

# Meal site cooking looked at again

The Decatur County commissioners talked with representatives of the Golden Age Center board and Senior Meal Site about cooking the lunches at the new senior center here.

Dewaine Stapp, Helen Gee, Dorothy Moore, Marcia Lohofener and MaryAnn Amack met with the commissioners during their meeting last Tuesday.

Mrs. Gee asked the commissioners that the commissioners put \$11,962 in the next budget for a satellite kitchen. That way, she said, people here can cook the meals.

The Area Agency on Aging, said Ms. Geihlsler, won't pay for the food to be prepared here. She said there needs to be at least 50 customer a day to make it feasible for the food truck to stop here.

Mrs. Gee said she's talked to a representative from the agency, but she's never heard the 50-a-day figure. Food for Oberlin and several surrounding towns is prepared at a central kitchen in Atwood now.

Mrs. Gee said they are doing around 45 meals a day between the deliveries and those served at the meal site. After April 29, she added, she's not driving to Atwood anymore.

Doesn't the agency in Hays hire you? asked Mr. Gallentine.

Shouldn't you tell them?

Mrs. Gee said she's already told them. At the price of gas, she said, something is going to have to give. When she drives the van to Atwood to pick up the meals for lunch, she added, she buys gas there because it's cheaper.

Mrs. Geihlsler asked what her salary would be then. Mrs. Gee said on the information she has it say \$7,200. Does that mean that the county doesn't have to pay Hays? asked Mrs. Geihlsler.

The group called Michelle Morgan with the Area Agency on Aging. She said with state budget cuts, the main issue is money.

Food vendors don't want to stop at every meal site, she said. If the sites don't order 10 cases of food at one time, she said, there are penalty fees.

While Ms. Morgan didn't know how many meals needed to be served each day to make Oberlin a satellite kitchen, she said she could get some numbers together.

She said that she didn't think the county has been giving any money to the nutrition program for the last five to six years.

Ms. Morgan said she could come out this spring to talk to the commissioners and representatives from the center and meal site.

# County receives lower premiums

By CYNTHIA HAYNES  
c.haynes@nwkans.com

Decatur County hasn't had to call its insurance company very much in the last few years, and that pays off in lower premiums for property and liability coverage.

Larry Sharp from the Kansas County Association Multiline Pool, which covered the county's insurance needs, was in to visit with the commissioners on Tuesday, March 15, and tell them about the basis for the premium ups and downs.

"Decatur County had an exemplary loss ratio," he said. "Not the lowest, but one of the lowest."

The loss ratio, which is the percent of claims paid out versus premiums paid, determines the amount the county will pay, he noted.

The group uses a four-year average for that score, which for Decatur County was 8 percent in 2010, 7 percent in 2009, 75 percent in 2008 and 20 percent in 2007.

Sometimes you have a bad year, he said, and the largest claims are seldom property loss. They're liability issues.

The big loss in 2008 was caused by an ice storm, Commissioner Ralph Unger recalled. It forced the county to replace the roof on the shop.

Decatur County's four-year ratio is now 28 percent, Mr. Sharp said. For all the counties out in northwest Kansas, the ratio is 66 percent.

While the insurance is a pool and not a business, he said, it tries to follow business principles so that it will be around to help in the

future.

The group spends about 30 percent of premiums on administrative costs, he said. The other 70 percent is used to pay claims and meet state requirements. The group considers a loss ratio under 60 percent good; that keeps enough reserves in the pool for the future.

In Decatur County, he said, premiums were \$76,000 in 2007, \$70,000 last year and \$72,000 this year.

A company called County Reinsurance Ltd., which handles the pool's exposure on large claims, will provide Decatur County with a \$2,000 grant for safety equipment or training to help keep insurance losses to a minimum, he said.

Most counties that get the grant, use it for road and bridge or law enforcement, Mr. Sharp said. Either safety training or equipment such as improved back-up mirrors or tarps for the trucks so that gravel does not blow out are acceptable uses.

Last year, Decatur County's biggest losses were a \$2,200 claim when a sheriff's vehicle hit a deer and \$1,700 to fix wind-damaged windows and a water leak at the courthouse, he noted.

