

Harvest starts slow after heat

Rain delays combines

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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Harvest trucks started rolling last week, as 100-degree-plus heat and strong south winds turned the wheat an amber brown, dry and ready to be put in the bin.

Farmers were able to put in several days before the rain came Saturday night, shutting down the harvest for a day or two.

At Hansen Mueller Grain in Oberlin, Janice O'Hare said they have taken in more than 350,000 bushels, most of it in Oberlin. Things have barely started out towards Cedar Bluffs, she said.

The elevator on U.S. 36 here received its first load last Tuesday and has had trucks continuously since.

Before the rain on Saturday, said Mrs. O'Hare, the wheat was showing at 8 to 9 percent moisture. On Tuesday morning, they got a little at 15 percent.

At the Decatur Co-op, General Manager Kurt Anderson said they

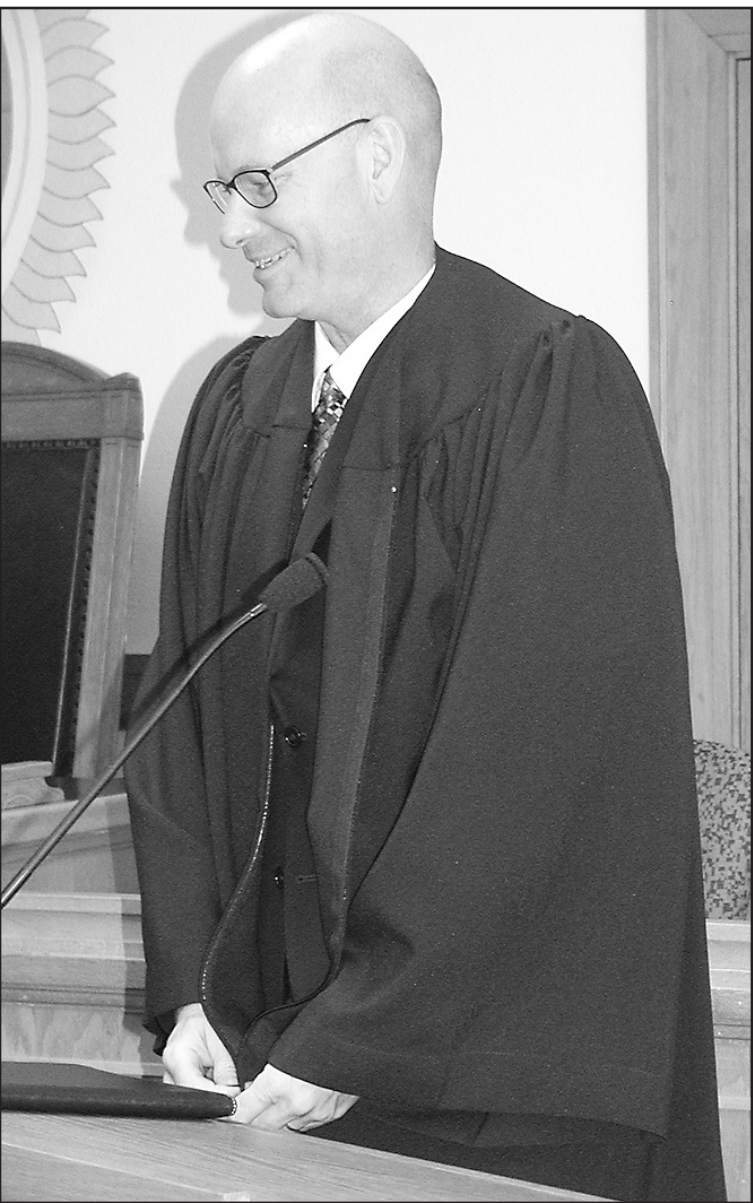
started receiving wheat last Monday. Harvest started really going strong by Friday, and a little was cut on Saturday. There were some crews out cutting Sunday night and on the Fourth of July, he said.

