

Party elects officers

The Decatur County Republican central committee elected new officers at a meeting Thursday at the courthouse.

Ralph Unger was elected county chairman and Carolyn Kelley-Plotts was named to serve as vice chair. Jim Wesch rounded out the roster when he accepted the position of committee secretary-treasurer.

Mrs. Plotts and her husband Jim were selected to represent Decatur County at the Republican state convention, Feb. 17 and 18 in Kansas City, Kan.

Former committee chair Marilyn Horn and her husband Steve, the former secretary-treasurer, offered their support to the new officers and said they would help as the party prepares for Decatur County's first Republican presidential caucus.

The caucus will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 10, at the Golden Age Center in Oberlin.

All registered Republicans are urged to attend the caucus and vote for their favorite candidate. If you are not yet registered, you have until Feb. 17 to do so and be eligible to vote at the caucus.

Fertility seminar is Jan. 24

Crop production and the many new products that come out each year are constantly evolving and changing. Extension experts say.

The latest research findings on these products and sound soil fertility practices and recommendations will be explained at a Soil Fertility School sponsored by the Thomas and Rawlins County Extension offices from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the 4-H Building in Atwood.

Continuing education units and certified crop adviser credits have been applied for. This is a great time to get a start on those credit hours to renew your license, said Clint Milliman, Thomas County agricultural agent.

Addressing these ever-changing products and soil fertility practices will be Dorivar Ruiz Diaz, K-State specialist in soil fertility.

Reservations should be made by Thursday, Jan. 19, by calling the Thomas County Extension office, (785) 460-4582, or the Rawlins County office, (785) 626-3192. For information, call either office, or e-mail Mr. Milliman at milliman@k-state.edu or Cynthia Dixson, Rawlins County Extension agent, at cdixson@k-state.edu.



NEW AQUASHIELD PARTNER Rick Thomeczek discussed business with his boss, Michael Perry, (standing) at the company's office on U.S. 36 on Friday.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Man joins roofing business

Rick Thomeczek, formerly of Garden City, has joined Aqua Shield Roofing in Oberlin as a partner in the company's northwest Kansas operation.

The company, which has its office on U.S. 36 at 503 E. Frontier Parkway, came to Oberlin five or six years ago after the town was hit by a heavy hail storm, which destroyed lots of roofs, said Michael Perry.

At that time, owners Luis Guzman and Mr. Perry, a stepson of Oberlin insurance agent Vince Carswell, decided there was an opportunity in Oberlin, so they opened an office across from Raye's Grocery. They moved to the highway about six months ago.

The main office for the company, which does residential, commercial and agricultural roofing, siding and guttering, is in Hugoton.

Mr. Thomeczek has worked for the company for two years and had several years in the roofing business before joining Aqua Shield. Before that, he was in advertising and marketing. He moved to Oberlin this fall.

He has been married to Becky for 37 years and the couple has two children, daughter Richelle Hansen, who is married with a 6-year-old daughter of her own and lives in Olathe, and son Matt, who does government work in Afghanistan.

The office number is (785) 475-2533 and the Internet address is aquashieldroofing.com.

The company offers free estimates on all types of exterior home improvements, Mr. Thomeczek said.

Graduate helps out at newspaper

Brandi Diederich spent her Christmas vacation writing stories and taking pictures as temporary intern for *The Oberlin Herald*.

Miss Diederich, 20, a University of Nebraska at Omaha sophomore, is the daughter of Steve and Marilyn Diederich of Oberlin.

She graduated from Decatur Community High in May 2010.

She has two brothers, Colt of Oberlin and Ryan of Manhattan, and a sister, Spring Louderback of Oberlin.

This is Miss Diederich's second go-around in the newspaper business. Last summer, she worked for *The Norton Telegram*, writing society items and helping around the office.

This time, she got to cover the vacations of Herald office manager Pat Cozad and proofreader Carolyn Plotts.

She also got to write several front-page stories, take photos, write a couple of feature articles, make up pages and deliver the papers to the newsstands.



B. Diederich

New officer joins city police force

The Oberlin Police Department has a new officer. Beau Downing, 24, started work last Tuesday, though he is still waiting for parts of his uniform to arrive.

Working in a small town should not bother him, Chief Wade Lockhart said. Officer Downing is from Moscow, in the southwest part of the state, with a population of about 1,000.

He said he's a graduate of Moscow High School and Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell, which is only about an hour away from Moscow.

He said he received an associate's degree in criminal justice and a bachelor's degree in animal science.

With the bachelor's degree, he could have gone on to be a veterinarian or a nutritionist, he said, but he chose to go into law enforcement.

"I love police work," he added. As part of his training, Officer Downing said, he attended the collegiate officer program at the University and the Oklahoma Police

Academy. The course work was spread out over two years instead of a few weeks at a state academy, and the students had to pay all their own fees.

"We learned everything you actually learn at the academy," he said, adding that he had passed the certification test in Oklahoma but wanted to work in Kansas.

"So, here I am," he said with a smile. He said he also served an internship at the Texas County, Okla., jail in Guy-



B. Downing

mon. Officer Downing said that he played football in high school and for a little while in college.

He likes Harley Davidson motorcycles and classic cars.

He said he plans to be married in May and his fiancée plans to move to Oberlin later in the month.

On Monday, he was on the job. He had a badge and his uniform shirt but has to wear black jeans until replacement uniform pants arrived. The first pair that arrived, the chief said, were several inches too short.

Offices, banks to close for holiday

State and federal offices and banks will be closed Monday for Martin Luther King Day, while city and county offices and most businesses expect to be open.

Closed here will be the District Court offices in the courthouse, the U.S. Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Decatur County Conservation District office and all county banks.

All post offices will be closed and there will be no mail delivery.

Oberlin city and county offices, the courthouse and schools will be open as usual.

The Oberlin Herald office will be open. Because there is no mail delivery, copy should be mailed in time to reach the office by Saturday, sent by e-mail or fax or brought in to the newspaper. Papers will be out Tuesday on the regular schedule.

Group to sell hearts

The Decatur County Helping Hands will start selling hearts in Oberlin businesses to raise money for people who need help with health-care expenses.

The volunteer group will start the "Valentine Heart" fund raiser on Wednesday, Feb. 1, at the Re-

Load, Raye's Grocery, Pizza Hut and Crossroads Express. The hearts cost \$1 each.

The hearts will be on sale through the end of the month. Anyone who buys a heart can put their name on it so the heart can be displayed.



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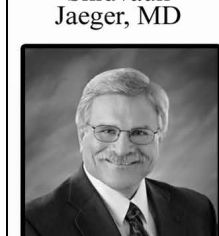
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Doula Services are also offered through Tranquil Valley Health Spa.



The Next FREE Childbirth Education Class will be held February 4. Call Jamie at 308-697-1399 to register.

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