Commissioner Unger, who is on the pool's board, said he has told his fellow commissioners that this is the best deal the county will get on insurance.

"The pool's advantageous because it's a stable source of insurance," he said.

# Council buys program to help determine rates

The Oberlin City Council approved buying a computer program that will help figure electric rates needed to continue providing service, maintenance and any needed upgrades.

The council talked about the program, by MGT of America, at the last meeting, but didn't make any decisions.

City Administrator Karen Larson said since that meeting, she's talked with other cities that use the program and they say it's worth the money. The program, she said, will help the city see if the rates need to be raised.

Mrs. Larson said she thinks it's well worth the money to know what's going on. It will cost \$3,750 for the program, which the company will install.

Councilwoman Rhonda May moved to approve buying the program, with Councilman Bill Riedel giving the second.

Mrs. Larson said there's no maintenance fee for the program.

She also said she met with Willard Perrin and David Sporn with the water department, as well as the engineers, about the proposed well and distribution lines. Hopefully the project will go out for bids this month.

Also, she said, engineer Chris

Miller is going to contact Solar Bee and ask them to come and look at the sewer lagoons, where the firm installed mixers last year.

The solar-powered mixers were supposed to take care of most of the smell, but they probably need more mixers. The firm is supposed to supply those free, she said.

Mrs. Larson said they were told the lagoons would smell twice a year when they are turning over, but that smell shouldn't last a month.

Maybe there is hope that the town won't smell forever, she added.

In other business, the council:

- Appointed Mrs. Larson and Mr. Riedel as the city's representatives to the Kansas Municipal Energy Association, with Dan Castle, city foreman, as alternate.

- Set the burn dates for spring cleanup for Friday through May 9.

- Agreed to sponsor a trophy for the car show for the museum. The trophy for Mayor's Choice will cost \$20.

- Talked briefly about plans for the new runway at the airport. Mr. Riedel said he wanted to make sure the plans include changes to the apron for the new hangars being built at the airport. Mrs. Larson said she would e-mail the engineer to make sure.

# Drivers check out bus



**DRIVERS** Bernard Goetze (left) and Larry Ganje checked out the county's new bus Friday morning. The county got the new transportation bus through a state grant program. County employees were checking inventory on the bus Friday before using it to haul residents.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

# Man donates \$550 to help pay for bus

An Oberlin man has given Decatur County \$550 to help pay for a new transportation bus as a memorial to his late wife.

Calvin Ufford said his wife benefited greatly from the bus service, which picks people up and takes them where they need to go around town. This service is essential to the residents of the county, he said. The bus service made life easier for his wife.

The people who run the bus, said Mr. Ufford, were always courteous and efficient.

Because of that, he said, his fam-

ily would like to donate \$550 from the JoAnn Ufford Memorial Fund to the county.

Commissioner Ralph Unger thanked Mr. Ufford and his family for their generosity and kind comments. The new bus should be here in the next week or so, he said.

"We really appreciated it," said Mr. Ufford. "We used it (the bus) quite a little bit. My wife really enjoyed it and enjoyed visiting with the people."

This community, said Commissioner Gene Gallentine, is blessed with good donations.

The commissioners talked about their policy on sick days and county employees being able to use those days when their kids are sick.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he checked on how the state deals with the issue. The state, he said, does allow sick days to be used when the person who is ill is related through marriage, blood or adoption.

It looks like the county should loosen its policy up a little, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy. Mr. Hirsch said he could write something up.

In other business, the county:

- Appointed Jim Fredrickson as trustee for Prairie Dog Township.
- Held a 10-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege, plus one later for 15 minutes. There was no action taken after either session.
- Authorized Noxious Weed Control Director Gaylen Huntley to buy chemicals based on the lowest bids.
- Authorized the road and bridge department to buy a truckload of diesel fuel.

# The Wrist Cath

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An important new alternative to traditional cardiac catheterization – transradial, or wrist, catheterization – is now offered by DeBaKey Heart Institute and Dr. Richard Markiewicz, interventional cardiologist.

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2214 Canterbury Drive  
Hays, Kansas  
Toll Free 888-625-4699  
haysmed.com