

Health meeting planned

The Decatur County commissioners talked with the health administrator about an upcoming meeting about health care in the county, held by an association out of Topeka.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine asked at the last meeting in November about a letter he received from the Kansas Association of the Medically Undeserved meeting at The Gateway on Monday, Dec. 13. While no one was sure about what it was, Administrator Marilyn Gamblin was able to shed some light on it last Tuesday.

Ms. Gamblin said the association contacted health departments in Kansas to visit with them about health care in the community. With everything that has been going on, she said, she thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a meeting.

Both Decatur and Meade Counties were chosen for the meetings.

Ms. Gamblin said the meeting at 6 p.m., Monday will be about health care and the future of health care.

She said she tried to suggest that letters be sent to anyone who has to do with health care to invite them to the meeting. It's important to get everyone to the table, said Ms. Gamblin.

After a five minute closed session for non-elected personnel, the commissioners accepted Leanna Bryan's notice of retirement in December.

The commissioners asked Ms. Gamblin to work on an advertisement to hire someone.

Mr. Gallentine said he hadn't yet reported on the Health Advisory Board meeting. The health department has given 640 flu shots, she said. He added that he thought it was a good idea that the department was working with the schools to get these done.

At a recent state health officer and immunization conference, said Ms. Gamblin, it was said that the state is pushing towards getting vaccinations and immunizations taken care of at private offices to free up health departments. Health departments, she said, are finally able to bill for immunizations and now it could be taken away.

St. Francis suffers gas outage

By KAREN KRIEN
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St. Francis residents began to feel a chill in their homes and offices about lunchtime Thursday when furnaces didn't come on.

The town found out later that a company doing maintenance on the international pipeline that provides gas to Midwest's border station had accidentally shut off the gas to St. Francis. Midwest Energy crews had to shut off all meters and purge the system of air before bringing the lines back up to full pressure.

Midwest, a member-owned cooperative based in Hays, sent out a call for help around western Kansas, and 33 repairmen converged from as far as Hays, Lakin, Phillipsburg, Hoxie and Leoti.

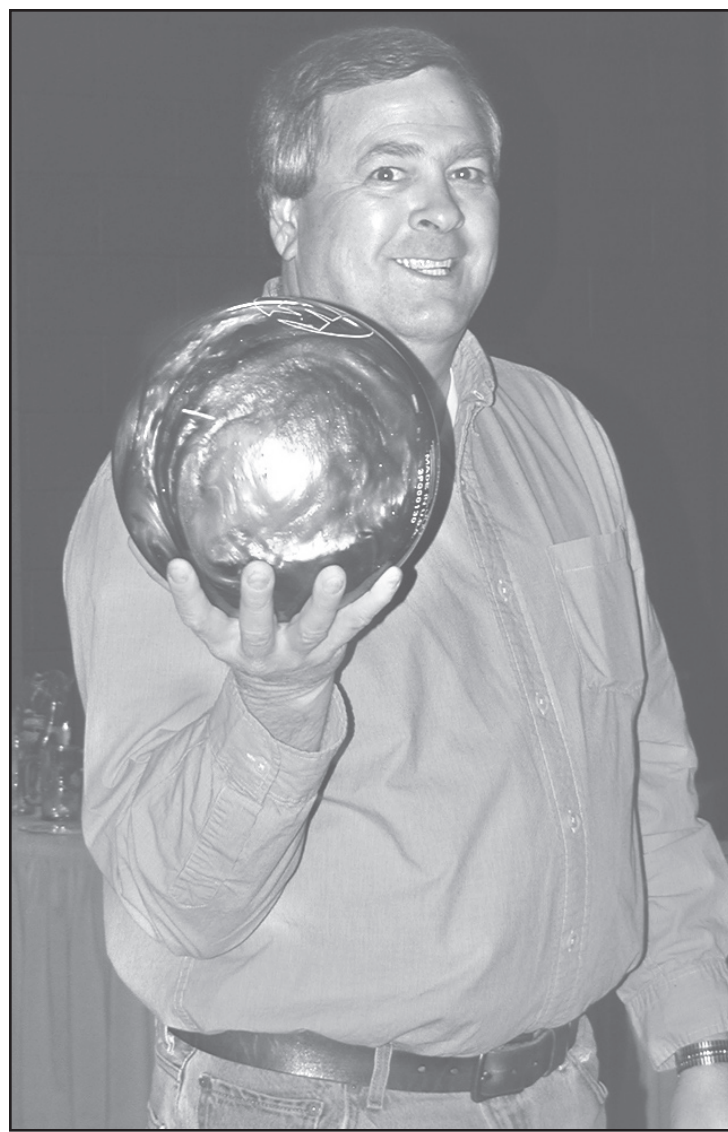
After the gas was restored to the city, about 3 p.m., two-man teams of repairmen began going door to door lighting furnaces, stoves, hot-water heaters and anything else that was operated on gas. The company called customers saying the crew would be working until midnight and anyone who needed help should call the office.

