

Norcatur, Herndon offices on list

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The post offices in Herndon and Norcatur are among about 3,700 listed to be studied for closure in the near future, which is more than 10 percent off all post offices in the country.

Brian Sperry, regional spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service in Denver, said 134 post offices in Kansas are on the list for studies. For another 22 offices in the state, studies have already started.

The studies, he said, will take into ac-

count the effect on the communities served, the on the customers and employees, the possible savings, service alternatives and other factors.

For each office, a community meeting will be held to discuss the process. Mr. Sperry said those haven't been scheduled yet for Norcatur or Herndon.

He said he thought in the next few weeks, those post offices should receive a letter with the date, time and location of the meetings. Along with that will be a survey for customers to fill out and send in.

Customers, he said, will also receive a letter in the mail about the meeting.

Scott Hartzog of Norcatur has written a letter to the editor (printed on Page 4A of today's *Oberlin Herald*) encouraging people to write letters to elected officials.

The Decatur County commissioners approved and signed resolutions against closing the post offices in both Herndon and Norcatur during a recent meeting. The commissioners, too, encourage people to write letters to congressmen and senators opposing the plan.

The resolutions note that the Herndon Post Office opened Oct. 18, 1880, and the Norcatur office on Oct. 30, 1885, and both have served their towns from more than 125 years.

In the past five years, said Mr. Sperry, mail volume has declined by 25 percent, or by 43 billion pieces of mail, due to a poor economy and use of e-mail and online alternatives. Unfortunately, he said, the amount of first class mail is dwindling.

The service lost \$8.5 billion last year and projects to lose \$8 billion this year, he

said. The agency, he said, doesn't run on taxpayer dollars. It is operated by fees and revenue. The service is trying to reduce costs, save money and streamline the operations while maintaining a high level of service, he added.

Nationwide, there are 3,700 locations under study. These offices have less than two hours a day of workload, said Mr. Sperry, although the offices are open longer than that. There isn't a lot of foot traffic in the locations and under \$50 a day in sales.

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AT THE CARNIVAL last week, Kelly Wasson and her son Mitchell (above) rode the Ferris wheel while Andrea Spanier (below) took her daughter Evie on the merry-go-

round. The carnival was open every night Tuesday through Sunday.

— Herald staff photos by Kim Davis

Rides get to go all week

The Home-Owned Carnival opened every night of the Decatur County Fair without a hitch as kids, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents turned out to ride the rides and play the games.

The carnival kicked off on Tuesday with wrist-band night. The \$15 wrist band allowed the wearing to ride all rides an unlimited amount of times.

The rest of the evenings, rides were run by tickets, sold in the two booths at the fairground.

Judy Scott, president of the Decatur County Amusement Authority, said things had gone well.

Throughout the week, people stepped up and covered the games and rides that needed volunteers. It seemed like people wanted to help out.

The number of people attending the carnival might have been down a little this year, she said, because of the humidity and threat of storms a couple of nights.

Tuesday is normally the slowest night, said Ms. Scott, but Wednesday and Thursday also were slow this year. Friday and Saturday saw



good crowds, however.

A great crew showed up Sunday morning to help tear everything down. Ms. Scott said they got everything put away and had enough volunteers to help do some extra work.

It was just like the set-up day, she said, with things going smoothly.

"I am just amazed at the change in the past three years," said Ms. Scott, "with people stepping forward to help."

The volunteers put up the signs that the authority found with the names of the people who have helped with the rides over the years.

The authority asked for bids for

the old storage trailers and have received a few. Ms. Scott said they plan to bring in new storage units.

The authority board plans a wrap-up meeting at 6:30 p.m. tonight to go over everything, she said.

Harvest ends as farmers cut terrace channels

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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While a few farmers were finally cutting terrace channels last week, elevator operators say the summer's wheat harvest has pretty much been over for better than a week and a half.

At the Hansen Mueller elevator in Oberlin, Janice O'Hare said a few trucks came in last week and there might be one or two more from farmers cutting terraces that were just too wet earlier.

During harvest, she said, rain kept farmers and harvest crews out of the fields for days at a time, and the terraces were too wet to cut in some places.

Mrs. O'Hare said harvest had gone well. There were no accidents, and both the firm's elevators — in Oberlin and Cedar Bluffs — were pretty much full. She said they didn't have to put any wheat on the ground at either location.

She said Hansen Mueller has almost 1.1 million bushels of wheat in storage at the two elevators.

The quality of the crop went down a little as harvest went on because of the rain. Mrs. O'Hare added that she thought people were happy with the yields.

Quite a bit of the wheat has al-

ready been sold, she said, but that will probably slow down now that the market has been down for three or four days.

Mrs. O'Hare said they started taking in wheat on Tuesday, June 28.

The Decatur Co-op, said grain manager Fred Brubaker, ended up with 3.7 million bushels wheat, down a little from last year. The previous two years had really good yields, he added.

While harvest started out in great, towards the end, elevators reported fairly light test weights. Mr. Brubaker said they took in as much wheat with test weights about 60 pounds per bushel as below. It evened out, he said.

