



DECATUR COUNTY Firemen Caleb Peters (left) and Chris Kelly helped put out a blaze in the tree-branch burn pile east of the old county shop Thursday afternoon after 40 to 50 mph winds fanned embers and spread the fire to nearby weeds. — Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

Firefighters put out embers at burn pile

Winds whipping 40 to 50 mph Thursday afternoon fanned embers in a tree-branch burn pile east of the old county shop on East Victoria Street, and the blaze spread to nearby weeds along the railroad tracks before firemen arrived.

City employees noticed smoke in the pile about 4:25 p.m. and called county dispatch, which paged out the fire department. Crews responded with two brush trucks. Firemen first put out a small patch of burning weeds, then started hosing down the smoldering pile.

The city crew got a front-end loader and dug into the mix of ashes and coals so firemen could get to more of the blaze. All the time, gusts tore at both the unburned limbs and the ash heap. Firemen were at the scene about 25 minutes, wetting down the pile.

Assistant Chief Larry Ayers said it looked like that would hold the pile for a while, and fire fighters rolled up their hoses.

About 9:50 that night, city workers asked firemen to come back and wet down the embers once more. Forecasters had expected the

winds to abate by that time, but the gale was still blowing.

Last Sunday, Oct. 2, about 4:35 p.m., firemen were called to a pasture fire about eight miles south of town on the west side of U.S. 36. Mr. Ayers said the damage was confined to some grass, and a couple of piles of new wooden fence posts which were badly charred. That blaze appeared to start near the highway and spread into the pasture.

Another blaze was reported about 10:50 a.m. Monday. The rigs returned at 11:27 a.m.

College results trick players in football pick

Most contestants in this week's Pigskin Pickem contest had a pretty good idea of how the high school football games would turn out, but the colleges fooled some.

Still, more pickers came up with all seven right than in any other week this season. Seven people came up with seven correct answers and the tie-breaker score had to be brought into play once again.

Rusty Addleman, Oberlin, came closest to the correct score as Stanford welcomed Colorado to the Pacific Conference with a 37-7 trouncing.

Mr. Addleman will win the \$15 scrip first prize.

Gary Anderson, Oberlin, was just a couple of points behind Mr. Addleman in the tie breaker, and he wins the \$10 second-place prize.

Ryan Leitner, Oberlin, came in third and wins \$5 in scrip.

Others picking all the winners were Kelly Brown, Zach May and Kel Grafel, Oberlin, and Wilbur Reichert, Dresden.

Coming up with six out of seven were Ivis Hanson, Kenny Gee, Justin Gee, Dwayne Stapp and Owen Wilson, Oberlin.

Naming five out of seven were Cheri Kastens and Vernon Ketterl, Herndon; Megan Carter, Jennings; and Norm Wendlin, Tom Martin and Jacob Gee, Oberlin.

Jim Hollowell, Oberlin, was able to come up with four correct answers.

All eligible scores are entered on a spread sheet. At the end of the 10-week contest, the contestant picking the most correct games will receive a trophy.

The scrip won in the contest can be spent only at the sponsors: Ward Drug Store, the LandMark Inn, Fredrickson Insurance Agency, Decatur Co-op, Creative Collision and *The Oberlin Herald*.

Other scores of this week's games:

- Oklahoma State over KU, 70-28.
- Kansas State over Missouri, 24-17.
- Nebraska over Ohio State, 34-27.
- Oberlin over Atwood, 26-8.
- Oakley over St. Francis, 60-0.
- Perryton, Texas, over Norton, 28-19.
- Goodland over Colby, 37-14.

County increases equipment rates

The Decatur County commissioners approved an increase in the hourly rate to rent out county road equipment.

At a meeting Tuesday, Sept. 27, road and bridge supervisor Tim Stallman said the proposed increases for the motor grader which increased \$5 an hour from \$55 to \$60 and for the scraper for \$7 an hour from \$61 to \$68.

The last time the rates were changed was in 2010, he said. Since then, prices for fuel, tires and grader blades have all gone up.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine asked how the county's prices compare to the prices of private contractors. Mr. Stallman said he thought the county's price is about two-thirds of what a private contractor would charge.

The county just recaptures its machine costs on the charges, he said. The county crew, said Mr. Stallman, is limited to a daytime schedule, where a private contractor is not.

Townships hire the county to grade roads, mow, remove snow and haul gravel, he said. Some of the townships do hire private contractors to do some work or own their own equipment.

The new rates were to go into effect at the beginning of October.