There were several shelters in St. Francis where people could go until their gas was turned on. Fortunately, the weather was mild and few if any people were forced to leave home or work.

Bob Helm, manager of corporate communication for Midwest, said 839 meters were turned off and had to be turned back on again. At first, he said, more repairmen had been called out, but because of the cooperation from residents and the nice weather, they were able to restore service without as much help.

A few businesses closed early — for instance, the Diamond R Bar and Grill couldn't cook anything without gas — however schools and most stores and offices were able to stay open.

While some people reported having no heat as late as 9:30 p.m., the servicemen began going home about 10 p.m. Mr. Helm said a few calls from people without service came in on Friday, but for the most part, gas had been restored to the town.



Beer helps alley

POURING A SAMPLE OF BEER, Colette Remsbecker, (above) administrative assistant for the Tall Grass Brewing Co. out of Manhattan, was at The Gateway Saturday night helping with a beer-tasting party. The fundraiser was for the new bowling alley and Greg Lohofener (left) showed off a bowling ball given as a door prize and won by Andy May of Oberlin. The event brought in \$1,750 before expenses.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Council allows change in beer rules

The Oberlin City Council approved a change to an ordinance to allow a place selling beer to be 200 feet or more from a library, school or church at its meeting Thursday, clearing the way for possible beer sales at the new bowling alley.

At a meeting at the beginning of November, Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development Corp., asked about being able to sell beer at the bowling alley on Main Street. At that time, the required distance was 500 feet, and the alley was too close

to the city library. City Attorney Steve Hirsch prepared an ordinance at the council's request changing the needed setback from 500 to 200 feet. Mr. Hirsch said he took a provision allowing the council to grant a waiver for the distance limitations because there weren't any standards set for that.

Councilman Rob McFee moved to adopt the revised ordinance.

Even with the change from 500 to 200 feet, said Mr. Hirsch, the bowling alley will still need to apply for a license to sell beer and would

have to meet the requirements set by state law.

While there was some conversation about whether the bowling alley could be considered a tavern, which isn't allowed by the ordinance, the council approved the change.

Councilman Ray Ward seconded the motion, which was approved by all members.

New officer joins city force

The Oberlin Police Department will have a new officer who started this month.

Bret Marietta, who will graduate from Colby Community College with an associate's degree in criminal justice, plans to join the force.

Mr. Marietta will still need to go to the police academy in Hutchinson for the three-month training course required by the state, said Chief Wade Lockhart. The City Council

approved his hiring on Thursday, Nov. 14.

Mr. Marietta was born and reared in Oberlin and graduated from Decatur Community High School in 2006. His parents are Alan and Judith Marietta.

He said he's wanted to go into law enforcement for a long time, adding that it's a way for him to help the community.

Four people claim \$50 prizes

Four of the 10 ticket numbers hidden in Christmas on Us ads in last week's *Oberlin Herald* were claimed by instant winners last week.

Each left the newspaper office with \$50 in scrip money in their hands to be spent at sponsoring businesses in Oberlin merchants' annual Christmas on Us promotion.

Those businesses include the Carpet Center, Home Planning Center, Decatur Co-op and Ampride, Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Ultimate Fertilizer, Stanley Hardware, Ward Drug Store, Lifetime Eye Care, Creative Collision, Raye's Grocery, The Bank and R&M Service Center.

