 13 years at the Oberlin Medical Arts Clinic, nurse practitioner Jonna Inman has turned in her resignation.

Mrs. Inman started at the clinic on July 1, 1997. She handed in her letter of resignation last Tuesday, according to a statement sent out by Administrator Barb Whitney. In the statement, Mrs. Whitney said she had met with Drs. Elizabeth Sliter and Stelian Andrecu, the clinic's owners, and the resignation had been accepted.

Her letter, said Mrs. Whitney, (See NURSE on Page 12A)

to be directed to the doctors, she said.

Rumors about the hospital closing or becoming a "triage station" aren't true, said Mrs. Doeden.

In a small town, she said, individuals know who to talk to regarding things they hear in order to sidestep all the rumors. Those questions should be directed to the people who can answer them truthfully she said. If anyone has questions about the hospital, she added, they should call her.

## Relay fights cancer

AT THE GATEWAY, Patty Brown (above) walked around the arena with her grandsons Kade (above right) and Kelly during the annual Decatur County Relay for Life on Friday. Cancer survivor Vernon Diederich (left) got a piece of birthday cake after the barbecue-beef dinner. Members of the relay teams walked until 1 a.m. The hospital teams won the campsite-decorating contest and Dr. Gary Fredrickson sold the most luminaries again this year, raising over \$1,400.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

## Airport to add self-service fuel

The Oberlin City Council approved a self-service fueling pump for the city airport during its meeting Thursday night.

The money for the pump will be taken out of the airport improvement fund, with the idea that the city will look for a grant from the state to cover the cost.

Phil Fraker, whose father Bob is the fixed-base operator at the airport, said Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., received two bids on the pumps. He said he's been trying to compare the two so they are apples to apples.

The bids came from Hoidale Inc. of Garden City at \$26,148 with options and from PEC Corp. of Pueblo, Colo. at \$25,750.

Mr. Fraker said although he knows the one from Hoidale is more expensive, he would recommend it.

He said he and county Commissioner Gene Gallentine have looked at the bids and think the options on the Hoidale bid are good and necessary. A self-service fueling system for an airport works the same way as one on the highway, the men said. People can use a major credit card, get fuel, get a receipt and be on their way.

Both systems offer software that could be installed at The Gateway and used to check the inventory. A

dedicated phone line will be needed for the system.

Even though the Hoidale bid is higher, said Mr. Fraker, that's what they are leaning towards. Hoidale seemed very interested and sent a representative here to talk and look at the facility. If repairs or work are needed, it's half the distance to Garden City as Pueblo.

The bid is only good until Thursday, he said, because they had to wait for two weeks for the one from PEC.

Mr. Fraker said his father is getting older and won't be the airport manager forever. A self-fueling station would be a good idea to fill the gap between when he leaves and a new manager is brought in.

The self-fueling station has been talked about before, said Ms. Grafel, but it was said then it could cost \$100,000.

While there was some question whether the city could get any money from the state for this project, council members agreed that they would try.

Mr. Fraker's comment about his dad is a good point, said Councilman Rob McFee.

Also, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, you have to look around and ask, "What year is this?" Maybe it's time to have a credit-card pump system at the airport, she said.

## Chamber asks county to provide tax assistance

A board member of the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce requested a possible tax levy from the county to support the group at the meeting last Tuesday.

Ken Shobe said he knows that money is tight right now, but said that the Chamber is asking the county to support its work with a tenth or two-tenths of a mill on the property tax. That would raise around \$3,000 to \$5,000, he said, which would be very generous.

Mr. Shobe said the chamber serves the entire county. He said

the board will be going to the city for financial support also.

Some cities offer a lot of support for their chamber, he said, while others offer a little. Some support is in-kind, he added, work done by a county crew or use of equipment.

The primary expense for the Chamber, he said, is the salary for (See COUNTY on Page 12A)

## Study shows four-lane road would benefit area

By SARAH KESSINGER  
The Marysville Advocate

Convenience stores, tourist spots and other vendors along U.S. 36 stand to gain significant business and communities could expect to add dozens of new jobs if the state were to expand the highway to four lanes, according to a recent study.

