

## Elfkin hands out hats



**ON MONDAY,** Susan Rynearson handed out elf hats Extension District office in the courthouse.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

## Salvation Army helps people here

What happens when you drop a quarter in one of the red buckets put out by the Salvation Army?

The Army helps people heat their homes when it's freezing outside. When a child is sick but can't afford a doctor, this agency can help.

At this time of year, the agency says, families need food, shelter and warmth, the necessities of life. And best of all, money donated to the program in Decatur County stays here to help county residents with emergency assistance for utilities, rent, prescriptions, food and clothing throughout the year.

To make a donation, look for one of the Army's red kettles at Pizza Hut, CrossRoads Express, Eagle Travel Stop, Raye's Grocery or the Frontier Restaurant in Oberlin; or

the Bank or the Broken Wheel Bar and Grill in Jennings, or the Bank in Norcat. Donations also may be sent in the Salvation Army envelope included in the Nov. 30 issue of *The Oberlin Herald*, or made in person at the First National Bank.

"The community always does great and comes together to help out a family in need," said Alvera Bruggeman, treasurer for the Salvation Army in Decatur County. "It is truly amazing how our community comes together."

If your family needs emergency assistance, contact Marilyn Gamblin at the Decatur County Health Department, 475-8118.

For information or questions about the organization, contact Mrs. Gamblin or Mrs. Bruggeman.

## Driver complains about slick streets

An Oberlin man delivered some complaints he had on the way streets were cleared after recent storms to the Oberlin City Council on Thursday, Dec. 15, asking if the city crew couldn't put sand on some of the slick, icy spots around town.

Bernard Goetze, a retired fish and game officer, drives the county transportation bus. He wrote, "Portions of our streets are potential sources of accidents. These accidents could be fatal or cause life-changing results."

"Take the intersection of Commercial and Highway 83 (Buffalo Avenue). How many times have you driven east into this intersection on ice, fearing sliding into the path of an 18 wheeler and be eaten alive?"

"There are four streets where this could happen: They are: Commercial, Elm, Oak and Ash."

"How about trying to stop at Sappa Valley Manor No. 2 just south of Oak Street and finding you and

your vehicle standing still at the dip in the street at the intersection of Elk and Commercial? There are many streets in Oberlin that have portions which are the same (hill streets): Waldo, Wolf, Elk, Buffalo, Beaver, Rodehaver, Cass, Penn, and so on across town, each has a block or two of steep slopes which are extremely dangerous.

"Also, there is the eastbound side of Commercial at Penn, shaded by the two story building on the south side of the street. Ice builds up here and is dangerous also."

"The bottom line is, can the city sand these portions of these streets to improve safety of our community?"

The council thanked him for pointing it out. The city is unable to gravel and salt every street, said City Administrator Karen Larson. The storm routes are taken care of first before the other streets.

## Marriage conference set for January

An "Art of Marriage" conference is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Jan. 27 and 28, at the Sunflower Cinema in Oberlin, put together by a group from a Bible study class with the support of the Decatur County Ministerial Alliance.

The event will run from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, said Amy Carman, one of the organizers. Breakfast will be served Saturday at the theater and

lunch will be served at the Golden Age Center next door. Volunteers are needed to help serve lunch, Mrs. Carman said.

The cost is \$50 per couple, which pays for workbooks, she said. Register at [www.familylifetoday.com](http://www.familylifetoday.com) or by calling Mrs. Carman at 475-2732 or Daniel Leitner at (785) 470-7620. The deadline is Thursday, Jan. 26, Mrs. Carman said, with a limit of 50 couples.

This is the first year for the conference, said Mrs. Carman. She said a group of women who meet for fellowship and prayers noticed the program and wanted to help and encourage couples in this area.

This conference is for couples of all ages, married or engaged. Mrs. Carman said they hopefully will learn insights into a successful marriage.

"This is a great option for a week-

end getaway that is right here in our community," she said.

Mrs. Carman said if anyone knows a couple who need encouragement, they might offer to pay their registration fee or to babysit their children.

For information or questions go to the Art of Marriage website or contact one of the organizers.

## New Year's baby will receive gifts

The first baby born to a Decatur County resident will win a host of prizes from area merchants.

While the parents must live in Decatur County, the baby can be born anywhere, said Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher for *The Oberlin Herald*.

The contest sponsored, by the

Decatur County Hospital and Family Practice Clinic, area businesses and the newspaper, will honor the first baby of 2012.

Prizes included a gift from Fredrickson Insurance Agency, a \$10 gift card from Stanley Hardware, a free engraved gift from Custom Trophy and Engraving, a \$10 gift

card from Rocking R, a free well-baby check-up in the first six months at the clinic, a free first prescription from Ward Drug Store, a case of baby food from Raye's Grocery and a year's subscription to *The Herald*.

