



## Angel Tree program starting up

The Angel Tree program, which collects gifts of everything from coats to toys to brighten Christmas for kids, has changed where it leaves application forms. Look for them at Dollar General and Raye's Grocery instead of at the banks.

Organizer Amber Scott said that the program, which has been going on for many years, won't be changed much otherwise. The deadline to turn in an application this year is Friday, Dec. 7.

"Any family that has children in need that are 17 or younger can pick them up," she said. "You just fill them out and tell what you're in need of, like clothes or shoes or even special requests like toys.

"You turn it in to us, and we give each application an anonymous number. Then we send them to the Rocking R, where people can pick one out, go shopping for them and

return wrapped packages with the number of the child on them."

Mrs. Scott said that last year, 73 families participated.

The forms can either be mailed to Mrs. Scott at 2061 900th Rd., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, she said, or dropped off at the Decatur County Hospital front office. No date has been set for families to pick up the presents, she said, but it is usually a few days before Christmas. If you're buying gifts for one of the families, she added, you can sign the present from anyone you like — Angel Tree, yourself or even Santa Claus.

"We don't like to give rules," she said, "and we have no qualifiers. Anyone who feels in need can apply.

"Some people just give money even, and we buy fresh fruit and movie passes, or fill in where others couldn't buy certain presents."

## Food drive kicks off fast at Stanley's

The annual food drive at Stanley Hardware has begun, owner Joe Stanley said, with the first donation coming in last Tuesday, two days earlier than usual.

"We start on Thanksgiving," he said last Wednesday, "but we actually have some stuff in the window now. We put it all in there as it collects, and have a board to keep track. Our goal every year is 2,000 items."

Mr. Stanley said the promotion started for the 1999 holiday season. He and his wife Regina were trying to think up promotional ideas for the big century changeover when it came to them, he said, and they've reached their goal every year since.

The store will be collecting anything that the Decatur County Food Pantry could need — food, personal items, coupons and cash — through New Year's Day. After the first, Mr. Stanley said, some of the kids from the high school usually help them carry it all over to the United Church of Oberlin at 109 N. Griffith Ave.

The pantry in the basement there, sponsored by the Decatur County Ministerial Association, collects donations all year long.

"It's not just food," Mr. Stanley said. "We need everything. A lot of people will bring punch cards from the grocery store, which the pantry then uses to buy the specials every week, and a number of people also donate cash."

## New trooper assigned to home

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP [sdecamp@nwkansas.com](mailto:sdecamp@nwkansas.com)  
Decatur County is getting a new

home for the weekends.

"It's paramilitary-style training," he said, "so you have to be on your toes all the time. They keep you in line ... I think the most important stuff is probably what we learn in the classroom. The most exhilarating is the hands-on stuff, the defense tactics and skills we need to work the road safely and make sure we're coming home at night."

Mr. Woolsey plans to graduate from the academy Dec. 13, and then begin his 70-day field training, where he works with a more seasoned officer.

"I'm pretty excited to be out on the road and start working," he said. "The training is intense. They get you ready for anything you might encounter.

"It's just nice to move back to this area, and regarding to work in this community. I grew up here and want to maintain a safe atmosphere here. I'm excited to work with some of the same people in law enforcement that I grew up with, too."



Tucker Woolsey

state trooper, and one from Oberlin, no less.

Tucker Woolsey, 33, a 1997 Decatur Community High School graduate, said being assigned back home was at the top of his list.

"We're happy to be back," he said. "We were really excited with the assignment. Coming back was one of my options. At the academy, you give options of where you'd like to be assigned to, and then they make assignments off of that. It was one of my first choices, but you never know where you're going to be."

He earned Bachelor and Masters of Science degrees at Fort Hays State University and had been the junior-senior high school principal at Quinter.

His wife, the former Tonya Miller, is a 1996 graduate of Decatur Community and also graduated from Fort Hays State University. She and their four children are already living here and she is a stay-at-home mom.

