

Senator's aide visits, answers voters' queries

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
c.haynes@nwkans.com

A handful of people showed up at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement center last Monday to meet Ryan Flickner, an aide to Sen. Pat Roberts, and talk about whatever was on their minds.



R. Flickner

Mr. Flickner said he has been the senior agriculture policy advisor to the senator in Washington for several years and has just started in constituent services. He will serve northwest Kansas but live in Wichita, where he is from.

Gary Walter, president of The Bank, asked about the new farm bill, which he said is important to the state.

"It's a good program and a lot of people use it," Mr. Flickner said, noting that the so-called farm bill is 80 percent nutrition programs, including food stamps.

Mr. Walter also said he was worried about the lack of give and take in Washington.

"At some point in time," he said, "people are going to have to learn to get together. Our county, our programs, the whole nine yards are at risk."

Mr. Flickner said that Sen. Roberts is about getting things done and has lived through the Vietnam War and Watergate — rough and tumble times in Washington.

In April, he said, the farm bill came out of the Senate committee by a 16-5 vote with both Republicans and Democrats voting yes. Four southern senators voted no because it didn't have enough for their peanut farmers, he said, and another senator was unhappy because it cut food stamps by one-half of 1 percent.

One in seven people in the U.S. receive food stamps, Mr. Flickner said. However, he noted that many people in Kansas who are eligible are not signed up for the program.

He said he thought that was because out here, people help each other out, get a second job or just figure out how to make do with less. That's not necessarily so in Washington or Chicago, he said, or even in Topeka or Wichita.

Sue May, whose husband farms, suggested that those who get public assistance should be asked to do volunteer work.

Oberlin Herald Publisher Steve Haynes asked Mr. Flickner to look into a problem the city has had with Rural Telephone. The company and its subsidiary, Nex-Tech, he said, got federal loans and grants to put fiber optic lines to carry broadband Internet into northwest Kansas towns. However, when the company got to Oberlin, it said the utility poles were not tall enough to carry its cable, although in other communities, it put the cable underground.

"It's being done with our money, but we're not getting anything done," he said.

Mr. Flickner said he'd look into the problem.

Economic Development Director Connie Grafel noted that the company had put some "hot spots" around town but that other communities had full fiber optic.

Businessman Greg Lohofener asked about renewable energy sources and how the senator stood in the battle between livestock raisers and ethanol producers.

Mr. Flickner said that the senator has long been a proponent for stockmen.

After all, he said, cattle outnumber people in Kansas two to one.

However, he added, the senator is also in favor of all renewable energy sources and ethanol has helped a lot of Kansas communities.

There has to be a middle ground, he said.

"The federal government shouldn't be picking losers and winners," he added.

The talk turned to crop insurance, and Mr. Flickner noted that there are now more than 100 commodities eligible for insurance, and it has kept a lot of farmers in business.

Mr. Lohofener said he had heard that there might be a push to regulate guns in the U.S. through an international treaty brokered by the United Nations.

Mr. Flickner said that the senator would not be in favor of anything that would hurt the sovereignty of the U.S.

"Senator Roberts would say, 'Not on my watch,'" he said, adding that a proposed "Law of the Sea" treaty has similar problems.

Marilyn Black, who owns a small business, said she is worried about the country losing its freedoms.

"I do believe Obama is a dictator," she said. "He just signs things that don't go through the Congress."

Marcia Lohofener agreed with her.

Mr. Flickner said that the senator plans to get out to western Kansas in August, but his aides and he can be reached by U.S. Mail or phone and through Twitter, Facebook, e-mail or his webpage at roberts.senate.gov.

Fresh vegetables, anyone?



SERVING UP A LITTLE STIR FRY, Chamber of Commerce Manager Carolyn Hackney filled a plate for City Councilman Jim Miesner on Wednesday during the weekly Farmers' Market. The stir fry was to show what could be done with vegetables grown in the area.

— Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

New school year prompts changes

School fees to increase

The Oberlin School Board raised lunch prices 10 cents a day for the coming school year at the urging of the federal government during its meeting last Monday night.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said the government was suggesting an 18-cent increase but he thought the district should go with 10 cents.

At the grade school, lunches cost \$2.05 for the kids last year, he said. The increase would bring that to \$2.15. At the high school, students paid \$2.35 last year and will pay \$2.45 next year. Adult lunches will go from \$2.60 to \$2.70.

The breakfast prices will stay the same at \$1 for all students and

\$1.35 for adults.

Other charges include 25 cents for an extra milk, \$1 for a second entree and \$20 a for preschool milk.