The moisture hasn't been too high, said Mr. Anderson. After the rain, it was borderline, but before the storm, the co-op was also getting wheat at 8 to 9 percent. About 14 percent is the maximum moisture elevators look for.

Everything seems to be going well so far, he said. The co-op, at all of its locations, had taken around 1.4 million bushels. Last year, the elevators got about 4.5 million bushels total, he added.

While the co-op has taken a lot of grain already this year, Mr. Anderson said, the trucks have been spaced out, with no big backups.

He said he didn't have any information on test weights of the grain yet.



AFTER BEING SWORN IN on Friday, District Judge Preston Pratt zipped up his new black robe.

— Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

Judge takes oath and gets to work

By STEVE HAYNES
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Preston Pratt of Oberlin took the oath of office Friday as chief judge of the Kansas 17th Judicial Districts, then after sharing punch and cake with friends, lawyers and court workers from around the area, sat down in the courtroom and got right to work.

A standing-room-only crowd of about 50 jammed into the courtroom of the Decatur County courthouse, filling the benches, the jury box and the counsel tables. One lawyer present said he figured at least half the attorneys in the district had come.

Justice Nancy Moritz of the Kansas Supreme Court drove out from Topeka to administer the oath. She said she'd spent the night with her brother in Hays, and arrived just in time for the 10 a.m. ceremony.

Justice Moritz, who has served on the high court only since January, said this was her first opportunity to swear in a new judge. She is the supervisory justice for courts in all of northwest and north central Kansas. A native of Tipton, she graduated from high school in Salina and went to college and law school at Washburn University.

She said it was a pleasure to be out in the west.

"This is truly God's country," the justice said, "and Preston is lucky to get to be a judge in God's country."

Mr. Pratt raised his right hand and swore the brief oath of office, then took congratulations from the justice. She said she'd asked him about his remarks beforehand, and he'd told her he's a man of few words. She urged him to speak anyway.

"There are only two things I can (See OBERLIN on Page 12)



ON MONDAY, Jeremy Tally (above) helped rake tree limbs out of the middle of Commercial Street, where a big old tree had fallen partly in the roadway during the storm Monday night. The city crews worked around the clock

getting the town cleaned up and power back on. Foreman Dan Castle (below, left) got help putting up a new power pole on Tuesday.

— Photos by Kimberly Davis and Bill Riedel

Winds damage area

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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Winds blew up to about 88 mph and the rain fell hard and fast Saturday night, leaving tree limbs down, streets flooded, buildings damaged and Oberlin without power.

Tree limbs and the wind damaged power poles, lines and transformers, shutting off the power in town about 9 p.m. Saturday night. Many homes were without power until Sunday. Some areas of town still didn't have power on Tuesday, but not for lack of the city crews working.

The city line crew, said Mayor Bill Riedel, has been out working since the storm. They started Saturday night, clearing up hot wires to make the town safe. The crew worked all night, he said.

Trees and limbs were down all over town, said Mayor Riedel, adding that it looked like the east side of the city was hit a little harder than the west.