Mr. Stallman expressed some frustration about not having a bridge crew and not being able to get contractors to do the work. Two bridges that had been scheduled for replacement this year are going to have to be put on hold, he said. The first one is 13 miles south and one mile west from the U.S. 36/U.S. 83 junction and the second one is eight miles west and eight miles south.

Right now, he said, the county crew is short five full-time workers, Mr. Stallman said. He has only six full-time workers and four of them will be on mowers until the middle of November, leaving the other two to do the rest of the work.

The crew, said Mr. Stallman, is just about done mowing the county roads and then will move to the townships.

"Would it help if the county paid more?" asked Mr. Gallentine.

Mr. Stallman said he was not sure. To get experienced operators out of the private sector, it might take \$15 an hour, he said, but that's a guess. County road workers today make \$10 to \$12 to start, depending on experience, he said.

Businesses prepare for holiday season

The Oberlin Business Alliance is getting ready for the holidays, with a string of events planned for the last quarter of the year.

The group briefly discussed the next few months during its monthly meeting last Wednesday at the LandMark Inn.

Up first is the annual Spook Parade on Main Street. Kids of all ages are invited to parade through downtown in their Halloween costumes. The parade starts at 4 p.m. Monday, Oct. 31, with the kids meeting around 4 p.m. on Main Street near the Good Samaritan Center.

The kids will walk to the intersection of Hall and Penn before they can circle back around and go trick or treating.

"Table tent" schedules put out by the Chamber of Commerce have a different date for the event, said Chamber of Commerce manager Carolyn Hackney. They were printed with the wrong date, which had been given to the Chamber, before the mistake became apparent. She asked everyone to correct the schedules if they are eating at an area restaurant.

Other events include:

- 1 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 13, members will be decorating downtown for the Christmas season.
- 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 13, is the annual Business-to-Business tour, designed to let everyone know what Oberlin businesses have to offer.

Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward

Drug Store, said anyone can come on the tour, which is not reserved for Chamber and business alliance members. Following the tour, the Chamber will have refreshments at the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center.

- Friday, Nov. 25, is the Christmas opener with the annual Parade of Light on Main Street. The group encouraged people to start thinking of entries now. Following the parade, the hospital will hold a soup supper at the Golden Age Center and Santa will be in town to visit with all the kids.
- From 4 p.m. to parade time, home-based businesses will be set up for "Mall in the Hall" in the Old Bohemian Hall at the Last Indian Raid Museum. The mall also will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. the next day, Saturday, Nov. 26.
- At 2 p.m. Saturdays Dec. 10 and 17, free kid movies will be offered

at the Sunflower Cinema.

- Ladies Shopping Night will be 9 to 11 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 15. Men's Shopping Night will be a week later, Thursday, Dec. 22.
- Saturday, Dec. 17, will be the Oberlin Merchant's annual "Christmas on Us" drawing, sponsored by The Oberlin Herald.
- Coffee hours will be held Fridays, Oct. 21, at Ward Drug Store; Nov. 25 at Stanley Hardware, Dec. 9 at the Dresser and Dec. 16 at *The Oberlin Herald*. Unger Chiropractic will also have one in November.

There was some discussion about ideas for a Business Alliance giveaway, but nothing was set. The group also talked about getting people into the stores after and before the Parade of Lights and to shop during the Christmas season.

Steve Haynes, publisher of *The Herald*, asked the group if they need to raise some money for Christmas

decorations for the town. There hasn't been a fund raiser for decorations in a while, he noted.


Mr. Vollertsen brought in a sample of the map Norton put out for the U.S. 36 Treasure Hunt sales in September. The first page had a map of the town with all the sale locations and then the next several pages featured descriptions of what the sales would have.


Cynthia Haynes, co-publisher of *The Herald*, said she was driving back from Concordia that weekend and noticed lots of the sales had flags up.

The U.S. 36 Association, said Mr. Haynes, who serves as the group's president, likes getting comments on the sale. The association works hard to put on the event, he said, and it's important that businesses pay their U.S. 36 dues because that money helps get events like this one done.

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Lineman to retire

With the retirement of a long-time city lineman, the Oberlin City Council approved hiring a journeyman lineman starting later this month.

City Administrator Karen Larson said Ron Beneda plans to retire Friday after 22 years with the city. The city will hold a reception for Mr. Beneda from 3 to 5 p.m. that day at The Gateway. The public is invited.

After two closed-door sessions, the first for 30 minutes for non-elected personnel with the council, mayor, administrator and city attorney, and the second for 15 minutes for attorney-client privilege with the same people, the council approved hiring David Perrin.

Mr. Perrin will start work at \$18 an hour. He is the son of Willard Perrin, head of the city water crew, and Tina Perrin.

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