

Voters oust commissioner

Newcomer beats longtime incumbent

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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 After 40 years in office, County Commissioner Ralph Unger lost his seat in Republican primary voting Tuesday to Sid Metcalf, who ran up 70 percent of the vote.
 The final count for Mr. Unger in the 2nd District of Decatur County was 77 votes to Mr. Metcalf's 181.
 Mr. Unger was seen with his wife, Norma, at the courthouse for the preliminary votes, which reflected the final outcome. He declined to be interviewed.
 Mr. Metcalf waited on the steps of the courthouse outside the county clerk's office as the numbers came



Ralph Unger Sid Metcalf

in.
 "I didn't know what to expect," he said after the results had become clear. "I had a lot of positive response when I was campaigning." (See ELECTORS on Page 12)

Citizens turn out to cast their ballots

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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 With local races to vote on, Decatur County residents turned out. With seven candidates for two county commission seats and two men running for magistrate judge, plus a couple of hot legislative races, 893 people cast their ballots.
 By Monday afternoon, 141 voters had mailed or come to the courthouse to cast advanced ballots, said County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler. Then on Tuesday, another 752 showed up at the

polls.
 Secretary of State Kris Kobach had predicted that, statewide, about 18 percent of those eligible would cast a ballot this election in Kansas. Out of 1,941 registered voters in Decatur County, however, 46 percent turned out to vote.
 While that is high, the county is normally above average when it comes to voting. In the primary elections of 2010 and 2008, 38 percent voted and in 2006, 36 percent turned out.
 (See DECATUR on Page 12)

Voters decide to keep senator and legislator

By STEVE HAYNES
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 Incumbent state Sen. Ralph Ostmeier swept to victory in Tuesday's Republican primary, rolling up a 2-to-1 margin over challenger John Miller of Norton and apparently carrying all 14 counties in the reshaped 40th District.
 With all precincts reporting, Rep. Ward Cassidy of St. Francis won a battle of incumbents in the 120th House District. He led Rep. Rick Billinger of Goodland by 396 votes.
 In Wallace County, the race was close, 222 for Cassidy to 291 for Billinger.
 (See STATE on Page 12)



R. Ostmeier Rep. Cassidy

Cassidy, a school counselor and former principal, and Billinger, a retired businessman and former mayor of Goodland, were thrown together in the 120th when a redistricting plan was passed.

I Quit

Mayor resigns at meeting end

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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 In a surprise ending to Thursday's City Council meeting, Mayor Bill Riedel announced that he was quitting.
 "I've talked with myself, my wife and my family," he said to a stunned audience of 20 or so, "and I just feel it's the best time to step down for the interests of my family."
 "I thank everyone for the opportunity to serve you, and I've learned a lot in the last 3 1/2 years. I'm very proud of the accomplishments we've made, but like I said, I think it's best I step down."
 The audience at The Gateway greeted the mayor's pronouncement with a shocked silence. One man yelled out, "Thank you, Bill!" in

response to the mayor's comments. Everyone else was quiet.
 City Administrator Karen Larson said council President Rob McFee will be acting as mayor for now.
 The next morning, Mr. Riedel talked about his reasons for leaving office. His official letter of resignation said only that "recently there have been decisions made by the council that I cannot support."
 "The thing about the council," he said, "is that I feel as though I don't easily let things roll off my back, and I'm probably just too compassionate toward people to hold that office. I don't know how to put it where it doesn't sound like I hate the place." (See MAYOR on Page 12)



Bill Riedel

City passes budget with tax increase

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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 The Oberlin City Council unanimously passed a \$4.3 million city budget for 2013 Thursday at its regular meeting at The Gateway, including a 10 percent tax increase, with no comment from the public.
 City Administrator Karen Larson and Mayor Bill Riedel welcomed questions and comments from about 20 people present for a public hearing, but no one offered any, so a motion was made to approve

the budget, and it passed without debate.
 Reviewing the changes, Mayor Riedel noted that the budget would include an 8.05-mill increase in the property-tax levy. While this is a big jump from last year, administrative assistant Steve Zedrow said last week, it is a return to a more normal level since the levy went down last year as the city spent some surplus cash.
 The council also got good news (See CITY on Page 5)

Hospital chief taking new job

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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 Lynn Doeden, chief executive of Decatur Health Systems and long-time administrator of the Decatur County Hospital, turned her resignation in to the county hospital board Friday, saying she had taken another job.
 It was the most recent blow to the management firm and the hospital, which have been looking for full-time doctors since before the departure of Elizabeth Sliter and Stellan Andrecia just a year ago.
 Mrs. Doeden said she will be leaving for an administrative position at a clinic in Emporia.
 "I'm ready for a change," she said in a later interview, "and an opportunity became available, so I'm going to take it."
 "We've lived in Oberlin for 26 years; the plan was to retire here," she continued, sounding exhausted as phones rang continually around her. "There's just been too much



Lynn Doeden

going on the last two years, and I'm getting to the point where I can't live my life here."
 Mrs. Doeden said she knows she has been a divisive personality in the community at times.
 "I love my job," she said. "I love what I do here, I love the people I work with. But I don't like what it's made of this community."
 Besides running the hospital, in (See WOMAN on Page 12)



4-H fashion plates model their outfits

DRESSED IN THEIR BEST, members of Decatur County 4-H clubs modeled their outfits for the buymanship part of the fashion revue last Tuesday at the United Methodist Church. Cheyenne Soderlund (above) told the judge about her outfit as she modeled it while Isabel Grafel (right) waited for her turn. Connie Noren (below left) watched while Cheryl Soderlund read a description of one of the outfits.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



City OKs planers to design new pool

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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 The Oberlin City Council gave Larkin Aquatics of Kansas City, Mo., approval to proceed with designs for a new swimming pool, should a proposed sales-tax increase be approved in the November general election.
 The existing pool used over 2 million gallons of water last year, said Kyle McCawley of Larkin, who gave the presentation. The new one would only use 750,000 gallons. The current pool needs a new filter-

ing system and concrete basin, he said. The cost to maintain a new pool would likely be about the same or maybe even a little bit less, depending on how many people staff it and the hours of operation.
 The new pool will cost roughly \$2,284,000, Mr. McCawley said, including construction, consultation, a site survey and a 5 percent contingency.
 "The city currently has a debt limit of \$2.15 million," Councilwoman Fonda Farr pointed out after the presentation at a meeting July

19. "How do you plan to make this fit into that?"
 "If that's all that's available, I'm confident we can make it fit," Mr. McCawley replied.
 He said the firm can take out the contingency first, then delete individual items, like the underwater benches or slide.
 "So there is a way to control the mounting cost..." he said. "There are ways to make it fit, between the City Council and the firm."
 "I'm pretty comfortable with the \$2.1 (million), that we can get it to fit in there. We're seeing contractors pretty aggressive for work. It's a good time to find that your dollars are going a lot further."
 Susan May, a member of the city's pool committee, pointed out that 50 to 60 percent of the money spent on the pool would stay within the area.
 One of the biggest needs is to get (See POOL on Page 5)

