

Supporters look at ways to get pool

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
c.haynes@nwkans.com

Almost a dozen swimming pool supporters met with a representative of a firm that helps towns build new pools last Tuesday night.

The group decided that it would look at getting a sales tax increase to pay for bonds to build and possibly maintain a new pool.

Kyle McCawley, an engineer with Larkin Aquatics out of Kansas City, Mo., showed the group what his company is doing in Phillipsburg and other Midwest towns.

Phillipsburg passed a 1-cent sales tax to pay for its new pool, now under construction. It includes an outdoor facility and a small indoor pool to be used for physical therapy and water aerobics, he said.

Other Kansas pools the company has helped with are in Neodesha, Mulvane, DeSoto and Cimarron, he said.

His company doesn't build pools, but helps cities with the engineering and design and helps to sell them to the public.

He said they help towns decide where to put a pool — current loca-

tion or move to a new site — assess the current pool and equipment condition, decide whether a new pool is needed or just fixing up the old one, and assuring compliance on safety and regulatory issues.

These things all need to be looked at before a push is made to get tax revenue for a pool or water park, he said.

If the pool committee decides to go ahead, Mr. McCawley said, another company would come in to help sell the idea to the City Council and public. That firm, Central States Capital Markets, helped Butler County pass a one-fourth-cent sales tax to build a new law enforcement radio system; Andover, a 1-cent sales tax for a new city hall; and Cimarron, a 1-cent sales tax for its new pool, said Shayla Williby, a pool committee organizer.

While no decisions were made at the meeting, Mr. McCawley said he would return in late February or early March to talk to the committee, the City Council and anyone who wanted information on the proposed project.

(See POOL on Page 12)

Plan proposes fewer judges in each county

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
k.davis@nwkans.com

The Decatur County commissioners talked with the clerk of the district court and magistrate judge last Tuesday about a plan released by the state Supreme Court which proposes eliminating the present requirement that there be a district judge or magistrate in each county.

That could mean that many rural counties, especially those in western Kansas, would lose their judges to the cities, many fear. The present law means each county has at least a district judge who lives in the county or a magistrate. Magistrates do not have to be lawyers, though district judges do.

Clerk of the Court Janet Meitl said they got the "Blue Ribbon Report" on court organization written by a special commission appointed by the high court recently. She said the report proposes allowing judge positions in lightly populated counties to be reassigned to areas with more cases.

Mrs. Meitl said the report said all judges should be lawyers, not lay people. Magistrate Judge John Bremer said the group still wants to keep the distinction between magistrate and district judges.

The report also states that some of the work in more populous areas could be done by magistrate judges, who are paid less than district judges.

County countdown

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked with the clerk of the court and magistrate judge about a plan released by state Supreme Court which would eliminate the requirement that there be a district court judge in each Kansas county. Story at left.
- Approved a small increase in charges for people taking tires to the county landfill. Story on Page 12.
- Received a plaque for placing second in the Kansas Workers Risk Cooperative for Counties insurance group for loss ratio for 2012. Story to come.
- Approved replacing the chains on a 2002 Caterpillar scraper. Story on Page 12.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said a meeting he attended proposed using web cameras for some hearings so prisoners and others wouldn't have to travel.

Also, said Judge Bremer, the report suggests that all the court docket fees go to the state.

They want the county to buy the video equipment, said Mrs. Meitl, (See COURTS on Page 12)



Students play outside

ON MONDAY the kindergarten class played in the sunshine on the playground at Oberlin Elementary School. While the temperatures reached 70 degrees, Emily Pearson (above) climbed and Aiden Kreutzer (left) played on a large tire.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

City receives grant to re-do some streets

The City of Oberlin will get nine blocks of streets repaired after receiving word that it has been approved for a \$394,979 Community Block Development Grant.

City Administrator Karen Larson said the city has won approval on a request for money to repave nine blocks of streets. The city will have to put up \$131,660 to match the

state money.

Out of the 39 applicants for the grant, she said, Oberlin ranked 10th out of the projects chosen to receive money.

Lance Harter, an engineer with the Nebraska firm Miller and Associates, is putting documents together to get bids on the projects, Mrs. Larson said. He did a street assessment study for the city which was used to back up the grant request.

Mrs. Larson said she is excited about the city receiving the grant. This project will cost more than the city has in its street fund, she said, but it is something a lot of people have been working on and looking forward to for some time.

"This will help our neighborhoods out and will help the commu-

nity prosper," said Mrs. Larson.

The nine blocks chosen for the project are some of the worst of the worst in the city, she said:

- Commercial Street west of U.S. 83 to Elk Avenue. The street assessment report noted that the earthen grade on this block is now exposed in some places, and potholes, edge cracking and deterioration are a continual problem.
- Elk Avenue from Oak Street at the north end of Sappa Valley Manor to Elm Street south of The Gateway. Drop-offs along the edge are pronounced, and some homeowners have filled in the gutter to level out their driveway entrances.
- Columbia Street, from Antelope Avenue to 175 feet west of Broad-

(See STREETS on Page 12)

Preliminary hearing set in murder case here

A preliminary hearing in the murder case against Dylan Coryell Jr. is scheduled for Friday morning.

The hearing originally had been set for November and has been continued twice.

Jeff Wagaman, deputy chief of staff for Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt, said the hearing has been scheduled for 9 a.m. Friday in Decatur County District Court. Mr. Wagaman said Mr. Coryell, 24, is being held in the Decatur County jail with bond set at \$500,000, cash or surety.

Mr. Coryell faces three felony charges for allegedly shooting

Airman Corey Cook, 22, and a companion.

The first count is for premeditated murder in the first degree with an alternative charge of felony murder in the first degree. A premeditated murder involves a planned killing, while a felony murder charge applies when a death occurs during a planned felony crime, regardless of whether the death was planned.

The second count is aggravated battery and the third is for aggravated burglary for entering the occupied home northwest of Jennings where the shooting occurred.