The economic impact study was conducted by Fort Hays State University's Docking Institute of Public Affairs. It was commissioned by the U.S. Highway 36 Association,

which is made up of business people, tourism and highway staff and others who live in the 13 Kansas counties along the highway, which runs across the northern part of the state.

The association board met June 4 in Scandia to hear a presentation on the study by its authors, Docking senior fellow Dr. Preston Gilson and the institute's director, Dr. Gary Brinker.

Research showed that the one-time regional economic effect of the

construction phase of a the project could be \$1.4 billion, although some income would also be lost to businesses where access would be blocked along the highway during construction.

The analysis of long-term economic growth resulting from an expanded U.S. 36 shows an effect of \$1 billion over 10 years and 898 new jobs, the authors said. The total of all economic activity associated with highway expansion was estimated at \$2.45 billion.

In Decatur County, the study expects creation of 44 jobs and economic impact of \$4.7 million a year from stores and nearly \$900,000 a year from restaurants and \$50,000 in increased spending by tourists. That should total \$56.2 million over 10 years, the authors said.

Construction spending should bring \$111.9 million to the county, not counting money spent elsewhere, for a total 10-year economic impact of \$168 million. The study (See STUDY on Page 12A)

## Group asks commissioners for letter on bridges

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
k.davis@nwksas.com

The Decatur County commissioners agreed to send a letter to the state about the three load-restricted bridges between Oberlin and Norcat that need to be replaced when representatives of the U.S. 36 Highway Association talked with them last Tuesday.

Bob Strevey and Lee Franklin, both board members of the association, and President Steve Haynes, and Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., talked with the commissioners about an economic study of widening the highway that the county helped pay for.

The report, done by Fort Hays State University's Docking Insti-

tute of Public Affairs, shows the economic impact of widening the highway to four lanes would be about \$2.45 billion over 10 years. Counties along the highway helped pay for the report, with Decatur County — one of the first to sign on — giving \$2,000.

"Thanks for the support," said Mr. Strevey.

