

Road supervisor wants efficiency

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
c.haynes@nwkansan.com

Decatur County Road and Bridge Superintendent Tim Stallman says he wants to get more efficient in dealing with township roads, changing the way the county handles road money and repairs.

To do so, he told about 30 township board members, the county commissioners and others at a meeting last Tuesday that he wants the townships to give him control of their road budgets.

Mr. Stallman said that his crews have plenty to do just dealing with the county's roads, but he knows that the township roads need to be maintained as well.

Out of 25 townships, he said, seven have

contracts with the county to take care of their roads. These townships set their taxes so that they can bring in enough to maintain the roads. Then they turn the money and work over to the county, and the county crew manages both.

"I like that," Mr. Stallman told the group, which included residents of at least 15 of the county's 25 townships.

The other townships either take care of the roads themselves or hire a contractor to do it, he said. Sometimes, these townships call on the county to help and while the county helps, it causes problems because that work isn't scheduled and it interrupts the flow of other work being done.

Mr. Stallman said that there are several

models for managing public business and rural roads. Decatur County has the township model, with 25 townships, each with a three-person governing body.

One idea floating around is that some of the townships with fewer people could consolidate, he said. The county would still have the same system but with fewer townships.

Another system would take the townships out of the equation and pool the township tax money.

The system used by most counties in the state, however, is to basically get rid of the townships and have just one taxing district for all the roads.

Mr. Stallman says he favors the present

township system because it provides more choices. Some townships want almost perfect roads, he said, and others are happy with "two tracks in the dirt."

The best idea is the township system where the county controls the road money and does the work, he told the group.

"You set the mill levy and let me manage it."

Mr. Stallman said that realistically, he sees some consolidation coming with the shrinking farm population and larger and larger farms. Some townships, he noted, have trouble filling out their three-person boards now.

He also suggested that the townships look at little-used roads and close them or

put them on minimum maintenance. Not everyone agreed with that.

"A lot of bigger equipment needs back roads," Brad Marcusson of Summit Township said. "We need those roads to keep that equipment off the highways."

"I really kinda like keeping the township unit," said Terry Lippelmann of Bassettville Township.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch noted that the county commissioners have no plans to force any townships to consolidate, even though they could do so if a township has fewer than 200 people. That includes just about all the rural ones, he noted.

"But that's not going to happen with the (See PETITION on Page 10A)



HOLDING UP AN ART PRINT FOR BIDS, Jamie Metcalf (above) helped out during the live auction at the annual Good Samaritan Hoedown on Saturday. Before

the live auction, Gary Walter bid on a cake made by Violet Shaw in the silent auction. The beautiful confection ended up bringing in \$170. — Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Jury trial set for August in murder case

A jury trial has been set for the end of August for an Oberlin man accused of murder.

Dylan R. Coryell Jr., 24, has been held in the Decatur County Jail on felony charges murder, battery and burglary since the shooting death of Airman 1st Class Corey Ryan Cook, 22, in October.

On Monday, District Judge Preston Pratt entered a "not guilty" plea on the behalf of Mr. Coryell.

The defendant waived his right to a speedy trial, agreeing to a trial within 180 days. The jury trial is scheduled for Monday to Friday, Aug. 27 to 31.

Hearings on pretrial motions are scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Monday, June 4; 1:30 p.m. Thursday, July 5;

and 1 p.m. Friday, Aug. 3.

Judge Pratt continued bond for the defendant at \$500,000.

During a preliminary hearing in February, witnesses described events on the evening of Oct. 16.

Witnesses then said that Airman Cook was in bed with Sarah Campbell at the time of the shooting, Miss Campbell described her relationship with the defendant as "complicated."

Mr. Coryell's plea covers all three charges, including premeditated murder in the first degree or an alternative of felony murder in the first degree, felony aggravated battery and felony aggravated burglary. He remains in jail.