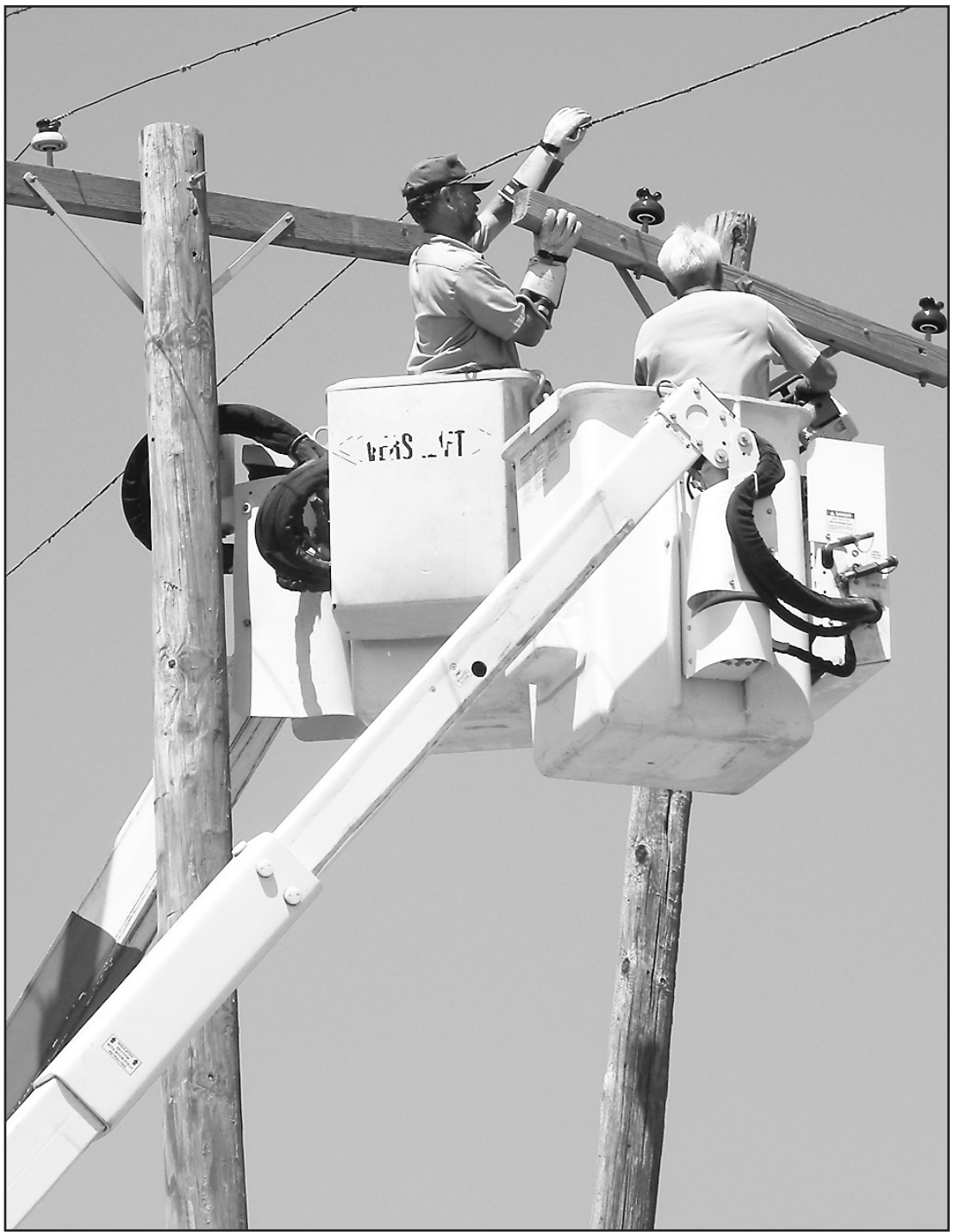
He said it was a good thing the city had trees trimmed along alleys and power lines this year, or the damage could have been worse.

The city crew worked over the weekend in cooperation with electricians to get power hooked up back to people's homes. The parks and street maintenance crews were out cleaning up trees and limbs.

Some big trees were down, including one across the street from the high school that blew over, roots and all, tearing up part of the sidewalk and blocking the north side of Commercial Street.

At the cemetery, said Mayor Riedel, the storm damaged trees, broke the veterans monument, knocked over 20 or more headstones and bent the flag pole.

At Dollar General, siding on the northwest side of the building



blew off landing on the sidewalk south of the store. On U.S. 36 a car port was lifted off the ground and ended on a used car dealership's building. Trees and limbs fell on fences, in the roads and on houses all over town.

It seems that the whole town was out on Sunday, cleaning up. It's amazing driving around, the mayor said, how many people were out helping their neighbors get things cleaned up.

