

# Weather class offered for free

If you want to learn more about tornadoes, thunderstorms and severe weather, or would like to serve as a volunteer storm spotter, plan to attend a free class at 6:30 p.m. next Wednesday at The Gateway.

The National Weather Service offers the class, taught by Weather Service meteorologists, each spring. It's open to anyone interested in helping spot and report severe weather, and those who take the class may sign up as storm spotters. Many will be police officers, firemen and emergency preparedness officials recertifying their skills.

The class will cover thunderstorm formation, organization and evolution, associated clouds and their meaning, thunderstorm hazards and safety practices, and what and how to report. Floyd said this year, they also will cover information about storms last year, which was particularly deadly for tornadoes.

"We'll talk about the storms last year in Joplin, Mo., and the Southeast," he said, "and some thoughts on how people get their information."

He said the service has talked about whether people get too many warnings, or whether it should change the way it gives warnings. Most of the bad storms last year were well-reported in advance, he said, and people had plenty of warn-

ing. In Joplin, most people should have had half an hour.

"We don't like to dwell on the previous year's storms," he said, "but there was a lot that happened."

"In Joplin, they had great lead time, but 162 people lost their lives, 550 nationwide."

"The question gets raised, if we're so good with warnings, why did so many people die?"

"We always say 'head to the basement and you'll be safe, but when an F5 (tornado) comes by and sweeps the house clear, it may not be all that safe.'"

At least part of the answer is having as many people watching every storm as possible. Even with improved radar, Floyd said, there's no substitute for eyes on a storm to provide warning of tornadoes and other severe weather.

Other area sessions, all at 6:30 p.m., include Thursday at the Logan County courthouse in Oakley; Tuesday, March 13, at the Bowen Scout House in Hoxie, and Tuesday, March 27, at the Rawlins County Courthouse in Atwood.

For information, call the Goodland weather office at (785) 899-7119. A complete list of the 2012 schedule across the Tri-State Area is available at the Weather Service Goodland web page, [www.weather.gov/goodland](http://www.weather.gov/goodland).

# Eighth graders talk about class trip

Two members of the eighth grade class told the Oberlin School Board about the class trip to Topeka last year.

Meghan Davies and Alexandra Waterman talked to the board while showing pictures from the trip on the wall.

At the Kansas Historical Museum, said Miss Davies, they learned a lot about the Native Americans in Kansas. The guides, said Miss Waterman, answered all of their questions.

Miss Davies said they also learned about the pioneer trails. When the pioneers traveled, she said, they would throw stuff off if it was too heavy or they didn't need it anymore.

The students also went to the Brown v. Board of Education building. Miss Davies said they learned a lot about how far education has

come.

The students went to the state Capitol, the governor's office and the Kansas Supreme Court. At the Supreme Court Building, they did a mock trial for a case involving cell-phone use in school.

Miss Davies thanked the board for the trip. She said the students learned a lot and had a fun time.

Teacher J.D. Johnson said they had planned to go to the Eisenhower Museum and World War II museum, but because of the weather, they weren't able to.

Several of the students hadn't been past Hays before, he said, so it was an eye-opening experience.

The students wrote thank-you notes to the Dane G. Hansen Foundation for a grant that helped pay for the trip. The class did a good job on the thank-yous, he said, and included pictures with the cards.

# Good Samaritan plans Hoedown in March

The Decatur County Good Samaritan Center plans to hold its third annual Hoedown in March at the American Legion.

Sponsorship spots are available now for the event, scheduled for 6 p.m. Saturday, March 24.

Sponsorship levels are \$750 for a Rancher, which includes two tables for eight people; \$500 for a Foreman with one table for eight; \$300 for a Wrangler, one table for eight; and \$150 for a Cowboy, including four seats.

Each sponsorship comes with a different size ad in the program. Cash donations of \$50 and up will be listed in the program under the Brander level.

Any money made at the Hoedown

will go for projects at the center this year, said Cindi Sloan Sauder, resource development director. In the past, they have used the money to buy an exercise bike and new dinnerware. This year, some of the money will help pay for the redesign of the front porch and entrance.

All sponsorships need to be in by Friday, March 16, Ms. Sauder said. The deadline for tickets is Tuesday, March 20.