Race promoter wants to sell beer

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
c.haynes@nwkansan.com

Race promoter Rick Salem told Decatur County commissioners last Tuesday he would like to hold two weekend events at the county fairground and would like to be able to sell beer at these events.

Mr. Salem said he hopes beer sales will make the races a profitable venture. In the past, he said, he has lost a lot of money on events he has promoted at the track, and while there is no assurance that the beer sales will make an event profitable, he hopes it might.

He said that he had talked to the Decatur County Fair Board and the members said that they don't want races and are opposed to any alcohol sales during the fair.

So, he said, he is hoping to put on races on Saturday and Sunday, June 9 and 10, with those on June 10 for vintage vehicles. Then on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 24 and 25, he wants to put on a memorial race for his father.

"That should pretty well fill the town," he noted.

The commissioners asked County Attorney Steve Hirsch for his opinion, and he said it's complicated because while the county owns

the fairground, it is within the city limits.

The commissioners would have to apply for a zoning change with the city, he said. There will probably need to be a survey of the area unless the commissioners want the entire fairground to be part of the sale area instead of just a beer garden, which is what Mr. Salem had planned.

The commissioners will have to decide whether they want an exceptional use or a permitted use under the zoning ordinances. If it is a permitted use, he said, all property zoned the same as the fairground would be able to get have alcoholic beverage sales, he said.

Because Commissioner Ralph Unger wasn't able to attend the meeting and there were still a lot of questions to be answered, the commissioners decided to get more information before they decide which type of zoning change they would request.

Mr. Salem said that he is at a standstill until he knows whether he can sell beer at the races since he has to get insurance, security and much more in place.

"I can't move forward until I know what we can do," he told the commissioners.

Board discusses options for doctors

The Decatur County Hospital Board talked last Monday briefly about the possibility of getting another doctor.

Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden told the board that she talked with a recruiter that morning about Dr. Alexander Platz. All of the information needed was sent out that morning for Dr. Platz to get a Kansas license, she said, and the state Board of Healing Arts is supposed to meet in May.

Mrs. Doeden said she talked to Dr. George Hightower last Tuesday and he is comfortable with Oberlin and excited about the services the facility has to offer. She said he was really happy about the new CT

scanner. Mrs. Doeden said Dr. Hightower is looking at another town, also.

Dr. John Stuke was in town last Monday from Indiana, she said. He is also excited about coming here. Neither of the doctors can deliver babies, she said.

Board member Ruth Wolfram said she thinks it's good that the physicians who have looked here said it's a friendly community and they felt at home. While the board can make a recommendation about a doctor, said Chair Pam Wilson, Mrs. Doeden does all the hiring.

Event brings in money

Prime rib, fancy duds, an auction and dancing for a good cause.

The annual Good Samaritan Hoe Down brought out an overflow crowd to the American Legion Hall on Saturday night to enjoy the fun, food and friends.

About 150 people showed up to enjoy a prime rib dinner catered by the Main Street Inn of Hoxie and to bid on the dozens of live and silent auction items.

The annual event raised \$11,000 to help the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center buy items not in its budget, said organizer Cindi Sauder, resource development director for the center.

Previous events have allowed the center to get new dishes for the residents, a mechanical horse, a swing for the courtyard, fans, a bread maker, a Christmas tree, a blanket and towel warmer, a shampoo machine and a recumbent elliptical exercise machine.

This year tickets went so fast, Ms. Sauder said, they were all sold out three weeks before the event. To take care of those who didn't get tickets, the committee set up extra tables on the dance floor for the dinner and auction, allowing 20 to attend the event. The tables were then removed before the dancing, she said, since many people only come for the dinner and auction.

As a special highlight to the evening, Good Samaritan Administrator Janice Shobe had everyone sing Happy Birthday to her husband, former Oberlin Mayor Ken Shobe, who was 62.

"This is the biggest birthday party you'll ever have," she said.