Tuesday morning, city line

crews from Goodland and Colby came in to help. The poles and transformers in the alley between the Last Indian Raid Museum and the telephone office were still out.

Mayor Riedel said the city has all the supplies it needs to get the power restored. It could take until Friday to get the businesses along that alley back up and running, including the Oberlin Post Office and Farmers Bank and Trust.

The city did run its power plant

for a short time after the storm, but it wasn't needed. The problem wasn't the outside power supply, he said, it was that the storm pretty much beat up the city's lines and equipment.

City Administrator Karen Larson made sure the crews had lunch and water throughout the weekend. The city asked the Golden Age Center to open up as a shelter on Monday, as people were without power still and the temperatures (See TREE on Page 12)

Sheriff discusses new jail contract

The Decatur County sheriff talked with commissioners last week about a new jail contract for the City of Oberlin, which included a change in the way charges are figured, but no decisions were made.

At the meeting last Tuesday, Sheriff Ken Badsy brought in a contract he had worked on. He said everything is pretty much the same except for item No. 4, which says the city will be charged for the actual cost of keeping each prisoner. He said

this will be figured by the final cost of the jail budget, plus 30 percent of utilities, divided by the total jail days for inmates.

The contract also says that the county can refuse a city prisoner with medical problems unless he or she is first cleared by a doctor, the sheriff said. Recently, the county had a prisoner who needed a drug that cost \$375 a month, said Commissioner Gene Gallentine.

The prisoner is supposed to (See SHERIFF on Page 12)

Volunteers needed to work at carnival

The Decatur County Amusement Authority has openings for volunteers who want to work a game or ride during the carnival at the beginning of August.

The fair and carnival start Tuesday, Aug. 2 and end Saturday, Aug. 6.

To sign up to work a few hours at a game or a ride, stop by the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce office in the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center on Main Street, or call Judy Scott, authority president, at 475-8983 or 470-7269.

The schedule has openings for the

moonwalk, kiddie swings, kiddie cars, Tilt-a-whirl, Octopus, train and slide.

For the games, Ms. Scott said, there are still openings for break-a-plate, baseball, the birthday wheel, dart throw, soda-can toss, toilet toss, ladder golf, Ric-a-sha, Hi-striker, Plinko, basketball, duck pond and the lollipop tree.

The authority is having volunteer work nights at 6 p.m. Thursdays at the fairground to get ready for the fair.





Custom cutters get ready

AT THE FAIRGROUND last Wednesday, Brandon Meier of Darrouzett, Texas (above), attached an end spout to a combine. Mr. Meier is part of a Kemp Harvesting crew that was getting ready to head to the fields. Several John Deere combines (left) sat in a row waiting for harvest to start.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

*Oberlin man takes oath to be judge

(Continued from Page 1A) guarantee as judge,” he said. “The first is I’ll try my best and do the best that I can. The second is I will make mistakes ... but I’ll try not to make the same mistake twice.”

With that, Justice Moritz signaled the new judge’s granddaughter, Crystal Beinke, 6, to come forward with his robe. She handed it to her grandfather, but when the justice asked her to help him put it on, she demurred.

Crystal is the daughter of Chanse and Cristina Beinke of Smithfield, Neb. Also with them was their daughter Emily Torres, 11. Other relatives included Mr. Pratt’s mother and stepfather, Lona and Jim Ball of Oakley, his wife Peggy and stepson, Brett Beinke, Smithfield.

Judge Pratt, who grew up in Oakley, graduated from the University of Kansas with a bachelor’s degree and in 1993 from the KU School of Law. He has been with the firm of

Hirsch and Pratt in Oberlin since, serving as deputy county and city attorney here and as county attorney for Logan County.

After the crowd shared food and conversation, court clerks from several of the six counties in the district — Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Smith, Graham and Osborne — brought out papers for the new judge to sign. Judge Pratt sat down at one of the counsel tables and got to work.