He said they haven't seen as much selling as in years past. Lots of the grain is still in the 30-day storage window, he said.

Harvest started at the co-op on Saturday, June 25. There were a few trucks coming in last week, with some of the terraces dry enough to be cut, he said.

There is some ground south of town, said Mr. Brubaker, where the terraces might not ever get cut because of the amount of rain. Farmers might ask if it's worth the trouble to go back so long after harvest, he said.



LANE RIETCHECK and his fiancée, Allie Samson, in front of the Ferris wheel at the Home-Owned Carnival in Oberlin on Saturday night. The couple became engaged after he popped the question at the top of the ride at the beginning of the week.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Man proposes on ride

High above the Decatur County Fairground in Oberlin, an Oakley man popped the question last Wednesday night.

Lane Rietcheck proposed to Allie Samson while stopped at the top of the Ferris wheel during the second evening of the Home-Owned Carnival.

Miss Samson, a 2008 graduate of

Decatur Community High School, said "yes," and the couple has already chosen a wedding date for next summer.

Miss Samson said they have been

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Missionaries arrive in town in Jaguar

By **MARY LOU OLSON**
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When a beautiful green 1998 Jaguar pulled down Main Street in Oberlin last week, it captured the attention of many onlookers.

What they did not know was that the two women in the car, longtime friends who became Catholic sisters and missionaries, felt they had been drawn to Oberlin for a special reason.

Susan Rynearson and her friend, Kathleen Worlickey, said they were actually just passing through on U.S. 83, traveling from Lampasas, Texas, where they had been doing mission work. They were headed for Townsend, Mont., where they planned to check in at a motel for some rest needed due to health problems.

The women said they stopped for

(See CATHOLIC on Page 8A)

New principal learns about district

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Saying he wants to get involved in the community and get the community involved in the school, Decatur Community High's new principal had jumped into the job with both feet.

Ben Jimenez started work for the Oberlin School District last week, on Monday, Aug. 1. Ev-

ery district, he said, does some things differently, so he's spent his first week learning about the district and meeting some of the people.

He said he worked in the concession stand at the Decatur County Fair and he and his wife and three kids have been getting out to events and getting to know

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*Catholic sisters buy a home here

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 a break in Selden to check on the best route, and after praying, they said they felt the Lord was leading them north on U.S. 83.

"When we got closer to Oberlin and saw the 'Oberlin' sign," Sister Rynearson said, "she asked, 'Why is that sign standing out to me; what does it mean? We must be where something is going to happen.'"

"There were no bells or whistles, but joy and peace flooded us and we felt that there was something special about this place and we must stop."

"I felt that the Holy Spirit was leading me as I turned onto Commercial Street. As we drove down Main Street, with its beautiful bricks, I felt compelled to make a left turn onto Hall Street. We drove two blocks east, then stopped right in front of the house (once owned by the late Byron and Phyllis McCartney) at 202 S. York.



SMILING FROM THEIR 1998 Jaguar were (from left) Sister Kathleen Worlickey and Sister Susan Rynearson, Catholic missionaries who have moved to Oberlin.

"When we saw the Realtor's sign in the yard, we became excited and decided to call Gary Richards (of Home Range Realty) to check it out. He came over and showed us the house, which we both loved. We then asked him if Oberlin had a Catholic church, and he offered to show us where it was, and we were very impressed with Sacred Heart Church."

The women said that after talking things over, they decided they needed some time to think, so they headed north out of town, toward Montana.

However, after driving a few miles, Sister Worlickey told her friend, "I need to talk to you seriously. We've got to go back. We can't leave that house."

So they drove back to town, talked to Mr. Richards again, then got a room for the night.

The McCartneys' daughter, Carolyn, and her husband, Howard Kuhn, of Topeka, had just left Oberlin, but when the women returned to the realty office, Mr. Richards called them on their cell phone and told them they needed to come back.

The women said that they decided to make an offer on the house, which was accepted. With the help of the

Kuhns and a neighbor, Gary Brugge-man, they were soon unpacked and settled in their new home.

"We both feel a real peace about the purchase, and feel we have been truly led to this location," they agreed. "We feel pulled here by the chords of love and give God the praise for it all."

The women said the story of their decision to become missionaries really goes back to when the two reunited in 1995 at a Bible study in Hinckley, Wis. They had not seen each other for 20 years, but Sister Worlickey had gone there to visit her sister, Mistzi, who also attended the Bible study.

They said they come from completely different backgrounds. Sister Rynearson said she was reared on the family farm among lakes and streams near Winnebago, Wis., while her friend lived in St. Paul, where her father was a tool and die maker. Both later married and had families.

Sister Rynearson, who had been raised as a Baptist, said she became interested in finding out more about the Catholic faith and after studying it and praying, she decided to take classes and then joined the church on April 26, 1996. Her friend was already a Catholic.

The following year, both women became members of the Third Order of Carmel, which they said follows the example of Elijah, the great prophet of the Old Testament. The lay order is part of the larger Carmelite order, the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, which includes priests, religious brothers and sisters and lay men and women.