Judy Wenger brought in ticket No. 883551 that she received from Home Planning Center. She said she would probably buy groceries with the money.

Don Dempewolf brought in ticket No. 871657 from Raye's. He said he would probably spend the money at the same place.

Denise Abbey brought in ticket No. 877231 which she got at Ampride. Mrs. Abbey said since she claimed the money on "Pay it Forward" day, she was going to donate it to the Decatur County Food Pantry.

Sharla Ritter brought in ticket No. 874250 from Raye's Grocery. She said she planned to use the money on Christmas presents.

With two instant winners claiming prizes the first week, that leaves 10 more to be found.

Ticket numbers not claimed last week were 889915 from Ward Drug, 879032 from Dale's, 860476 from the Bank, 875048 from the Carpet Center, 893034 from Stanley and 867025 from Ultimate Fertilizer.

More ticket numbers are printed in the Christmas on Us ads again this week. Anyone who finds their ticket number in one of the ads should bring their half to the newspaper before 5 p.m. Friday to claim their prize.

Shoppers can collect tickets until Friday, Dec. 17. People receive tickets from the sponsoring businesses for every \$10 they spend. They also can get one ticket a week from the newspaper office or from the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce. No purchase is required to win any prize.

Tickets are limited to 250 for any single purchase.

The Grand Prize drawing is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 18, at the gazebo in Centennial Park, unless the weather is bad; then it will be moved inside.

Employees of sponsoring businesses are not eligible to get tickets at the place of their employment. Employees of the newspaper and their immediate family aren't eligible to win any prize.

Winners must be present and have the ticket with them at the time of the drawing. All winners agree to be photographed and interviewed by the newspaper.

Grant will pay for play equipment

Members of the Sappa Park Committee found out last week that the park will have new playground equipment after receiving a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation.

Shayla Williby and Kem Bryan of DreamMakers applied for the grant in September. Last Thursday, Kimberly Davis, co-convenor of the park committee with Connie Riedel, received a letter from the foundation that the grant had been approved for \$24,650.

Interim City Administrator Karen Larson received a letter as well, along with a check made out to the city.

Equipment the committee picked out includes a play set with several slides, a two-seat "retro rocker," a ball toss, a "camelback," with bars for people to climb on, a tether ball

and other items.

The committee, said Mrs. Davis, hopes to order the equipment, which will be placed near the shelter house, by the end of the week.

The committee plans to hold a celebration day next summer, inviting kids of all ages out for a walk at Sappa Park, snacks and a chance to play on the equipment.

Mrs. Davis said they will also put up a plaque at the park to honor the foundation.

The committee is thrilled to receive this grant with the help of the DreamMakers, said Mrs. Davis. Sappa Park is such a fun place to hang out with the family now; new playground equipment will only improve it.

The women's fee is 4 percent of the grant amount.

Oberlin teens plan drive for Decatur Food Pantry

The Oberlin Teens for Christ group is gearing up for the third annual "Porch Light Food Drive" next weekend.

The members plan to pick up food donations between 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 19. Anyone who wants to give food for the Decatur County Food Pantry should put it on their front porch and leave the light on, said Pastor Doug Mason, sponsor of the teen group.

The food will be taken to the pantry at the Oberlin United Church.

For safety reasons, he said, the teens will stay in town, but anyone living outside the city limits can drop off their donation at the TFC building between 6 and 7:30 p.m. that evening.

The group hopes to catch all homes, said Pastor Mason, but if your donation is missed, call 475-2599.

The need for food assistance has been very high this year," he said, "so a strong response from the community is critical."



» A dedicated heart team...

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» » »

When Dad started having chest pain, I didn't realize how critical the first few minutes were to preventing damage to his heart. The Good Samaritan Hospital paramedics transported him to the Level II trauma center where the heart team opened his blocked artery in less than 30 minutes, preventing any damage. I guess time really is heart muscle, which is one reason why Good Samaritan was the first accredited Chest Pain Center in the state.

Our family is really blessed to have such skillful care close by. When seconds count, the best care from arrival to dismissal is...within reach.

† CATHOLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

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2 p.m. Sunday at Sunflower Cinema
showing
"A Christmas Carol"