

Council still must approve pool

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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The Oberlin City Council talked about whether to follow through on a sales-tax increase to pay for a new swimming pool at its meeting Thursday, but put off a decision until the next meeting Thursday, Dec. 6. Although voters approved the tax increase by a nearly 2-1 margin, 567 to 311, it is still up to the council to pursue building a new pool, which will require the city to

borrow about \$2 million.

John Haas, a financial advisor from Wichita hired by the city, will report to the council at that meeting, said City Administrator Karen Larson. After hearing that report, and what members of the pool committee and the public might have to say, the council will then vote on whether to go ahead with the project.

"I talked to the people out in Norton," said Councilman Rusty Addleman, "and they

said that when they (did a similar project for their pool), that the money they got from the tax far exceeded what they needed."

The pool committee has recommended that the city set up a Public Building Commission, which could borrow the money on the city's behalf, therefore leaving the city's credit untouched. But some members of the council have reservations about that plan.

Councilwoman Fonda Farr expressed her doubts shortly before Election Day:

"It's just a way to get around our debt limit," she said. "I know I'll get flack for this ... but I think we already have as much debt as we can handle, and until we can pay off the sewer and water projects, we shouldn't acquire anymore. I'm not against a pool, but we already have one."

Danielle Leitner, a member of the pool committee, said at Thursday's meeting that she expects a lot of people to show up to support the pool.

"I don't think a lot of people realize it's still up in the air," she said, "and that the council could still strike it down."

Mrs. Larson said that if the council passes the tax ordinance, it will go into effect on April 1. If it puts the decision off until January, it couldn't go into effect until July 1. Construction of the pool would begin next September, with the new facility to be open for Memorial Day 2014 if all goes well.



THE TRACTOR OF A SEMI-TRAILER truck from Nebraska (above) lay in ruins last Tuesday after it collided with a tractor pulling a grain cart (left) on U.S. 83 at the west edge of Selden. State troopers (far left) examined the

damage to the semi, which spilled much of its fuel. The spill, estimated at less than 100 gallons, spread across the highway, shutting it down for about four hours.

— Herald photos by Marian Ballard

Light Parade this Friday

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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The Oberlin Business Alliance is looking for more float entries for this year's Parade of Lights, which is coming up Friday, the day after Thanksgiving.

"The deadline to register for the float is probably 10 minutes before the parade starts," joked organizer Gary Walter, an alliance member and president of The Bank. "But really, we'd like to know who all is going to be in it by the Tuesday before, on the 20th. That will give us a few days to get a good idea of how it's going to go."

Mr. Walter said he uses the word "float" pretty fast and loose, as any vehicle with any kind of lights can enter the parade, which is part of the alliance's kickoff for the Christmas shopping season. It will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Decatur County Co-op parking area and go up Main Street to the Good Samaritan Center.

"You put a generator on a pickup or trailer and light it up with Christmas lights or spotlights or whatever you want," said Mr. Walter. "We've had golf carts, and even one where Brad Marcuson, the new county commissioner, had antlers and a big red nose on, and reins drawn back to an all-terrain vehicle. And he just ran down Main Street as Rudolf; it was great. There's a multitude of opportunities to be creative and have fun with it."

"And of course, Santa Claus comes every year and brings up the rear. He's going to be at the Golden Age Center after the parade, and the Lions Club will provide candy for him."

Mr. Walter said that the parade has been running for 12 or 13 years now. Downtown businesses will be doing their hidden Christmas tree and turkey promotions again this

Community dinner Thursday

This year's Community Thanksgiving Dinner starts at noon Thursday at St. John's Lutheran Church. Bring a salad or pie if you can.

The dinner, which will feature turkey, ham, rolls, dressing and dessert, is free, but people are encouraged to give a donation, said organizer Ruth Miesner. The money will go to the Decatur County Food Pantry.

The church is at 510 N. Wilson Ave. If you would like to attend or have a meal delivered to your home, Mrs. Miesner said, call her at (785) 475-2380.

year to try and keep people around after the parade is over.

If you find one of the trees, which will be hung in shops and stores around town, you get a discount or free item offered there, he said. If you find the hidden turkey, you get a discount or prize from the store it was found in.

Decatur Health Systems staff will be serving soup from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Golden Age Center as a fund raiser for the Cedar Living Center. Margie Wilson, the chief nursing officer at the Cedar Living Center, said that soup will be served during and after the parade.

For a float entry form, you can call Mr. Walter at The Bank, 475-3817, the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce office at 475-3441, Judy Scott at 475-8983 or Sid Metcalf at 475-2251. Those with floats are to meet at the Co-op at 6 p.m. before the parade to get organized.

Many businesses will close Thursday

Most area businesses will be closed for Thanksgiving Day.

The only area restaurant that plans to be open is Jerry's Bar and Grill in Norcatour. Owner Jerry Wescott will offer a Thanksgiving buffet at noon.

Both Oberlin convenience stores, Eagle and Crossroads Express, will be open for business as usual. Dollar General will be open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Raye's Grocery will be closed all day Thursday.

Oberlin and Norcatour city offices will be closed both Thursday and Friday, as will the Decatur County Courthouse, Golden Age Center and the Decatur Health Systems Family Practice Clinic. State offices, including the clerk of the district court, will follow the same schedule.

