

Forecasted snow doesn't pile up

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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The weatherman forecast a howling blizzard for Oberlin and northwest Kansas, with up to 10 inches of snow over two days Friday and Saturday, and north winds from 25 to 40 mph.

For Decatur County, at least, the moisture showed up, but the snow and wind were a little short of expectations.

It started raining about 9:30 p.m. Thursday night in Oberlin and continued most of Friday, turning to snow as the temperature

dropped at nightfall. By Saturday afternoon, the sun came out and Oberlin had received about three-fourths of an inch of moisture, mostly from the rain. About three inches of snow covered the ground.

Meteorologist Dave Thede at the National Weather Service office in Goodland said the storm encountered a "dry slot" in the upper atmosphere, an area of low moisture from 10,000 to 20,000 or 25,000 feet. This caused drizzle and flurries, which is what Oberlin got, instead of nice, fat snowflakes.

The dry slot came across Goodland and

headed east on Friday, he said. At that time, the temperatures were still in the 40s and the moisture came down as rain instead of snow. The winds also weren't as strong as expected, either.

However, out along I-70 in eastern Colorado, the winds were 30 to 35 mph with heavier snowfall and the road was closed from Burlington to east of Denver by 9:52 a.m. Friday. The closure extended to Goodland by 3:30 p.m. as motels in Burlington filled up, and the road did not reopen until Saturday morning

Selden reported 3 inches of snow, Atwood, 6 to 9 and the Norton reservoir station 8. In Colorado, Stratton, Flagler and Yuma all reported 3 inches of snow. Up in Nebraska, Mr. Thede said, North Platte had 3, Grand Island 6 and Hastings 10.

The hardest hit by the storm were Denver and the foothills area. Denver reported up to a foot of snow and Boulder had up to 18 inches.

The Associated Press reported that more than 600 flights out of Denver International Airport had to be cancelled on Friday.

While there were no power outages or wrecks reported in Decatur County, Hill City reported some problems, and there were major electric outages in southeast Nebraska.

With the forecast for a blizzard, most schools in northwest Kansas and eastern Colorado cancelled classes and activities for Friday on Thursday.

In Oberlin, the schools were closed and basketball games in Quinter set for Friday night were postponed. Also, a home speech (See SCHOOLS on Page 8A)



INSIDE THE OBERLIN City Library, Kem Bryan (above) flipped through one of the many magazines on the racks. Director Carol Smith (below) checked out several books to a customer. — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Library provides lots of fun

By BRANDI DIEDERICH
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The Oberlin City Library is a place to find affordable relaxation and fun. It's a calming place to enjoy a book, read a magazine, do your homework or paper work, or get on the Internet at no cost.

To enjoy your favorite literature or movie at home, though, you need to get a library card.

Library assistant Ronda Schroer said to get a card, just come in and whoever's at the desk will help you fill out the form. There is no charge unless you lose your card. The replacement fee is \$1.

She said you should have a 475 or 470 phone number. If you do not have either, you may give a contact number in Oberlin or a work number, or an e-mail address. This contact information is used for book-return reminders and notification of book requests received, she said.

A parent's signature is needed if an applicant is under 18, she said. Children may be issued a card after completing first grade.

If the card is lost or stolen, she said, you should report it immediately, because you are responsible for anything checked out on your card.

The library has lots of things you can take home, she said: some can be checked out for one week and others for two depending on the acquisition date.

Current issues of newspapers, for the last three months, can be checked out for one week with no renewal. All other newspapers can be rented for two weeks with a renewal.

Reference materials and en-



cyclopedias can be taken home for three days at a time with no renewals, though some reference materials can be used only in the library.

Movies can be checked out for one week with no renewals. You must be 18 or older to rent a movie, with a limit of four movies

per card and eight per household, at the librarian's discretion, with no renewals.

Overdue fines are 10 cents per day on regular material, 5 cents per day on children's and youth material, and \$1 per day on movies.

Ms. Schroer said new cardholders have a three-month waiting

period to rent movies and request interlibrary loans, but everything else can be checked out the same day. This rule was made because of problems in the past, she said.

To check out the material, you must present your card every time.

(See LIBRARY on Page 8A)

Hospital here waiting on Medicare cash

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Decatur County Hospital Board talked a little about revenues for 2011 at its January meeting, hearing that the overall operation shows a loss for the year, but anticipated federal payments should wipe much of it away.

Board Treasurer Pam Wilson said among units of Decatur Health Systems, the operating company which runs the hospital and affiliated services, the hospital and Family Practice Clinic had a loss of \$484,192 for the calendar year, the Cedar Living Center nursing home unit a loss of \$288,457, and the home health unit a loss of \$49,452.

While all these areas show a loss, she said, the hospital received a check from Medicare for \$324,000 in December for reimbursement for six months of the year. That check wasn't included in the loss amounts, she said.

The hospital was also down 609 inpatient days, said Mrs. Doeden, comparing 2011 to 2010.

Amanda Fortin, finance manager for the hospital, said the hospital is probably going to get more money. On the low side, she said, she thinks it will be around \$225,000.

One of the big expenses last year, said Mrs. Wilson, was for Docs

Who Care, a firm which supplies doctors. The hospital used providers from the firm until it could hire its own after it took over the clinic operation. It's expensive, she said. At one time the hospital was paying \$70,000 a month to have the medical staff here. The hospital paid that for six months of the year.

The bottom line for the year, said Mrs. Fortin, isn't a true figure. She said that won't be known until after the auditors come to the hospital in February.

The 2012 budget isn't set yet, Mrs. Wilson added.

The hospital has about \$1.8 million from bequests and memorials, Mrs. Wilson said, most of it from the Bremer estate. Two funds are restricted for educational use, adding that most of the money is in the Health Care Foundation and can't be used for just anything.

There's just under \$1.8 million in the mutual fund, CDs and money market account, she said. The board spent \$550,000 for the digital mammogram machine and the new CT scanner.

Both of the machines replaced old machines, said board Chairman Gary Walter. It's about helping provide care for the Oberlin people, he said.

Conservation tab inside newspaper

Each year, Decatur County farm families are honored for their work with the land. Today's Oberlin Herald includes the annual Conservation section, which has stories about four families that received the Kansas Bankers Awards this year.

Two families received the Rangeland award, one the Windbreak award and one the Conservation award.



County sheriff wants fees in separate account

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Decatur County sheriff asked commissioners last Tuesday if the money the county receives for vehicle inspections and other fees could be put in a separate account to help replace sheriff's department vehicles.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said he would like to put the fees into an account to be used for equipment. He noted that the commissioners would still have control over any purchases over \$500.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine asked if Sheriff Badsky knew how much money the fees bring in a year. The sheriff said he thought \$7,000 to \$8,000.

The department's vehicles are all going to need to be replaced, said Sheriff Badsky, and possibly at the same time. There used to be a rota-

tion to replace the vehicles, he said, but that has since stopped.

The 2005 Dodge Durango has 61,000 miles on it, the 2007 Dodge Charger has 63,000 and the 2001 Jeep has 35,000, he said.

Undersheriff Allen Marcum said the mileage on the Jeep isn't the problem. The vehicle is just wearing out.

The fees are going into the general fund now, said Sheriff Badsky.

The department is still getting the money, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, just through the general fund.

The commissioners told the sheriff that they needed to talk with the (See COUNTY on Page 8A)

