

## Emergency workers look at fires

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkans.com

The heads of every Decatur County emergency department came together at Tuesday's county commissioners' meeting to discuss the slew of wildfires they'd handled the last month, and to talk about how they might manage emergencies better in the future.

Among the ideas they considered, managers and volunteers discussed having a separate radio frequency for supervisors, an emergency services coordinator to organize volunteers and a plan to control sightseers.

They decided to compile a list of those who had resources who could help in future emergencies, and to keep the county's burn ban in place.

They also discussed how things happened during the crisis, how each department managed to handle the press throughout that time and whether or not they should appoint a public information officer. They reviewed the damages that resulted from the fires, and noted that a picnic set for Wednesday, Aug. 1, would be a "recognition night" for everyone who worked so hard to put out the flames.

Besides commissioners Stan McEvoy, Ralph Unger and Gene Gallentine, the heads of the county emergency departments were present: Linda Manning, emergency medical services director; Marilyn Mack, chief dispatcher; Sheriff Ken Badsky; Fire Chief Bill Cathcart and Assistant Chief Jerry Stein; Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden; Jacque Boultinghouse, director of emergency preparedness; Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher of *The Oberlin Herald*; Jennings Fire Chief Kerry Green, and three firefighters from Norcat, Scott Hartzog, Chief Carl Lyon and Stann Hartzog.

"The gist of this meeting is so that everyone can get a feel for who is involved," said Mr. Gallentine. "If this ever happens again, the losses can be diminished when everyone is on the same page."

### Coordination

First on the list to discuss was communication. Sheriff Badsky suggested using special radios instead of the standard radios in the event of an emergency, so that the supervisors could talk directly to each other on a separate frequency from the one they use to speak with their own people.

"So in an instance like this," asked Mr. Unger, "when it gets beyond the control of our capabilities, does someone say 'OK, we all need to switch to MoComm?'"

"I think we need a coordinator to make those decisions," said Sheriff Badsky. "We could set up a command post or something, a staging area we could set one person up with."

Chief Cathcart saw a flaw in this idea, however.

"As the incident builds and builds," he said, "we need more and more people. Our (See WORKERS on Page 6A)

## Two parties planned to help firefighters

Decatur County will be celebrating and helping its volunteer firefighters at two parties within a week of each other.

The Decatur County firefighters will hold a fund raiser from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, July 28 at Sappa Park to help raise money for new fire trucks. Then, four days later, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 1 at City Park, a community-sponsored appreciation cookout and fund raiser will be held for the firemen and other emergency workers who fought the fires a couple of weeks ago.

The first party, put on by the firefighters in Sappa Park, will feature hamburgers, beans and sal-

ads, with games and entertainment until dark.

Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said the volunteers hope to raise money to help the county replace eight old fire trucks. The chief said that there is one new truck on order but his department needs eight more. Fire trucks run between \$100,000 and \$150,000 each, he added.

"We've got a long way to go," he said, adding that the recent fires have brought the need into sharp focus for both the fire department and the community.

"It's a big need," he said. His budget just doesn't stretch that far, he added, and so he's asking for help, and this is the first step.

The second party, organized by several area women, is a thank you to the firefighters and emergency workers for their quick response and their dedication during the fires the county suffered just before the Fourth of July.

Shirley Shields, one of the organizers, said that she talked to both the chief and the county commissioners about holding the party.

Partygoers are asked to bring lawn chairs and enjoy hamburgers, polish sausages, hot dogs and watermelon. Donations at this party will also be accepted for equipment for the firefighters.

## Women's group plans candidate forum

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkans.com

The Decatur Professional Women have planned a candidate forum from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday at the Sunflower Cinema, where those running in the Republican primary elections on Tuesday, Aug. 7, can introduce themselves and meet the public.

Candidates are scheduled into three time slots, organizer Diane Barrett said.

From 3 to 3:30 p.m., those running for magistrate judge of the 17th district will speak. They include:

- Jay Tate, a sheriff's deputy of Oberlin
- Allen Shelton, a lawyer of Oberlin,

From 3:45 to 4:15 p.m., the candidates for county commissioner in District 2 will speak. They include:

- Ralph Unger, a farmer and long-time incumbent commissioner who lives west of Oberlin.
- Sid Metcalf, a retired farmer and economic development leader, of Oberlin.

District 2 includes Finley, Logan, Liberty, Sappa and Bassettville townships and Oberlin city Precinct 1, the part of the city west of Penn Avenue.

From 4:30 to 5 p.m., candidates for commissioner in District 3 will speak. They include:

- Brad Long, a rancher from Norcat, and the only Democrat

running for county office.