Some people might look at the

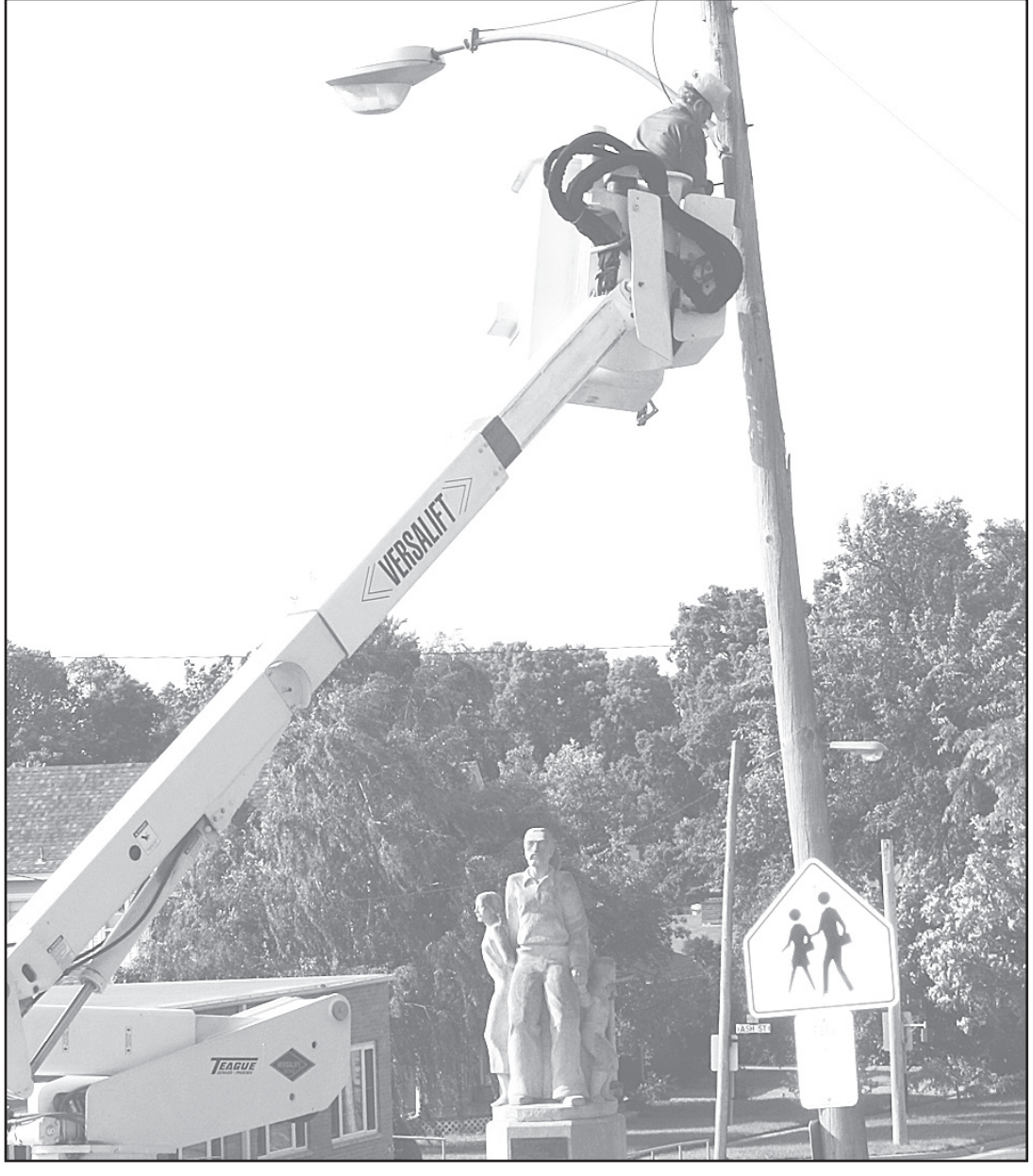
highway and say that four lanes aren't needed, but then look at the bottlenecks in the eastern part of the state, where the extra two lanes are needed today.

He said each county is looked at in the report and the economic impact projects. The association gave a copy of the report to the commissioners and one to Ms. Grafel.

(See BRIDGES on Page 12A)



# Trimmed limb snags wire



IN THE LINE TRUCK, City Foreman Dan Castle worked on an electric line on north Main Street on Friday after a tree limb knocked it down. A crew trimmed trees along the street that were near the line the same morning. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

# \*Bridges here concern U.S. 36 highway group

(Continued from Page 1A) What does the report say about Decatur County? asked Commissioner Gene Gallentine. They are talking about a potential of millions, said Mr. Streyve.

Representatives from the Kansas Department of Transportation attended the association's meeting in Scandia earlier this month, said Mr. Streyve. District Engineer Jeff Stewart talked about the three bridges that need to be replaced. He suggested that the association and the commissioners should write letters urging the state to fix them.

There are survey crews out looking at the bridges now, said Mr. Franklin, laying the groundwork for engineering plans for replacements. However, heavy trucks are being forced to detour via Jennings and the Selden junction on U.S. 83.

The new 10-year transportation plan is out, said Mr. Streyve, although it isn't as cut and dried on what projects will get money. Some of that money, he said, is for airports and rail lines.

The district engineer, said Mr. Haynes, is looking at those bridges as a priority. It's just a start though, he said. There will be more bridges in the state that will have to be replaced. It sounds like they are ready to replace them as soon as the transportation department can get money out of the plan.