Federal offices will be closed Thursday only.

All area banks and the United Northwest Federal Credit Union, plus all post offices, will only be closed Thursday.

Sunflower Recreation bowling alley will be closed Thanksgiving Day but will open at 5 p.m. Friday.

The Decatur Co-op Association will be closed Thursday. Hansen Mueller will be closed Thursday and will close Friday at 12:30 p.m.

Bill Cathcart, who operates the county's trash hauling service, said pick-up service will be pushed back one day for the holiday. If your trash is normally picked up on Thursday, it will be picked up on Friday and Friday's trash will be picked up Saturday.

Tractor, semi rig collide

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An accident between a semi-trailer rig and a tractor pulling a grain cart in Selden last Tuesday shut down traffic on U.S. 83 for four hours, sent both drivers to the hospital and spilled about 100 gallons of fuel across the highway and a Selden city park.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Morris Ray Arnold, 64, Colby, was driving the tractor northbound on the highway and went to turn left into the roadside park.

Jacque Boultinghouse, emergency preparedness director for Sheridan County and mayor of Selden, said that as Arnold turned, the semi, driven by John Burns Sr., 64, of Roseland, Neb., went to pass him.

"He went to go around him," Boultinghouse said, "and ended up going over him instead."

The Highway Patrol report said that the tractor came to rest on its side in the middle of the road and the semi went into the north ditch, striking a tree. Its saddle tanks spilled fuel everywhere.

Boultinghouse said that a Sheridan County ambulance and fire trucks from Selden and sheriff's deputies, along with Kansas De-



partment of Transportation workers and state troopers, all rushed to the park.

The Highway Patrol report listed both drivers as "possibly injured," which Trooper Tod Hileman, Troop D public affairs officer in Hays, said "means that they had minor injury or complained of hurting somewhere."

Neither man had a working listed phone number, and officials at the hospital said they were taken to the Sheridan County Health Complex in Hoxie, but did not return phone calls. Boultinghouse said she had heard both men were later released.

As for the fuel, what wasn't absorbed with special pads was

washed into the ditch, said Assistant Fire Chief Steve Rogers.

"The fuel tank was ruptured," he said, "probably from hitting the tree on the driver's side ... With the cleanup, what we did was absorb as much as we could with absorbent naps, and the rest of it was basically just washed off, the little bit that was left. We were going by what the state was telling us to do."

Troopers had asked their dispatcher to report the spill to the state Department of Health and Environment.

Boultinghouse said that the amount of fuel spilled was less than 100 gallons.

"It was strung from here to there,

so it looked like a lot more than what it was," she said. "The whole accident just tore both vehicles to pieces."

She said the Department of Transportation shut down traffic going both directions on the highway, rerouting it two to three blocks through town.

"We had to divert it around and through town because the tractor was in the middle of the highway, and one set of (the truck's) dual wheels were entirely off it," Rogers said. "It broke them plumb off and laid the tractor (cab) right on its side in the highway, so we had to close that whole section of highway down."

Craft show this weekend has 50 vendors

This year's Holiday Craft Show boasts more than 50 vendors with homemade and commercial gift items for one big day of Christmas shopping.

"It will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

on Saturday at The Gateway," said David Swank, president of the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the show. "We'll have a bunch of people displaying crafts, crafting supplies,

decorations, some homemade food items and other nice gifts."

Mr. Swank said admission is free, and the Chamber will be selling homemade goodies at the door as a fund raiser. Lunch will be served by

The Gateway staff.

"It will be a good time to buy some unique or handmade Christmas gifts," Mr. Swank said. "We have vendors coming from all over (See FIFTY on Page 5A)

The Bank buys three branches of First National

The Bank of Oberlin has completed its purchase of three branches of First National Bank, including those in Colby, Bird City and Quinter.

"We're just completing the ac-

quisition, from when we started in April," said Gary Walter, president of The Bank. "We were approved by the (Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.) and the Office of the State Banking Commissioner (to take over) at the close of the business day on Friday."

Mr. Walter said that customers won't be seeing much of a change, other than the routing number and name on their checks. Internet and business banking won't be affected, he said.

"The people that were customers of First National are customers of

ours," he said, "and the same people that were working at those branches are there still. It's the same location, personnel and telephone number."

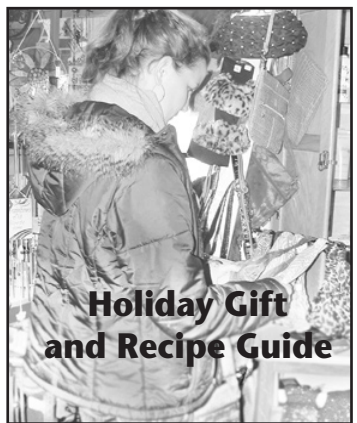
For existing customers of The Bank in Colby, however, there will be a change. (See THE BANK on Page 5A)

Christmas gift guide in today's newspaper

Wondering what to get that certain someone for Christmas?

Well look no further. Just check out *The Oberlin Herald's* Holiday Gift Guide inside today's newspaper. It's full of gifts sold in area businesses, and some are offering specials for the coming weekend.

Besides giving you gift ideas, the Holiday Gift Guide is full of new recipes from area church and business cookbooks.



Holiday Gift and Recipe Guide