The order traces its history to the 12th century, when a group of men left civilization to live a religious life on Mount Carmel, in the Holy Land, near the place where the Bible says Elijah went to meet with God.

Since joining the order, the women said, they have done mis-

An icy treat



SNO CONE AT THE READY, Abigail Scott, 7, Olmitz, was having a great time at the Decatur County Fair on Thursday. She is the granddaughter of Theresa and Jim Reeves of Oberlin.

*Small post offices may be closed

(Continued from Page 1A)

If the services does decide to close an office, he said, that doesn't mean mail services will stop. Rural mail carriers can sell stamps and take packages. The towns would keep their zip codes, he said, though they'd be served by carriers out of a larger office. People could still send mail.

The Postal Service, said Mr. Sperry, has started working on a new concept called Village Post Office, which could offer stamps, prepaid flat mailers, post office boxes and a collection box. These will be considered where there used to be an office or where one might

close, he said.

The Village Post Office could go in a town hall, government center or business under a third-party contract. Mr. Sperry said the first one in the nation will be in Washington.

Customer habitats are changing, said Mr. Sperry, and a post office isn't required for most business. People can buy stamps online, at the grocery store or over the phone.

"There are so many ways to do business with the Postal Service," he said. "It's not just going to the local office."

He added that the studies don't necessarily mean that an office is going to close.

*Principal played Wildcat football

(Continued from Page 1A)

people.

The family came from a large district in Derby where Mr. Jimenez served as the middle school assistant principal. They had a thousand students in the middle school, he said, a big difference from the combined junior/senior high here.

A smaller town offers more community choices, he said, more things to get involved in.

He said his wife, Jennifer, is from Quinter. They wanted to live in a smaller town, with a safer environment for them and their kids, he said.

Mr. Jimenez said his wife found a job as a speech pathologist with the McCook School District. She's always worked in hospitals in the past, he said, so this will be some-

thing new for her.

The couple has three children, Lia, 5, who will be in kindergarten; Sam, 8, in third grade; and Zeke, 11, a sixth grader. The family bought a house at the southeast corner of town which had belonged to Rocky and Teresa Diederich.

Mr. Jimenez said this is his 13th year in education. He said he grew up east of Andover, east of Wichita in Butler County, and went to school there until seventh grade, then attended parochial schools in Wichita.

After high school, he attended Benedictine College in Atchison and Kansas State University, graduating with a degree in secondary education. He played on the defensive line for the K-State football team in 1996 and 1997 after transferring from Benedictine.

The team went to the Cotton Bowl his first year and won the Fiesta Bowl the second year, finishing No. 7 in nation.

He taught social studies for two years in Wichita and seven in Valley Center, north of Wichita. He then spent three years as an assistant principal.

He received a master's degree in school leadership from Baker University in Baldwin City, just south of Lawrence.

Mr. Jimenez said he is an avid Wildcats fan. He likes to hang out with his family and coach kids' sports. While he hasn't been a hunter in the past, he would like to take the hunter safety course and try the sport.

The new principal said he wants to have a good year and be successful here. He wants to start an award/recognition for students and staff who show respect to others. Mr. Jimenez said he's going to call it a

TEAM award, standing for teach respect, expect respect, appreciate respect and model respect.

So far, he said, he's really been impressed with Oberlin and how nice everyone has been to him and his family. He said Mick and Linda Glaze came by after his family moved into their house and offered to help.

The football team and coaches got together to help them move in, he said. Joe and Melissa Dreher and several others also pitched in. They all were greatly appreciated, he said.



Ben Jimenez

City budget hearing set

The Oberlin City Council plans to hold a hearing on the proposed 2011 budget at 7 p.m. Thursday, during the first regular scheduled meeting of the month.

The budget, as published, includes a 9.113 cut in the city's property-tax levy compared to last year.

City Administrator Karen Larson said engineers with Miller an Associates will be at the meeting to present the well-testing results. Last month, the council decided to look at nearby irrigation wells

before proceeding to build a water treatment center for the city.

She said the engineering firm also has a report about proposed improvements in water distribution lines.

The city's code enforcement officer will give an update.

Prior to the council meeting, the city's Airport Advisory Board will meet at 3:30 p.m. upstairs in The Gateway.

Both meetings are open to the public.

*Man proposes on Ferris wheel

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dating for 21 1/2 years. They first met through a friend.

She said she knew a ring was coming, but didn't know the day or how it would happen.

Turns out Mr. Rietcheck had the ring ready and had made arrangements with Charlie Haag, who was working the ride for the Oberlin Rotary Club, to stop the wheel when the couple was at the top.

Mr. Rietcheck said he decided to propose on the Ferris wheel because it would be unique and something they would remember forever. Miss Samson said after the proposal, they went around a few times, then got off the ride.

Her mom, Candi Ketterl, who serves on the Oberlin Amusement Authority board, knew about the proposal and was waiting at the bottom of the ride, she said.

Miss Samson said they are think-

ing about getting married July 28 in Oberlin.

She works at the Rawlins County Good Samaritan Center in Atwood and her fiance works at the ADM grain elevator in Oakley.

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