It would be a good idea to send a letter or resolution on the bridges and the county support to the secretary of transportation and the Norton office, he said.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he didn't think the commission would be opposed to that. It was

## U.S 83 could be four lanes?

The Decatur County commissioners and members of the U.S. Highway 36 Association and the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. marketing director talked briefly about a plan they have heard of to make U.S. 83 four lanes from Interstate 70 in Kansas to I-80 in Nebraska at the meeting last Tuesday.

Bob Streyve, with the highway association, said he thinks there's been a lot of talk in Nebraska about U.S. 83 becoming a four-lane road between the two freeways.

Marketing Director Connie Grafel said she thinks a group in Nebraska envisions the highway being four lanes from I-80 to

I-70. If Oberlin happens to be where two four-lane highways cross 20 years from now, said Mr. Streyve, that could be a big deal.

Steve Haynes, association president, said he would like to see Nebraska's plan.

Maybe, said Mr. Streyve, we need to be talking to Congressman Jerry Moran, if he becomes the area's senator.

What was indicated to her, said Ms. Grafel, was that money for a feasibility study has been earmarked for the road project from I-80 to the Nebraska/Kansas border.

It sounds like something people in Oberlin need to keep an eye on, said Mr. Haynes.

suggested that the association ask the Oberlin City Council to do the same.

With wheat harvest coming up, said Mr. Haynes, it worries him that if a load of grain comes from the Norton area and the driver has to take 383 because of the bridges, why turn around and come into Oberlin.

It could affect the local producers too, said Mr. Gallentine.

Another issue, said Mr. Haynes, is all the electronic mapping that can be done from the vehicle or on the computer shows the shortest routes by way of the Interstate. For instance, it shows the shortest and fastest route from Denver to Norton is through Colby, which isn't true.

He said the association plans to take the U.S. 36 study to all of the commissioners in the 13 counties along the highway and get it in the hands of every legislator before the next session starts.

The basic facts are pretty striking, he said. It shows a \$2.4 billion return to all the counties along the road. Some of these counties aren't that prosperous and could use the boost.

Mr. Haynes said they would like to see every county and economic development group get behind this plan. These kind of projects happen because of persistence more than anything, he said. People have to tell the state what they want and stick to it.

# \* County tax could help Chamber

(Continued from Page 1A) the manager. That has been kept down at a little less than \$8 an hour, he said, and she does good work.

The Chamber, said Mr. Shobe, gets quarterly money from the Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Oberlin Business Alliance, at \$250 for each group, to help with office expenses.

Austin Gilley, former city administrator, said Mr. Shobe, got some numbers together, but obviously every Chamber is different.

He said that the Chamber does a lot of promoting for Oberlin and the county and they plan to focus on events in Jennings and Norcatur as well as Oberlin.

The Chamber gets most of its money from dues, which are \$125 a year for businesses, \$50 for individuals and \$25 for clubs.

With all that, the group is running about \$3,000 behind last year.

Probably the biggest event the Chamber sponsors is the Farmer and Rancher Appreciation Banquet, during which the Chamber tries to give away everything it gets in.

Mr. Shobe said the Chamber is just asking for consideration of some support.

Why did the Chamber wash its hands of the Amusement Authority? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger.

Liability, said Mr. Shobe, but the Chamber didn't wash its hands. They just wanted it separated out. The authority, said Mr. Unger, kind of felt orphaned.

There wasn't really any governing by the Chamber for the authority, replied Mr. Shobe.

Before, the elections for the authority members, said Mr. Unger, were held at the Chamber's annual banquet.

There are separate by-laws for

the chamber and authority, said Mr. Shobe.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said he knows that Kem Bryan had the by-laws reworked when she was president of the Chamber.

Originally, said Mr. Unger, the authority, which runs the carnival at the county fair, was started by the Chamber directors.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he thought that those elections did happen early on and then there was a group of people doing a good job running the carnival, so elections weren't held.

Terms of most current authority board members terms are up at the end of this year, said Mr. Unger. If people want to continue to have a carnival, the group needs more community support.

The county hasn't budgeted money in the past for the Chamber, except for paying yearly dues.