- Republicans Robert W. Jones of Jennings, an auctioneer

- Mick Barth, a contractor and owner of the Re-Load bar and restaurant of Oberlin

- Shayla J. Williby, a grant writer and member of the city pool committee of Oberlin

- Brad Marcuson, a farmer, of rural Oberlin.

District 3 covers Beaver, Sherman, Harlan, Grant, Olive, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Oberlin (with the exception of Oberlin Precinct 2, east of Penn Avenue), Center, Altory, Garfield, Summit, Custer, Jennings, Pleasant Valley, Cook, Prairie Dog, Dresden, Lyon and Allison townships.

## Co-op joins marketing group to help generate more profits

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkans.com

The Decatur Co-op Association plans to join a marketing group with other Kansas co-ops that should help all of them reach more grain buyers, and hopefully, generate more profit for the co-operatives and their farmer members.

Kurt Anderson, general manager of the Oberlin-based co-op, told about seven members at a special meeting Friday at the main office, many people apparently think Decatur Co-op is merging with the other businesses, but that's just not the case.

On Aug. 1, he said, the co-op will

be joining CoMark Grain Marketing Group, which comprises 11 other co-ops, Mr. Anderson said.

This partnership, he said, will not threaten the independent identity of the local co-ops, nor will it result in personnel or name changes. He also said services provided to farmers won't change.

CoMark is one of three regional marketing firms that the co-op considered, said Mr. Anderson. CoMark's grain marketing branch has been together for five years, he said, and markets as one grain company. The firm has traders and handles freight and accounting. The group doesn't own any assets, and

will not own the elevators. CoMark, like the Decatur Co-op, is federally licensed and has the bonding required by the government. The group was started 10 to 12 years ago, he said, to buy fertilizer and later chemicals. The grain marketing is optional, he said, but the group will now control 60,000,000 bushels of grain in Kansas.

"We will continue to have a federal warehouse license," he said, "which is a lot stricter than a state warehouse license. (CoMark has) the bankroll for seasonal loans to purchase and sell grain, and they are responsible for the insurance. That's (See CO-OP on Page 10A)



## Kids enjoy the park

FAMILIES WERE enjoying some summer fun Friday at City Park. Rebecca Nichols (above) held her little cousin Sophie as they enjoyed a swing. Nathan Keys (left), who was visiting from Topeka, was having a good time on the slide.

— Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCamp

## Airport, pool, wells on city plate

The Oberlin City Council will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway to discuss wells, a proposed new swimming pool and the airport, City Administrator Karen Larson said.

First in line is a water update. New wells are being drilled this week, she said, and hopefully there will be some more test results from Miller and Associates, the engineering firm out of McCook working on the water project. The Pool Committee will report to the council, Mrs.

Larson said. They will be there to discuss the plans they have so far, town meetings they want to have and how they plan to proceed with getting everything ready for the coming sales-tax election.

And lastly, the Airport Advisory Board will report on the justifications it plans to send to Topeka for building a planned second, longer runway. Mrs. Larson said they will be submitting their final report to the Federal Aviation Administration, which must approve the plans.

## Top lawman meets with county attorneys

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkans.com

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt was at the Decatur County courthouse Friday, met with area county attorneys and discussed this last year's progress on the state's

prosecution goals.

The attorney general, the state's chief law enforcement officer and its main attorney, represents the state in lawsuits and handles prosecution of cases that counties may not have the resources to prosecute, Mr. Schmidt

said in an interview last week. Two of his main focuses have been prosecuting crimes against children and prosecuting those who work scams on consumers, especially the elderly.

He casually leaned against the courtroom railing, insisting that the

meeting was to be more of a conversation, not just a speech.

"Last year, there were a few things that we talked about," Mr. Schmidt said, "that I said I'd try to accomplish...."

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## KU doctor to visit with Jayhawks at Oberlin theater

The University of Kansas Alumni Association plans a reception for Jayhawks and friends of the university from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. tonight at the Sunflower Cinema, featuring Dr. Roy Jensen, director of the cancer center at the KU Medical Center.

Dr. Jensen is doing a summer tour talking about the center's recent designation by the National Cancer Institute as an institute-designated cancer center. Representatives of the association and the KU Endowment will also be present.

The prestigious cancer designation allows access to more money for research and outreach and to clinical trials from the Midwest Cancer Alliance.

Pharmacist Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug and local coordinator for KU events, said the reception will feature appetizers and refreshments.

After the reception, Dr. Jensen plans to go to the Decatur Health clinic to meet with the doctors.

"You don't have to be a Jayhawk to attend," Mr. Vollertsen said.

Everyone is welcome, he said, including potential donors and those who want to learn more about cancer research.

Reservations can be made by contacting Kerri Wright at [klwright@kualumni.org](mailto:klwright@kualumni.org) or by phone at (785) 864-9772.