The district had been without a judge for about a month since the retirement of Judge Bill Elliott at the end of May. Though Judge Elliott did handle the regular motion days through the month, some paperwork apparently had piled up.

Judge Pratt said he will have an office in the courthouse here, plus the main judge’s office at the courthouse in Norton. He will hold court in all six counties as needed, including the regular motion days. Tuesday, he was at work in Oberlin.

* Sheriff proposes new jail contract

(Continued from Page 1A) reimburse the county for that cost, said Mr. Hirsch, but the practical question is whether a prisoner has any money to pay the county.

The contract might need to be tweaked, said Sheriff Badsky, but it’s a starting point.

Normally contracts are a mutual thing, noted County Attorney Steve Hirsch, who also serves as the city attorney. He asked if the city has been consulted.

The change to charging the actual cost is in state law, said Sheriff Badsky.

Mr. Hirsch suggested that the

sheriff talk to the city police chief about the contract.

This discussion has come up before, said Mr. Hirsch. The city and the county have to get along, because it doesn’t make sense for the people paying the bill otherwise.

He asked what kind of financial impact the change would have. The sheriff said it might cost the city \$400 to \$500 more per year.

“Is it worth it?” asked Mr. Hirsch, referring to the work of calculating the actual cost at yearend.

It’s a matter of principle, the sheriff replied.

*Tree limbs down all over town

(Continued from Page 1A) rose to over 100 degrees.

Mayor Riedel said county Ambulance Director Linda Manning called to let him know she could help give people rides to the center, if needed.

The storm, while it left a lot of damage, didn’t last that long. Jacques Boultinghouse of Selden, county emergency management director, said she hasn’t seen anything that indicates a tornado in Oberlin, just straight-line winds. She said she had reports of winds at 68 mph in Oberlin, but is guessing some were higher than that.

North of town, where a tornado warning was issued for a time, said Miss Boultinghouse, winds were clocked at 88 mph.

Her initial assessment after talking with dispatch and driving around town was that 30 percent of the streets in Oberlin were flooded that night. Around half the town was without power and there was damage to many trees and homes.

Unofficially, she said, the town got about two inches of rain which came down fast.

She said she hasn’t heard of any

hail and while the area around Cedar Bluffs was under a tornado warning, no twister was sighted.

Miss Boultinghouse said she talked with the mayors from Dresden, which reported no damage, and Jennings, where there was some.

Council to discuss city streets

The Oberlin City Council plans to discuss possible street improvements and maintenance needs when it meets Thursday night.

The council has a full agenda, with several items under old business, including a report from the Sappa Park Committee, updated information about the new water treatment plant and bids on the former school house at the youth ranch, said City Administrator Karen Larson.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the upstairs room at The Gateway. It’s open to the public.

UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas

Brought to you in part by Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism Tourism Division

Little Apple Jazz Festival
July 9, Manhattan
Free festival featuring 7 bands on 2 stages, food vendors, a family-fun area and more! Larry Norvell Band Shell, Manhattan City Park (785) 532-6571, k-state.edu/upc

Amelia Earhart Festival
July 15-16, Atchison
Celebrating the spirit of the famed pioneer! LakeFest concert featuring Darius Rucker. Music, food, crafts, kid’s events all day. (800) 234-1854, atchisonkansanet

Blues, BBQ & Bargains
July 15-17, Hays
Sidewalk sales, food vendors, blues music, beer garden, 3rd annual KCBS BBQ contest and much more. Check out Facebook: Blues, BBQ & Bargains for schedule.

Pickin’ on the Plains Bluegrass Festival
July 15-17, Colby
Three days of great bluegrass music. National and local bands, craft and food vendors, children’s activities and more! (800) 611-8835, colbybluegrass.org

National Day of the Cowboy
July 23, Abilene
Celebrate the American Cowboy with activities at Old Abilene Town. Gunfights, stagecoach rides, can-can dancers, class in a one-room school, ice cream social, music and more! (785) 263-1868, abilenekansanet

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