

Pantry needs food

Shelves bare at county pantry

The shelves in the Decatur County Food Pantry seem a little bare, although the need hasn't decreased.

Melanie Anderson, who works at the pantry, said they are getting to the time of year when the donations seem to drop off, but the demand stays the same. The pantry could really use some donations, she said. Anything that people would like to bring in would be appreciated.

Ms. Anderson said they have a freezer and are able to take meat or pre-packaged frozen foods. She added that they can't take any items that are homemade or home canned.

Items the pantry needs include peanut butter and jelly, sugar, tuna and other canned meats. She said that boxed "helper" dinners that just need meat added and ramen noodles are always popular.

The county's churches, said Ms. Anderson, each take a month for their congregations to bring in items. Teens for Christ takes a month and the food drive at Stanley Hardware covers December. The pantry also gets quite a few items from Raye's Grocery, she said, and that helps a lot.

Still, she said, there are times (See PANTRY on Page 5A)

Co-op divests Ampride

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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A Colorado company has bought the Ampride convenience store, at the corner of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83, from the Decatur Co-op Association.

Ginger Work, office manager for the Colorado Retail Venture Services, said the change in ownership will be effective Monday, May 16. The business will be closed on Sunday, May 15, so that they can do an inventory, she said.

Ms. Work said Colorado Retail Venture Services is based in Sterling, in northeast Colorado. After the sale, the station will be called Eagle Convenience. The company, said Ms. Work, has stations in Tri- (See COLORADO on Page 5A)



AT SAPPA PARK last Wednesday, Bernard Corcoran (above) used a tractor to pull tree limbs to the edge of the wetlands for fish habitat. Gary Connie Riedel (left below) held a toad that she was going to move out of harm's way. Anderson (right below) cleaned off the steps behind the shelter house.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Volunteers clean Sappa Park up during work day

About 10 people moved old desks, dryers and junk out of rooms that will be converted into bathrooms in the shelter house at Sappa Park last Wednesday.

The Sappa Park Committee set up the work day, one of two planned this spring, to help get the rooms cleaned out and get some limbs moved.

The first work day, which had been scheduled for Friday, April 8, was canceled because of wet weather.

A handful of people worked on the wetlands, moving downed limbs and trees from near a trailhead to the pond using a tractor. The brush will provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

Another three cleaned off the steps on the back side of the shelter house, pulling weeds, raking dead grass and picking up trash.

Several others, said committee member Kimberly Davis, cleaned out the rooms on both sides of the shelter house where the group plans to build bathrooms.

The work day went well, she said. All of the help was much appreciated. The committee continues to work with the city to get bathrooms, she said.

Gary Anderson, another com-



mittee member, said the group is working with the Oberlin camp of the Modern Woodmen, a fraternal and insurance group, for money for paint for the shelter house and for the bathrooms.

The group is giving \$500 for paint for the outside of the shelter house. A work day is planned for Wednesday, May 18.

Marie McKisson said she's waiting on the raffle tickets for the second project, which is a \$5,000



match for the bathroom project, with up to \$2,500 coming from the Modern Woodmen.

Besides the painting, said Mrs. Davis, the committee plans to schedule another work day to

continue cleaning out the shelter house and around the park.

New law to give tax exemptions

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Decatur County commissioners talked Tuesday about a new state law that provides an income tax exemption to anyone who moves from another state to one of 50 rural Kansas counties with declining population.

The law, signed by the governor earlier this month at the airport in Colby, says former Kansans must have lived outside the state for at least five years. The person receiving the help has to live in the county for the entire tax year, starting in 2012; file their taxes on time; and sign an affidavit confirming residency.

Counties that sign up can participate in a state matching program to help pay down student loans up to \$15,000.

Connie Grafel, marketing director with the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Economic Development Corp., said she went to a meeting in Quinter last week where the bill was discussed.

If the county is going to do it, she said, the bureau is ready to do a letter-writing campaign in May to area alumni who might qualify.

