

Wheat-plot tour shows solid crop

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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The fungus known as stripe rust is “winning the battle” as the wheat disease gains resistance to fungicide, farmers at Monday’s annual Extension Wheat Plot Tour heard.

The wheat in the plot west of Oberlin so far is above average, they found, but with the lack of rainfall and warm winter, those gathered had reason to be concerned.

“The disease just eats it like candy,” said Jim Shroyer of Manhattan, a state agronomy leader and wheat expert with Kansas State University Research and Extension.

Stripe and leaf rust were hot topics as farmers from Decatur County gathered to share an early breakfast and walk the test plots to see various strains of wheat. Representatives from the Kansas Wheat Alliance and K-State spent the morning reviewing and discussing which were the most and least resistant to fungus, drought and other threats.

With each passing year, Shroyer said, the fungi have

grown more tolerant of higher temperatures and more resistant to fungicide, allowing them to attack what were previous favorite varieties for wheat planting at an escalating rate.

When asked what they thought yields would be this year, Roger May and Paul Shields both predicted this year’s harvest to be at least in the 40-bushels-per-acre range, and possibly as high as the 70s.

“I don’t expect the numbers to really be that low,” Shields said, adding that he would be disappointed if it came to that.

Because of the warm winter and lack of rain this winter and spring, drought has also been a serious concern. Issues discussed included the advantages and drawbacks of each individual type of seed, resistance to drought and fungus, response to fungicide, plant height and winter hardiness.

Both Mr. Shroyer and Daniel O’Brien of K-State agreed that all of the farmers’ considerations basically boiled down to quantity versus quality, and the top strains they suggested (when pressed) were Texas (See WHEAT on Page 8A)



K-STATE EXTENSION SPECIALISTS Jim Shroyer (front on the left) and Daniel O’Brien (behind him) discussed this year’s wheat plots with farmers during the annual wheat plot tour at the May farm.

— Photo by Susan May

Citizens give city answers

Council gets list of survey opinions

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Oberlin City Council members looked over results from a survey that went out earlier this spring to city residents.

Mayor Bill Riedel said that 335 of 1,265 surveys, or 27 percent, had been returned.

“This is a really tremendous return,” said City Administrator Karen Larson, noting that a similar survey sent out four years ago brought only about 200 responses when there were more people living in town.

The mayor said that 57 percent of those who responded have lived in Oberlin for 20 or more years and almost 40 percent said they were retired and 70 or older.

Overall, he said, the respondents thought that the city government is effective by more than 75 percent, and that city employees are courteous and professional by almost 90 percent.

About 60 percent were satisfied with the city services, but only 12 percent were interested in serving on a city board or committee.

Looking at priorities, 93.1 percent said improving the water service is important; 85.8 percent, improving city streets; 74.9 percent, improving electric service; 82.1 percent cleaning up blighted or unsightly property; 77.6 percent, lower taxes; 73.7 percent, improving storm drainage; 65 percent, more youth programs; 61.5 percent, improve swimming pool; 55.5 percent, access to new technology; 44.2 percent, improving Sappa Park; 36.7 percent, more senior programs; 32.8 percent, more information on the Internet; 32.5

(See SURVEY on Page 8A)



Pipe inches along

A NEW WATER MAIN SNAKED across Penn Avenue last Wednesday, blocking traffic for a few hours in the morning. By noon, the pipe had been pulled and pushed into to its new underground home by employees of Midlands Contracting. The traffic lights were still out Monday, and the stop sign remained in the middle of the intersection of Penn Avenue and Hall Street. The line is one of several being replaced as part of a project to update the city’s water system.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



Stephanie DeCamp

Reporter from Colorado starts work at newspaper

A new reporter has joined *The Oberlin Herald* and the Oberlin community as of Monday.

Stephanie DeCamp grew up in Kansas City and went to college at Metropolitan State University of Denver. She graduated with degrees in journalism and Spanish.

Ms. DeCamp said she never lived in a small town growing up, but rather Shawnee, a suburb of Kansas City, and later downtown until she was 20. She then moved to Denver, and two years later decided to return to school. It was a passion

for language and travel that eventually led her to pursue her degrees, she said.

“Culture is something that has always fascinated me,” Ms. DeCamp said. “I was fortunate enough to spend a year studying abroad in Argentina, and have traveled throughout Mexico and South America.”

“When it came time to make the decision on whether or not to pursue this opportunity in Oberlin, I thought, ‘Why not?’ I’ve started over twice before, and I felt it was high time I

started learning more about my own country for a change.”

Sprawling suburbs and cities have their advantages, she said, but small-town America offers different experiences and views on subjects that all of us hold dear.

“I think Americans as a whole are deeply polarized these days,” she said. “Between politics and the economy, and even just regular issues of the day, I feel like we’ve grown apart from (See REPORTER on Page 8A)

Police chief to retire at end of month

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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After 15 years as Oberlin’s top cop, Police Chief Wade Lockhart plans to retire at the end of the month.

Chief Lockhart, who will be 66 in July, said he started work in Oberlin on Aug. 1, 1995, as a patrolman for Chief Gary Reiter, who died later that year. The Oberlin City Council approved him for the chief’s job in early May of 1996.

Before moving to Oberlin, Chief Lockhart said, he had started as a sheriff’s deputy in Osborne County in 1985. After seven years, he moved over to the Osborne Police Department and served there for three.

A former police chief in Osborne knew Chief Reiter, he said, and knew Oberlin was looking for an officer. Mr. Lockhart said that he felt it was time for a change, so he applied for the job here.

Before he got into law enforcement, he said he was an emergency medical technician

on a service where the responders were paid by the run, similar to what occurs in Decatur County.

He was a maintenance man for Parkview Manor, a nursing home in Osborne, and worked for a farm manufacturing company, Gilmore-Tadgy, which has its home base in Clay Center. At that job, he said, he did everything from being night supervisor to working in the shop.

“Whatever they were behind on,” was what he worked at, Chief Lockhart said, adding that he could do about anything in the plant — painting, welding, whatever.

It was welding that got him in trouble once in his youth, he said.

He was working for a business that did quite a bit of welding. That day he was working on a forklift and accidentally got gasoline on his pants. Just then someone started up a welding unit and his pants caught a spark. His leg was burned pretty badly, he said.

Chief Lockhart said that he became an emergency medical technician after he saw his father being taken to the hospital many years ago.

“I thought to myself, ‘I can do better than that,’” so he took the class and went to work.

He went into police work for about the same reasons, he said with a smile.

Chief Lockhart said that he and his wife Nancy plan to stay in Oberlin.

“This town’s been very good to me,” he said. “this has been a good job. I’ve enjoyed it. It’s going to be hard to leave it.”

The chief added that he plans to keep his law enforcement certificate up to date and perhaps work vacations or sick leave for Oberlin and the many small police departments around here.

But the first order of business, he said, is a trip, perhaps to Branson, Mo.

“I owe the wife a vacation,” he said.



Chief Wade Lockhart plans to retire June 30.

No Profile in this week

While the *Relish* magazine will make its debut in *The Oberlin Herald* this week, there will be no *American Profile*.

Relish, which features recipes and cooking, will appear in the paper the first week of each month, and *Spry*, devoted to senior topics, will be inserted the second week of the month in those papers that receive inserts.

This week’s shipment of *American Profile* was damaged by insects and had to be destroyed. While new copies of the magazine are being sent from the printer, they will arrive too late to be inserted this week. The issue will be made up next week.