He's been driving to Salina for the patrol's 23-week academy Monday through Friday, and then coming

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IT WAS OFFICIALLY CHRISTMASTIME on Friday night, when the Oberlin Business Alliance put on its annual Parade of Lights. A four-piece brass band (above) sparked up the holiday energy for over 20 brilliant floats this year,

and afterward, Talulah and Trennedey Woolsey (below) wore matching dresses to meet Santa.

— Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

## Holiday season begins!

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP [sdecamp@nwkansas.com](mailto:sdecamp@nwkansas.com)

This year's Parade of Lights was a shiny triumph, with over 20 floats, Santa Claus among them, and a lot of people shopping afterward and hunting for the hidden turkey at each business downtown.

The turkeys, little cutouts hung somewhere in the stores, redeemable at *The Oberlin Herald* for store discounts and prizes, weren't all found, however. By the end of the night, all but two had been turned in.

The winners were Jacelyn Krause, who found the turkey at R&M Service Center, Lily Hendrickson at Raye's Grocery, Alex Hayworth at the Dresser, Janice Cundiff at the LandMark Inn, Brynna and Bryant Adleman at Stanley Hardware, Darian Klee at Rocking R and Tiffany Witt at Ward Drug.

The well-hidden missing turkeys were at Penn Ave. Boutique and Prairie Petals.

Dan and Isabel Grafel judged the parade, and they had no shortage of contestants to work with.

"This was one of the bigger parades we've done," said Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. "I think we had right around 20 float entries. And we always need more people involved.

"I think more should participate to make it even bigger and better, because everybody loves (See PARADE on Page 12A)



## Firm will study services for seniors

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP [sdecamp@nwkansas.com](mailto:sdecamp@nwkansas.com)

County commissioners gave the go-ahead for a consulting group by the name of the Grace Team to perform a study of Decatur County's nursing homes starting next month at a cost of \$22,500.

Commissioners OK'd the contract at their meeting Tuesday, Nov. 6, meeting. Commissioner Ralph Unger said founder John Grace will be head the project.

"It's a complete look at our health systems," said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, "and how we can maximize and utilize our facilities and keep them all open."

"It's a three-way effort the nursing home, hospital long-term care unit and county commissioners are in on," said Mr. Grace. "They've hired me to do an assessment of the needs, the number of elderly, and the usage of health and social services. That'll be the base of the study. Then we'll try to analyze what needs have been met and unmet, and lastly we'll

### What will the project do?

What will the nursing home study be about? It should:

- Determine the ages and incomes of those in homes today, as well those expected to come in the future.
- Analyze the supply and demand of nursing care, assisted living and apartments for the elderly.
- Review the budgets of Decatur County organizations for the elderly.
- Interview people who work within these organizations, ministers, city and county workers and anyone else involved with care of the elderly.

make recommendations on how to serve the elderly."

Janice Shobe, administrator of the Good Samaritan Center, elaborated on the process.

• Provide for public input, though how this will happen wasn't explained.

Based on these studies, the team will:

- Compare our facilities (and how much they cost) to industry standards.
- Report on areas where money could be made or saved.
- Recommend a plan and timeline to accomplish the county's goals.

At the end of this list, the proposal says "economic impact will be an optional service per further discussions."

"(The study) includes what services we do have," she said, "what we have in surplus, and what we're lacking. It's going to take a look at everything that could keep seniors

in the community and keep them healthy.

"We know we are facing changes in the way the state reimburses nursing homes, and under Kancare (the state's revamped approach to Medicaid), there will be a greater emphasis on keeping seniors at home longer, then going to assisted living and then long-term care."

Mrs. Shobe said that right now, Decatur County doesn't have assisted services, only independent living and long-term care. Assisted living is a critical level in between those two, she said, so it will be important to figure out how to meet that need.

"It could end up being a business opportunity," she said, "or it could be just changing the way we use the resources we currently have."

Grace Team, based in Topeka, sent a contract to the commissioners that they signed and accepted. The proposal said that the team will provide its recommendations in the (See STUDY on Page 12A)