# \* Study pushes road upgrade

(Continued from Page 1A) notes that economic activity should continue beyond the 10-year study period.

One assumption of the study is that Oberlin would not see any new motels. The authors said those might more likely be built in larger towns such as Norton or Phillipsburg. However, Lee "Doc" Franklin of Jennings, a U.S. 36 director active in economic development issues, said the fact that Oberlin has more traffic with the intersection of main north-south and east-west highways, might help draw a hotel here.

The research focused on economic activity likely in the 10 years after completion of the expansion but not beyond that period, Dr. Gilson said. It also looked at the economic activity that could accompany the construction phase.

Missouri plans to christen its newly completed four-lane U.S. 36 in August. When the final stretches open this summer, the highway will be four lanes from the Mississippi River on the east to the Missouri at St. Joseph in the west. In Illinois, most the road is now Interstate 72.

The association sought the recent study to consider what might hap-

pen if Kansas were to undertake a similar project, said Steve Haynes of Oberlin, president of the group.

Shannon Kusilek, district planning engineer for the Missouri Department of Transportation in St. Joseph, said the widening of the final 52 miles to four lanes was a \$72.4 million project. It was paid by a \$7 million federal earmark, \$22.4 million from the state and \$43 million from a half-cent sales tax passed by counties along the route, which voted to form a Transportation Development District.

It remains unclear what the economic effect of the expanded highway has been in northern Missouri and whether traffic will increase, he said.

"We hear people say a lot of drivers on Interstate 70 will now take a four-lane highway 36," Kusilek said. "Maybe, maybe not."

U.S. 36 is now a four-lane from Uhrichville, Ohio, to just west of the Missouri River at Wathena, including eight miles widened by Kansas during the last transportation plan.

The study's executive summary included this note:

"We conclude that while up-

grading U.S. 36 to four lanes with bypasses kept close to communities in the study area will not guarantee population and economic growth, without such improvements, potential growth is unquestionably stymied."

Mr. Haynes said communities along the highway should be able to decide whether or not they'd like a bypass or whether the highway should continue to run through their towns, narrowing to two lanes through some places.

The study noted that safety would improve with a divided four-lane highway. National statistics show that undivided two-lane highways have 10.25 more fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled than divided four lanes, the study says.

A wider road could also relieve congestion in some areas, improve access and enhance economic development in general in the 13 counties that were part of the study, the report said.

# \* Nurse practitioner resigns from clinic

(Continued from Page 1A) said that Mrs. Inman was giving the required 60 day notice, making her last day Monday, Aug. 16.

Both doctors, said Mrs. Whitney, wish her well.

"Every day brings change," said Mrs. Whitney, "and the clinic has had a lot of that through the years. We will continue to do our best for this community."

The Oberlin doctor procurement committee has already been on

the search for a new doctor at the clinic.

Community interest and involvement in that process is a great thing, said Mrs. Whitney. Any ideas, connections of just getting the word out would be great.

Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug, and committee chairman, said the group just got the news about Mrs. Inman's resignation and hadn't yet gotten together to talk about it. He said they will probably do that

in a week or so.

Whether the direction of the current search will change with this resignation is up to the clinic and hospital, he said.

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Rawlins County Health Center RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY CALENDAR 707 Grant Atwood, KS 67730 (785) 626-3211 Bringing Specialized Healthcare To Your Community June 2010

Calendar table for Rawlins County Health Center showing dates from Sun to Sat with various medical appointments and notes. Includes a note for Dr. Martin J. Rubinowitz's absence in July and Independence Day on Sunday July 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas. Brought to you in part by Kansas Department of Commerce Travel & Tourism Division. Wild West Festival July 1-4, Hays. 2nd Annual Mardi Grass & Hay Capital KCBS BBQ July 9-10, Yates Center. Sunflower State Games July 9-11, 16-18, 23-25, Topeka. Pinks All Out Racing July 16-17, Topeka. Mid-America All-Indian Center Annual PowWow July 31-August 1, Wichita.