

# Airport soars in survey

The final inspection of the rebuilt runway and taxiway at the Oberlin Municipal Airport went well, the City Council heard at a meeting Thursday, and not a single part of the work failed to meet Federal Aviation Administration standards.

City Administrator Karen Larson said that the city had received a letter from the Kansas University Medical Center to support Phase 2 of the project, which would add a longer runway. The new runway, the letter said, would help with establishment of a cancer treatment center in Oberlin.

"It's all very preliminary," she told the council. "We can't do too much about the airport until we can justify it to the (Federal Aviation Administration), but this was something kind of fun to think about."

In other business, the council:

- Decided to start the next meeting, on Thursday, Dec. 20, one hour earlier, at 6 p.m. due to councilwoman Fonda Farr needing to leave early.

- Went in closed session for 20 minutes to discuss the blighted property ordinance because of attorney-client privilege. When the council resumed the public meeting, City Administrator Karen Larson said the members decided not to take any action right away since they plan to rewrite the ordinance at the end of January.

- Heard from Mrs. Larson that The Gateway's budget had to be amended because it's been busier, and therefore has had more expenses, this year. Mrs. Larson said that an estimated 47,500 people passed through The Gateway's doors this year, pulling in about \$64,500.

"We're going to end the year with more money than we thought," she said.

The fully amended budget will be signed off on at the end-of-year meeting, she said, and will be published in *The Oberlin Herald*. That meeting is set for Monday, Dec. 31.

- Heard that the city's employee appreciation dinner will be at 6 p.m. Friday at The Gateway.

- Heard that Mrs. Larson and City Administrative Assistant Steve Zdrorow are trying to get a grant to fix the city's brick streets. Goodland, she said, just redid two blocks for \$600,000, but they would like to do the project in more affordable increments.

- Heard that Decatur County Hospital is putting together a fund raiser to fix up the children's park nearby. Mrs. Larson said that the Rotary Club has given \$750 to the cause and the city will, too.

- Heard that the city is still \$1,700 short on the money needed to fix up the structure around the new directory at the cemetery.



## Homes tour gives a warm welcome

**WELCOMING VISITORS** to their home, Cheryl and Sid Metcalf (left) opened the door on Sunday during the Decatur Professional Women's annual Holiday Homes Tour. A trio of snowmen (below) decorated a railing at the home of Jim and Diane Barrett while Mrs. Barrett stood in front of a series of snowflakes on her wall. — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



## Churches begin lighting wreaths

This year, a handful of area churches are lighting Advent wreaths, and while many know of the tradition, few know of its roots.

"Advent means 'to come,' so it's preparation for Christmas, and the coming of the Christ child," said Pastor Nancy Proffitt of the Oberlin and Prairie Chapel United Methodist churches. "It's that time that we prepare our churches and homes, but also prepare our hearts and lives to receive Christ, not only as a baby, but for when He returns. So it's a time of getting both ourselves and our Christmas trees ready."

Dean McIntyre, a member of the General Board of Discipleship

of the United Methodist Church, said that the tradition of celebrating Advent started in France and has been around since the fourth century, though it's not practiced in every denomination.

"Advent marks the beginning of the church year," he wrote in an article Ms. Proffitt provided. "It begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and ends Christmas Eve. Advent ... is part of the cycle of seasons that includes Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, all related in some fashion to the coming of Jesus. That cycle is followed by Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and the long Pentecost season."



**STEPPING ONSTAGE** at the United Methodist Church of Oberlin, Celiano Shobe lit the second candle of the church's advent wreath Sunday.

— Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

## Christmas contest drawing Saturday

Haven't had much luck so far with "Christmas On Us" contest? The big drawing for the grand prize of \$1,000 in scrip is at 11 a.m. this Saturday at the gazebo in Centennial Park. Maybe you'll win.

If the weather is bad, then the drawing will be moved indoors. Any unclaimed \$50 prizes will be drawn right before the grand prize.

Two people came in to claim their \$50 prizes this week. Brenda Ulery, who got lucky ticket No. 217806, found her number in the ad for Raye's Grocery, after receiving it at the same store. She said she plans to spend the \$50 in scrip on groceries.

The second winner was Vada Jensen, who got ticket No. 867404 at Ward Drug, and found her number in the ad for The Bank. She said that she planned to check around at all of the sponsors and then decide what she wanted to buy.

Speaking of sponsors, this year's are Stanley Hardware, Raye's, Ward Drug, the Carpet Center, the Dresser, the Bank, R&M Service Center, Dale's Fish 'n' Fun and *The Oberlin Herald*.

The giveaway works like this: For every \$10 you spend at one of the sponsoring businesses, you get a red ticket with a number on it. You can also get one ticket a week from the newspaper or the

Economic Development office downtown.

Every week, ticket numbers are hidden in the sponsors' ads in the pullout Christmas On Us section of the newspaper (also called section "C"). If a number in the paper matches the number on one of your tickets, bring that ticket to *The Oberlin Herald* by 5 p.m. on Friday, have your picture

taken and claim your \$50 prize. Prizes are paid in scrip, which can only be spent at one of the contest sponsors.