These gifts have to be picked up within the first 60 days after the

baby's birth, Mrs. Davis said.

## Council approves electric contract

The Oberlin City Council approved a 10-year contract with Sunflower Electric to provide power for the city starting in January.

At the meeting Thursday, Dec. 15, Mayor Bill Riedel said it was previously represented that the city's cost of electricity would go down, but that's not true. The cost under the new contract is pretty equal with what the city pays today, he said, but as the availability of federal hydropower goes away, the average cost will go up.

The city will be getting less hy-

dropower, said City Administrator Karen Larson, but will still be able to get some of what it has in the past.

People can count on that, the electric rate in the city will go up, said Mayor Riedel.

Since the city first approved the contract, he said, Sunflower Electric has increased everything by 6 percent. It is still by far the better of the two contracts the city had to choose from, said Mayor Riedel, because the power plant doesn't have to be brought up to the Environmental Protection Agency standards.

The 6 percent increase, he said, was across the board for every contract that's been offered, not just for Oberlin.

Sunflower Electric, said City Administrator Karen Larson, isn't in the habit of just raising rates. The company, she said, has purchased a wind power field and that power will cost less. It won't be available for a year and a half, however.

The contract was approved by all members present. Councilman Rusty Addleman and Councilwoman Fonda Farr were absent.

## Customers need to clear walkways

The Oberlin post office is asking customers to shovel a path to their mailbox as soon as possible after it snows to keep carriers safe.

"We want our carriers to return home to their families healthy each night," said acting Postmaster Janet Knappert. "Keeping a path clear to your mailbox will go a long way toward keeping our letter carriers safe and ensuring mail delivery each day."

Carriers, who make an average of 600 deliveries a day, continue to do their best in difficult weather, she said, but snow and icy sidewalks can make it difficult to work safely. She said mail delivery could be delayed

or the carriers may not be able to deliver mail if your walk and steps aren't cleared.

If you receive mail at the door, she said, make sure sidewalks, steps and access ways are safe and clear. Customers with street-side mailboxes need to make sure the way to the box is clear and safe.

Letter carriers will consider safety first if the path to a mailbox is hazardous, she said. They are instructed not to make deliveries to locations that seem dangerous.

Ms. Knappert said carriers appreciate the support customers show by clearing walks.

## Game to be shown at the cinema

Let the big game begin.

Sunflower Cinema and Recreation are planning a party for the the big University of Kansas-Kansas State basketball game Wednesday night as a fund raiser for the theater and bowling alley. Admission to the game is \$5. There will be no reservations, said Economic Development Director Connie Grafel.

The game starts at 7 p.m., but the theater will open at 5 p.m., she said. The bowling alley will open at 3 p.m. for pre-game fun and pizza, said manager Doug Huscher, and concessions available at the theater.

The game will be available on the big screen in the theater and the three wide-screen televisions in the

bowling alley.

Rusty Addleman and Gary Walter are promoting a competition, trying to see what school can get the most fans to the event. Mr. Addleman is recruiting for KU and Mr. Walter for K-State. Mr. Walter said there might be a prize for the best-dressed fan.

## Food drive still a little short of 2,000-item goal

The window at Stanley Hardware is filling up with food, personal items and cleaning supplies, although there is room - and need - for a few more donations.

Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, set the goal again this year at 2,000 items. As of Monday morning,

the window held 1,738 items donated and tallied, leaving 262 needed by the end of the week.

After the new year, the donations will be taken to the Decatur County Food Pantry in the basement of the United Church.


## Council to wrap up 2011

The Oberlin City Council plans to hold an end-of-year meeting on Friday to clean up financial details before the books close.

The council will meet at 4:30 p.m. in Room 3 downstairs at The

Gateway to pay the bills and possibly hear an update on the power outage on Monday, Dec. 19.

The meeting, as usual, is open to the public.



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### Helping You Keep Your New Years Resolution

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Participants receive: a consultation with Tonya Koeppen, RD;  
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## Losing to Win

**Lose the Most - Win 6 Months Free**  
Register for our Losing to Win competition for a chance to win 6 months free membership at Tri Valley's Wellness & Rehab Center. The contest will take place from January - June and will provide Nutritional and Activity components with Registered Dietitian, Tonya Koeppen and Wellness Coordinator, Christina Houghtelling to help you meet your weight loss goals and have a happy and healthy 2012.  
Winner determined by biggest percentage of weight lost. Must be a member of Tri Valley's Wellness & Rehab Center during time of contest.

Email [wellnesscoord@trivalleyhealth.com](mailto:wellnesscoord@trivalleyhealth.com) or call 308-697-1400 for more information.

1-800-732-5505  
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