

Heat wave beats down on county

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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The temperature in Oberlin reached record highs this week, with heat advisories coming from the National Weather Service, a fire ban issued by county commissioners “until it rains” and power outages troubling the city both last Monday and Sunday afternoon.

A woman was taken to the hospital Sunday afternoon after she collapsed at the city ballpark during a game. The woman, a spectator at the game, was taken to the hospital for a checkup.

County recreation director Melda Downing told coaches after the incident they shouldn’t play any more games at midday in the extreme heat.

Last weekend saw record-breaking temperatures, with Saturday reaching 110 degrees and Sunday 107. Dave Thede, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Goodland, said that the heat wave will likely extend through Thursday.

Colby set an all-time record high of 111 degrees Sunday, breaking the old record of 107 set in 1943. That also was an all-time high for June in Colby.

The average high for this time of year is usually around 91 degrees, according to www.wunderground.com, an online weather service.

The first power outage occurred last Monday, June 18, with another Sunday evening.

“They were having some issues with maxing out,” City Administrator Karen Larson said. “We’re going over our reports to figure out when and how it’s happening. We’re using the peak amount of electricity (for air conditioning), but as soon

City uses less water

So far, it appears, the people of Oberlin have been doing a good job conserving water, and city officials hope they keep it up so they don’t have to start rationing.

While the city is still consuming around 700,000 gallons of water a day, the threshold for the city’s water conservation plan, steps to ration water are, for the time, on hold, City Administrator Karen Larson said Monday.

Two weeks ago, water use was at this same rate, she said, and the city declared Stage 1 of the drought emergency plan. Oberlin remains in Stage 1, avoiding for now the second stage, which would require water rationing.

“People did so well conserving last week,” Mrs. Larson said, “so we’ll see next week if we should go on further restrictions.”

Any further restrictions will be decided at the next City Council meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, July 5, at The Gateway.

Mrs. Larson advised people to keep on conserving as they have been, using as little water as possible and watering yards at night instead of during the day.

as it starts back up again, it works (See HEAT on Page 12)

Overheated truck



A PICKUP WAS CONSUMED by a fire about 4 p.m. Friday three miles west and three miles north of Oberlin. As neighbors stood and watched, firemen drove through the field to control the flames. Just minutes before, live ammunition inside the truck, owned by Gary Torlumke, had gone off. — Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

Republicans have two races

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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Decatur County Republican voters will have races to decide for two county commission seats in primary elections Tuesday, Aug. 7.

The deadline to file for state or county office was Friday, June 1.

Five candidates have filed for the commission seat in District 3, four Republicans and a Democrat. Commissioner Gene Gallentine, a Republican from Clayton, is stepping down after one term.

The deadline to register to vote in the primaries is Tuesday, July 17, said Decatur County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, who also serves as county election officer.

The primary election will be Tuesday, Aug. 7. Voters will need to

bring an approved photo ID — such as a passport, state driver’s license or ID card, or a government or college ID, with them under a new Kansas law.

Candidates for commissioner in District 3 in the Republican primary are Robert Jones of Jennings, an auctioneer and former mayor of Jennings; Mick Barth of rural Oberlin, a contractor and owner of the ReLoad tavern; Shayla Williby of Oberlin, a grant proposal and technical writer; and Brad Marcuson of rural Oberlin, a farmer who lives south of town.

Brad Long, a Norcat area farmer, is running as a Democrat. He is the only Democrat running for county office.

District 3 includes Beaver, Sherman, Harlan, Grant, Olive,

Roosevelt, Lincoln, Oberlin (excluding the City of Oberlin), Center, Altony, Garfield, Summit, Custer, Jennings, Pleasant Valley, Cook, Prairie Dog, Dresden, Lyon and Allison townships.

Running for commissioner in District 2 is Ralph Unger of Oberlin, a farmer who has served 10 terms and over 40 years as a commissioner, and Sid Metcalf of Oberlin, a retired farmer who is chairman of the city’s Airport Advisory Board, and was chairman of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. board for five years.

District 2 includes Finley, Logan, Liberty, Sappa and Bassettville townships and the west side of Oberlin, City Precinct 1.

Commission Chairman Stan

McEvoy serves as commissioner in District 1, which covers City Precinct 2 on the east side of town. He was re-elected two years ago and has two years to serve.

Two candidates are running for magistrate judge of the 17th district, Jay E. Tate, a sheriff’s deputy, and Allen Shelton, a lawyer. Both are Republicans from Oberlin.