No purchase is required to win any prize. Tickets are limited to 250 for any single purchase. Employees of sponsoring businesses are not eligible to get tickets at the place of their employment. Employees of the newspaper and

## Two elected to committee

Robert R. Henningson of rural Norcat has been elected to represent Local Administrative Area 2 in the annual election for the Farm Service Administration county advisory committee.

Diane Barrett, Decatur County executive director for the agency, said Sharleen Wurm of rural Oberlin was elected as first alternate for the district.

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on the agency's disaster, conservation, commodity and price-support programs, as well as other farm-program issues.

## Schools to see changes in state tests

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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The Oberlin School Board briefly discussed changes coming in state assessment tests for the 2014-2015 school year.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst told board members during a meeting Monday, Nov. 12, that one of the big changes in the assessments will be the amount of writing. A lot of the test will have to be keyboarded in. Some of the teachers, especially at the third and fourth grade levels, are concerned about the amount of keyboarding and writing.

Mr. Dorshorst said some have questioned whether the district starts kids on keyboarding at the right age.

Board member Abby Hisson asked if writing isn't somewhat subjective for a state test. Mr. Dorshorst said all of the test is computer scored.

High School Principal Ben Jimenez said state officials now are saying not to teach to the test, which is not what they have been saying for the last 10 years.

One of the new focuses for the assessments is to tie in student achievement to teacher evaluations, he added.

The agenda for the Kansas Association of School Board conference must have 20 different references to student achievement on it, noted board member Dan Nedland.

These changes, said board President Monte Moore, are going to take some time and tie up teachers and principals. Mr. Jimenez agreed.

"What a waste," said Mr. Moore. Mr. Dorshorst said a group of educators is trying to come up with something that is more friendly to rural schools.

In other business, the board:

- Named board members Jerry Chambers and Mrs. Hisson to the calendar committee for the 2013-2014 school year.

- Talked briefly about a possible \$10,000 gift that might be left to the district to establish a scholarship fund.

- Looked at the responses to a parent survey handed out during parent-teacher conferences. Mr. Dorshorst said the response was pretty light, but he was pleased with the results. Some of the positive comments included that parents like the pleasant atmosphere at the school, the school daily planners that kids can write their homework in and that their kids enjoy going to school here. Some of the items parents said could be improved on included the district's bullying policy, better lighting in the classrooms and the school lunches.

Mrs. Hisson noticed that one of the comments was that the buildings look cleaner. The board agreed to thank the custodians for their work.

# Motel may be built at Gateway

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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The Oberlin City Council heard a report about a new motel the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. has been planning, and tentatively gave its stamp of approval for the project to be built on The Gateway's grounds.

Greg Lohofener, chairman of the development agency's board, invited the council to attend a meeting that the group plans at 7 p.m. Thursday in the council meeting room at the civic center.

"One reason to put the motel here," he told the council, "is to keep the cost of building it down. We could use the meeting rooms here instead of having to build one on-site, and that would generate revenue for The Gateway. It will also create a better relationship for multi-day events with this location."

Mr. Lohofener said he has been seeking investors for the project, which he said he hopes to get off the ground this spring. The group he has so far assembled is debating whether or not to go with a name-brand motel or operate independently, he said, and more investors are needed to make the big decisions.

As for the motel itself, Mr. Lohofener said that it will have 30 rooms, probably in an "L" shape. If they decide to build it on The Gateway grounds, he said, it would be situated on the southeast corner of the property along U.S. 83 (Antelope Avenue). This location, he said, would make construction of an underground shelter or parking space easier. He told the council they still haven't decided if they wanted a one-story or two-story design, but that an architect would be at the meeting to explain the options.

Mr. Lohofener said that Rex Olson, the architect for the project and an Oberlin native, has worked on private and chain motels, and will try to draw up some first-draft ideas for the building to bring to the meeting.


"Well I don't see how we could turn down possible growth to our town," said Councilman Josh Williby.

"And it would be less we have to mow," joked Councilman Rusty Adleman.


Mr. Lohofener also told the council that three positions on the board would be up, including his own, as of Jan. 1. He said he has a recommendation for who should replace him. The council decided to talk about that later.

There is actually a total of seven openings at the agency for the end of the year, said Marketing Director Connie Grafel afterward. The three that Mr. Lohofener referred to were the at-large, city and county positions. Two of these seven are hired by the agency itself, and the rest are appointed by the city and county.

He told the council that the agency has been busy, has four revolving-loan applications out and four of the loans have been paid off.



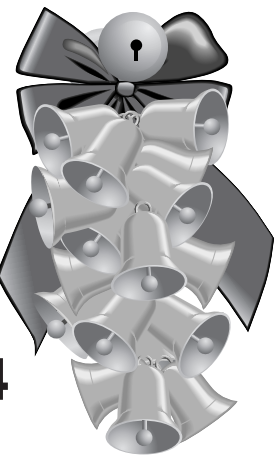
# THE OBERLIN HERALD



## Coffee Hour

**Friday, December 14**

**9 a.m. to noon**



**Come taste some of the recipes from our Gift Guide and Last Minute Gift Guide. We will also be having festive drinks and come chat with the staff from The Oberlin Herald. We look forward to seeing you and wishing you personally a Merry Christmas.**