The loan-repayment program,

she said, is capped at \$15,000 for the county. The state will put money in, too.

Unless the state runs out of money, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch. The paperwork, he added, states that the money from the county is "irrevocable."

Commissioner Gene Gallentine mentioned that it might be hard for counties to budget for this type of program.

He asked if Ms. Grafel thought there might be money from the hospital board or other agencies to help out.

Or possibly money from the school board, added Commissioner Ralph Unger, if the person is a teacher.

It sounds like the commissioners have some time before they have to make a decision, said Mr. Gallentine.

Yes, said Ms. Grafel, there is some time, but the corporation needs to know if the county is going to take part in the program so they can start recruiting.

It could be a bad thing if the county doesn't participate, said Mr. Hirsch, and Decatur County turns out to be the only one that doesn't.

This bill could be a good recruiting tool, said Mr. Gallentine. No decisions were made.

Eating Easter candy



AT CITY PARK on Saturday after the Oberlin Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, Bailey Wolf sat in her mom Sarah's lap and enjoyed candy.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Students sets up freecycle

A Decatur Community High School sophomore, with the help of his mother, got Decatur County set up on the freecycle website.

The idea, said Tyler Bruggeman, is that if someone has something that they want to give away, they can post it on the website. People who are looking for a certain item can go to the site and see if someone is trying to give it away.

Tyler said no money can be exchanged for the items. Everything has to be free.

It's his job to make sure that nobody exchanges any money for the items.

While the website isn't new, it's new in Decatur County, he said. So far, a few jigsaw puzzles are listed.

If a person finds something they are interested in, they can e-mail the person giving it away. Tyler said the closest place using the freecycle site is Colby.

Anyone interested can register on the site by going to www.freecycle.org.

He said it's easy and also helps keep things out of the county landfill.

He said Kem Bryan also helped him get started with the program.

Postal Service plans meeting May 9 in Colby

The U.S. Postal Service will hold a public meeting at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 9, to discuss its proposal to move mail processing operations from Colby to Salina in the multi-purpose room of the Colby Community College Student Union.

With a steep, continuing decline in mail volume due to the economy and diversion to e-mail, the Postal Service has an excess of employees and equipment, officials say. Stamped single-piece, mostly first-class mail, has declined by 50 percent in the last 10 years. A study was begun last month at the Colby office to determine the feasibility of consolidating some redundant operations.

dating processing centers in Colby and Hays to Salina. The study said Colby would lose one job, with the rest being transferred to Salina. The post office here employs 25 people, eight in mail processing.

This could increase overall efficiency and productivity, the service said, but initial findings say the collection-box pickup times, retail services, business mail acceptance and local mail delivery will be unaffected.

While no final decision has been reached, Postal Service managers will give an overview of the reasons for the proposal and its possible outcomes, and will listen to community comments.

Results of the initial study have been released by the Central Plains District office in Omaha, suggesting that the Postal Service could save as much as \$139,000 per year — \$99,000 in Colby — by consoli-

Anyone who wants to submit comments in writing can send them to: Consumer Affairs Manager, Box 199504, Omaha, Neb. 68119-9504. These must be postmarked by Tuesday, May 24.

*Pantry needs more donations

(Continued from Page 1A) when more donations are needed. Ms. Anderson said she appreciates everyone who donates and their consideration to the pantry.

While the volunteers might help pick out items, they let the person choose what they want from the pantry. What one person might want to eat, said Ms. Anderson, another might not care for.

People from the county can use the pantry, located in the basement of the United Church in Oberlin, three times a year, she said.

Donations can be brought to the church basement from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

She said the amount of food given out is based on family size. Ms. Anderson said they track information at the pantry, including their name and those in their immediate family.

Besides the food items, said Ms. Anderson, they also take toiletries, household cleaning items and laundry soap. If someone can't afford to buy food, she said, they can't afford those, either.