Incumbents are running for other county offices, including: district judge of the 17th District, Preston A. Pratt of Oberlin; county attorney, Steven Hirsch of Oberlin; county clerk, Colleen Geihlsler of Oberlin; register of deeds, Kari Ketterl of Herndon; sheriff, Ken Badsky of Oberlin; and county treasurer, Jean Ann Hale of Oberlin. All are Republicans.

County bans fires until it starts to rain

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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Decatur County commissioners declared a fire ban at their meeting last Tuesday, prohibiting any open burning in the county until the county gets some rain. There is an exception for fireworks, however, as long as they are closely monitored.

The ban was requested by Emergency Management Director Jacques Boultinghouse and approved by Fire Chief Bill Cathcart and the commissioners.

The ban includes agricultural fires, trash fires, and anything else that could possibly get out of con-

trol in this windy, dry summer. The ban basically sticks until it rains, commissioners said.

“These fires can take a township out in a second with these winds we’ve been having,” said Commissioner Ralph Unger.

Under the ban, any intentional fire is prohibited. Barbecues are safe, as long as they’re monitored. It’s also illegal to toss cigarette butts, lit or unlit, out of your car window. If anyone violates the ban, the fire department will respond to their house and the police will come to issue a ticket, with the fine to be determined by a judge.

City hears plea on tax

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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A representative of the pool committee asked the Oberlin City Council for an assurance Thursday that any money collected from a sales tax for a new swimming pool would be guaranteed for the pool alone, but council said it couldn’t do that.

The 1.5-cent sales tax increase needed to pay for the pool has to be a general-purpose tax, as opposed to a special-purpose tax, said Mayor Bill Riedel. If it (See CITY on Page 12)

New pool committee holds first public meeting on issue

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Oberlin could get a new pool which would be safer, save water and power and provide better facilities for young children and the disabled — if citizens vote for a 1.5-cent sales tax increase, those who showed up for the first community meeting on the project heard.

Pool committee member Danielle Leitner chaired the session, held last Monday at the Sunflower Cinema. It drew about 20 people. The meeting had originally been scheduled for the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center, but was moved due to the heat, organizer Shayla

Williby said.

Mrs. Leitner told the group that the City Council had passed a resolution to put the sales tax on the November ballot. She said that it would be a city election only since most of the retail base in the county is in Oberlin and those living in the city would benefit most from a new pool.

She introduced Kyle McCawley with Larkin Aquatics, the company the committee has been working with to design a new pool.

He said that his company evaluated the pool and bathhouse, which was built in 1957. Neither meet requirements for access set by the

Americans with Disabilities Act, he said, and the pool uses two to three million gallons of water each year, partly because the two wading pools have to be emptied and refilled each day. The diving board is damaged, he said.

The pool his company is envisioning, he said, based on what members of pool committee thought the community needs and could afford, will be about 5,800 square feet, a tad smaller than the current pool. It will hold 270 people, have a beach or zero-depth entry, a family slide, an area for lane swimming and the items for children and those (See POOL on Page 12)

Combines, crew harvest wheat



AS HE CHECKED over his combine, Dan Lippelmann pointed out how the machine operates.

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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Dan Lippelmann had two semi trucks to haul grain and two combines working in constant rotation to bring his wheat to the Hansen-Mueller grain elevator last Wednesday.

He, his son, his grandson and a long-time friend, Alan Erickson, worked the field like a well-oiled machine in the hot sun.

In fact, they may have worked harder than the machines. The two combines had broken down earlier that morning and one was leaking fluid.

Mr. Lippelmann went to the elevator twice that afternoon, his grain came in with almost the exact same statistics as Kansas grain overall: 511.62 bushels had a test weight of 60.7 pounds, with 9.1 percent moisture. The Kansas wheat report said that day that farmers were 80 percent done with the harvest, and so was he.

This harvest season, however, is not.

“We don’t usually start harvesting this early,” Mr. Lippelmann

said. “It’s typically the last week of June and first week of July. So when anyone asks what you’re doing for the Fourth of July, it’s ‘Well, I’m going out to harvest.’ This year will be nice though; I’ll actually get to celebrate.”

He said this as he punched the shift into second gear. The truck ground in response, hauling the massive load of wheat behind it.

In the field, he casually leaned inside the combine, showing with his hand where the wheat goes, how it is chopped by the sickle, shaken from the heads and turned through the rotor to separate it from the chaff. The massive machine was suddenly not so intimidating. It was an herbivore, after all — a set of gears and wheels doing what once required days, in mere hours.

The advances in machinery from the 1960s on have infinitely multiplied harvest yields and aided farmers, Mr. Erickson said. But (See HARVEST on Page 12)



DAN LIPPELMANN watched as a worker checked the hopper of his truck at the Hansen Mueller elevator after workers failed to close it tightly on a previous trip.

— Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