Tickets cost \$25 and can be purchased from Dianne Bremer at Great Northwest Insurance Agency on Main Street. Mrs. Bremer is also accepting items for both live and silent auctions.

Ms. Sauder noted that the tickets seem to be going fast.

## A trip to the library



**KINDERGARTNERS RETURNED** to their classroom after getting books at the school library on Friday. With books (from left) are Aidyn Witt, Shakira Cook, Katrina Neal, Cheyanna Hale and Emily Pearson.  
— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

# New radio frequencies cause problems

By CYNTHIA HAYNES  
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The Decatur County sheriff and fire chief are trying to figure out the best and cheapest way to comply with new federal regulations on radio frequencies.

Sheriff Ken Badsky and Fire Chief Bill Cathcart talked to the county commissioners on Feb. 13 about what they will need to change over to a narrow-band radio frequency required by end of the year.

The Federal Communications Commission is pushing for narrower bands on all radio frequencies so that more bandwidth is available for cell phones and other mobile communication devices.

The county has to upgrade its system by the end of the year or it will not be able to use the radios, Sheriff Badsky said.

Mr. Cathcart said his department has six vehicle radios, a hand-held unit and 10 pagers that will probably have to be replaced at a cost of a little over \$7,700. That will cover the fire departments in Oberlin, Jennings and Norcatour, he said.

Most of the radios that the county has purchased in the last few years can be upgraded to the new frequencies, the men said, but some new sets will have to be purchased.

To maintain the county system, the sheriff said, a repeater five miles south and four miles east of Oberlin will have to be replaced. New equipment, he said, will cost \$4,000 plus.

It is important to keep the tower, he said, as it is a backup for the fire department. A city repeater on the Oberlin water tower leaves Jennings

and Norcatour without a good signal, he said.

Mr. Badsky said that he has used a couple of loaner radios on the state's 800-mhz system and they give excellent coverage of the county. In fact, he said, you could call Decatur County from about anywhere in the state. The only dead spot seemed to be in Cedar Bluffs.

Each county agency could have its own block of frequencies on a new 800 mhz system, the sheriff said, but someone will need to program the new radios and reprogram the few older ones that can still be used.

There will be no monthly charge to use the state system right now, Mr. Badsky said, but he expects there to be a price tag down the road.

"It could get kind of expensive before this is over," Commissioner Stan McEvoy said. "We need to look at the whole picture before we buy anything."

Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested that the county get a list of what's needed by all departments, including the hospital, ambulance service and dispatch, and talk to Emergency Management Director Jacque Boultinghouse.

The sheriff noted that there is a push to have several northwest Kansas counties centralize their dispatching in Colby. He said that he thought that Thomas, Cheyenne and Rawlins counties are going to that.

"I don't like that centralized dispatch," said Commissioner Gene Gallentine.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Held closed sessions of 15 and five-minutes with the sheriff, county attorney and county clerk to discuss an issue involving attorney-client privilege.

- Held a 10-minute session on a different attorney-client matter without the sheriff.

- Held a 15-minute closed session to discuss nonelected personnel with the attorney and clerk present.

- Heard from Mr. Badsky that High Plains Mental Health out of Hays is planning to put in an interactive television system at the sheriff's office so that its people won't have to come to Oberlin to do assessment.

The mental health group will pay for the equipment, he said, and his office will provide a secure, private room for the assessments.

Also, he said, the sheriff's office will need a new data line to send information to the state. This line will have a firewall to keep it separate from other the courthouse lines and be used to transmit fingerprints and offense and accident reports.

- Looked at border samples in a wallpaper book. The county is going to repair the commission meeting room and plans are to put a border about five foot up to divide the walls, since they are so high.

## Partnering To Bring Medical Specialists To Oberlin

### Oberlin Outreach Clinic Schedule

**Decatur County Hospital**  
810 W. Columbia - Oberlin

**Cardiology - Dr. Jeffery Curtis**  
Monthly - (785) 625-4699

**Urology - Dr. Darrell Werth**  
Monthly  
(877) 312-1619 or (785) 628-6014

**Mobile Ultrasound, Echo & Vascular**  
Weekly - (785) 475-2208



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[haysmed.com](http://haysmed.com)

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