The board approved the suggested changes and left all the other fees for the schools the same as last year.

Those fees include:

- \$10 for preschool textbook rental.
- \$25 for textbook rental, kindergarten through 12th grade.
- \$10 for senior high high vocational agriculture.
- \$10 for senior high industrial art.
- \$5 for junior and seniors.
- \$20 for music instrument rental.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst to serve as the representative for the food service program and freedom of information officer.

• Authorized participation in federal programs for the new school year with Mr. Dorshorst serving as the representative.

• Approved Mr. Dorshorst to serve as the hearing officer for free and reduced-price lunches.

• Designated Mr. Dorshorst as the homeless children coordinator.

• Established petty cash limits at \$1,000 for the district and high school offices and \$500 for the grade school.

• Gave permission for records from the 2006-2007 school year to be destroyed.

• Gave the OK for Casey Cook and Deanna Sumner to be picked up in the district and taken to the Norton School District.

• Established the mileage reimbursement rate at 55 cents a mile, which is the state rate.

• Named Principals Dorshorst and Ben Jimenez as truancy officers.

The Oberlin School Board hired a new fifth and sixth-grade teacher for Oberlin Elementary School during its meeting last Monday, completing the staff for the coming year.

The board approved the hiring of April Farr to help teach those classes. The board also approved the resignation of Kala Bose from the kitchen.

Organizing for the new school year, members re-elected Monte Moore as board president and Dan Grafel as vice president. The board will continue to meet the second Monday of the month, starting at 7:30 p.m. from April to October, and at 6:30 p.m. from November to March.

In other business, the board:

- Approved retaining Vickie Lippelmann as clerk of the board, Carla Depperschmidt as deputy clerk, Pam Simonsson as treasurer and using the Kansas Association of School Board legal assistance program as the board's attorney.
- Gave permission to the board clerk and superintendent to invest

idle funds, following board policy.

• Retained Mrs. Lippelmann as the

representative for the Kansas Public Employee Retirement System and

New state trooper ready to go

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
sdecamp@nwkans.com

Oberlin has a new state trooper, and he says he's here to start a family and work with the community.

John Gizzarelli and his wife, Christina, moved here from Texas a month ago, after he was assigned to Decatur County last spring. Mr. Gizzarelli said that before joining the patrol, he was in the Marine Corps. He was looking for something similar, he said, but without deployments abroad.

"I was five years active in the Marine Corps," Mr. Gizzarelli said, "and achieved the level of staff sergeant."

He said he chose to be a state trooper because he knew the agency would provide him the best training and equipment.

"I did it for a lot of the same reasons I chose the Marines," he said. "I wanted to be a part of the best."

He started the academy on Jan. 4 and graduated June 9. He said it depends on the individual how long a new trooper has to ride along with an officer before being able to do so alone, but that it's typically three to four months. He is riding with a training officer now, but hopes to be on his own by October.

The 29-year-old trooper said he and his wife both grew up in small towns. In the military, they were always stationed in cities, he added, and it's nice to be back in a smaller town.

"You don't have as much to worry about here," he said, "and we're paying half as much for twice the square footage in our house."

Being a trooper, he said, is different from being a city or county officer in that the patrol deals mostly with incidents on the highway.

However, they're trained to handle any situation that might come up.

"We try to focus on helping communities," he said. "They encourage us to volunteer and educate people on the law, and to assist the local police and others in any way we can."

Mr. Gizzarelli said he doesn't plan on leaving Oberlin anytime soon.

"When we first got here, we were like, 'Where is everybody?' but we're really looking forward to getting to know everyone and becoming involved in more family-oriented things."



STATE TROOPER JOHN GIZZARELLI (right) posed in full uniform with his wife, Christina, after his graduation from the patrol academy. The couple moved to Oberlin after he was assigned to Decatur County.

Day of denim to celebrate farm women

The third annual "Women in Denim Event: Finding Your True Color" will be held Wednesday, Oct. 3, at the Shepherd's Staff in Rexford, sponsored by the Northwest Kansas Conservation and Environmental Alliance.

Registration will be from 9 to 9:15

a.m., followed by "Let's Talk About It," led by Charlotte Shoup-Olsen, of K-State. It will include sessions on communication styles and how to effectively communicate with spouses, children and other family members while helping to manage the farm.

Activities including a presentation on estate planning, color coordination and salsa making will fill out the day.

Call Diana Solko at the Decatur County Conservation District at (785) 475-3131. Cost is \$30 and deadline is Friday, Aug. 17.



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