IN THE FOOD PANTRY on Thursday, Brownie Scout Kaitlyn Howland, 8, unloaded boxes of cookies that were donated by customers this year. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Girl Scout delivers cookies to food pantry

An Oberlin Girl Scout helped stock the Decatur County Food Pantry last week with cookies.

During the annual cookie sale, said Becky Ayers, Membership Services Manager for the Girl Scouts, anyone who bought cookies had a chance to buy "cookie shares" and donate boxes to the food pantry. Kaitlyn Howland, 8, a Brownie Scout, put 17 boxes of cookies on the shelf at the pantry in the basement of

the Oberlin United Church, after school on Thursday.

Mrs. Ayers said other agencies that received cookie shares in this area included the military, food pantries, the Kansas Food Bank and Catholic Charities.

The Girl Scout year will come to an end, she said, with a family event at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 1, at City Park. All Scout families are invited for cookies and drinks.

The program will start back up in the fall when school starts, she said. It costs \$12 per child. Anyone who signs up before June 30 will get \$1 off registration.

Recently, said Mrs. Ayers, Calvin Ufford gave a donation to the Scouts in memory of his wife, JoAnn. While the money will be used for the Oberlin Scout program, she said, they haven't decided what to do with it yet.

County changes the sick leave policy

The Decatur County commissioners approved language to allow employees to use their sick leave for themselves or to take care of a spouse, child or step-child.

The commissioners had talked about a possible change in the policy at a recent meeting and checked out the state's policy, but didn't make any decisions.

Later, they asked the county attorney to draft a resolution to change the policy. Before the change, sick leave could be used only when the

employee was sick.

Are there employees who have vacation time left, but are choosing to use sick leave? asked County Attorney Steve Hirsch.

Yes, said Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, but there are some who have nothing left.

Full-time county employees acquire one sick day a month, she said.

It's important that people take vacations, too, said Ms. Geihlsler. Employees need to get away and be

free from stress. It's not a vacation to take care of someone who is sick.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy made a motion to change the language in the sick-time policy, which was approved.

He added that if employees use all their sick and vacation leave and still need to take time off, the employee just won't get paid.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved the minutes from the last meeting.

- Cancelled the Tuesday, May 3, meeting so the commissioners can attend Kansas County Commissioners Association meeting.

- Transferred \$20,000 from the general fund to the landfill.

- Transferred \$3,000 from the general fund to the summer recreation fund.

- Appointed Stephanie Blau to the recreation committee.

*Colorado company buys station from co-op

(Continued from Page 1A) bune and Johnson, Kan., plus two in Sterling, one in Yuma, one in Wray, one in Palisade and one in Brush, Colo.

Although the name will change, she said, Venture plans to continue

offering fuel, convenience store items and some gifts. Ms. Work said they are also working on getting some kind of pizza in the station, but nothing is set.

People passing by will notice a new sign, said Ms. Work. There also

might be some remodeling. The lease for the Subway restaurant in the north side of the building is still good, she added.

Her boss, said Ms. Work, is always looking for new locations. He had heard that this station was for

sale and bought it. The company, she said, is owned by seven farm cooperatives.



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Photograph courtesy Alan Henderson, Flickr.com

Play planned for Rexford

Golden Plains Middle School will present the play, "Law and Order: Fairy Tale Unit," at 7 p.m. on Thursday in Rexford.

The script is based on the popular television series with a fairy-tale twist.

"In the fairy tale criminal justice system," a synopsis says, "the characters from fairy tales and nursery rhymes are represented by two separate yet equally ridiculous groups: the fairy tale police, who investigate fairy tale crime, and the fairy tale district attorneys, who prosecute fairy tale offenders. These are their stories."

All students at the school have at least one on-stage part.

"All students have been working hard on developing their acting skills," said Director Ashley Arnberger. "I would encourage everyone to come out and support the students and all their hard work."

The sophomore class plans an ice cream social prior to and immediately following the play.

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