

Doctor will live, work in Oberlin

Dr. Allen Hooper, who has been working at the Decatur County Hospital one week out of every six since last fall, confirmed on Friday that he has agreed to join the staff full time.

Dr. Hooper and his wife Jeanne both grew up in Decatur County and graduated from Decatur Community High. They plan to move back soon.

"I want to commend Oberlin for all the positive things they've done over the past 20 years," Dr. Hooper said. "Seeing the improvements around town, like the new theater and bowling alley and The Gateway, I've been to a lot of towns in Kansas, traveling with Docs Who Care, and they haven't done those sort of things.

"What better thing than to go back to your home and see all that?"

Dr. Hooper is one of three Decatur Community High grads to come back and work for the hospital in the last six months. The other two include the medical director, Dr. Robert Rosin, a 1976 graduate, who returned in October, and Amy Anderson, Class of 1979, who moved from Oklahoma City in September

to help with physician recruitment and communications.

Dr. Hooper will be the second full-time doctor at the hospital, along with full-time nurse practitioner Lynnetta Ward and part-time nurse practitioner Tricia Carney. The facility hopes to hire another nurse practitioner soon, said Miss Anderson.

Dr. Hooper attended the Kansas University School of Medicine in Kansas City and had worked here from 1985 to 1990. He moved to McPherson, where he worked until 2000, then joined Docs Who Care, an organization that sends doctors to help at understaffed hospitals around the state. He later worked in Kinsley for six years, he said, before going into semi-retirement.

The hospital plans an open house this spring to allow everyone to meet the doctors and the new administrator, Mrs. Anderson said. No date has been set.

Dr. Hooper will start his full-time schedule at the end of March. To make an appointment with him or any of the providers at the clinic, call 475-2015.

Wheat crop doing better

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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It's been looking up lately for wheat in Decatur County, as little splashes of rain and snow here and there have blessed the new year for a crop that had a rough start last fall.

Most farmers planted their wheat despite the dry conditions last fall, and even with the rain and snow this area has received, the state is still abnormally dry, according to a Jan. 17 report from the Kansas Wheat Commission and the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers.

Jim Shroyer, a wheat specialist with Kansas State University who spoke at this month's Cover Your Acres expo at The Gateway, said wheat is a surprisingly hearty plant that farmers shouldn't give up on too quickly.

"I hear a lot of producers saying you have to have 'X' number of plants out there to optimize yield," Mr. Shroyer said at his lecture. "I've seen some pretty good yields with less than those optimum numbers, though, because the plant has the ability to compensate. The plant has that elasticity, a built-in flexibility."

If the wheat doesn't succumb to a winter kill from low temperatures

and dry soil, Mr. Shroyer said, then you're doing better, but you're not out of the woods yet.

"Then we have to think, 'OK, the wheat's going to make it,'" he said, "but we have to make a decision. If the wheat has been planted in the fall and it's still not up yet after the first of the year, from this point on you're looking at a 40 to 60 percent yield loss.

"If growing conditions get better, if March through May is great, then maybe it won't be so bad, maybe it'll be a 20 or 30 percent loss. So you have to think of your options: Do I fertilize my wheat that's not up yet? I sure don't want to put in my herbicide, because that will lock me into wheat. So maybe I'll put on the fertilizer but not the herbicide in case I have to destroy the wheat and go to grain sorghum (milo)."

Going to sorghum means destroying the wheat and going to another crop because the wheat won't make it, Mr. Shroyer said, but doing that comes with its own challenges and should really be considered an option of last resort.

"I think the snow we got helped the wheat against winter damage because it wet that soil," Mr. (See WHEAT on Page 10A)

One dead, three hurt in accidents

A Colorado man was killed and his brother sent to the hospital late Saturday night when their pickup went off the road and rolled just south of Leoville in southern Decatur County.

The accident came just a little more than a day and about three miles by road from one Friday night which sent two Colby Community College students to hospitals.

The fatal accident happened about 11:40 p.m. Saturday a mile south of Leoville on K-223, a spur route connecting K-23 and K-383 through the tiny town.

The driver, who was not wearing a seat belt, was killed. Trooper John Gizzarelli, who worked both calls, said in his report that the driver, Gordon Gail Gibson, 23, was southbound from Leoville when his 1997 Toyota Tacoma pickup went off the right side of the highway just north of the county line. It came back on, then flipped onto its right side and

rolled down the road. When firemen and ambulance crews arrived, the victim was reported as "code blue," not breathing.

The passenger, Parker James Gibson, 22, was taken to the Decatur County Hospital, which refused to comment on his condition.

"I don't know if the driver fell asleep or what," said Chuck Harms of ASC Towing in Oberlin, "but I think he did, because he hit a post and a sign before overcorrecting and rolling down the road.

"Unfortunately he died, so we can't ask him. It's tragic as heck to be that young and killed that way."

The wreck on Friday occurred when a car carrying five college girls left the road where K-123 makes a 90-degree turn to the north. The curve is about a mile from the junction with K-23, the road to Hoxie, and four miles south of Dresden. It's about a mile into Sheridan County, (See ACCIDENTS on Page 5A)



Students ready to sing, act in musical Monday

THE SIXTH GRADERS of Oberlin Elementary School (above) are ready to break a leg at 7 p.m. Monday in their production of "Ever After," which features many princesses, including Mollie Tate and Madelaine Johnson (left). Shiloh Singleton-Marine (at left below) hosts the show-in-a-show, which also has Isiaha Tucker as a frog turned half prince.

- Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCamp



City Council redoes ordinance

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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After last summer's continued debate on the city's "nuisance" ordinance, which covers blighted property, weeds and junked vehicles, the City Council called a special meeting Thursday to once and for all address the problem.

As it turned out, the session was surprisingly low-key, with only a handful of people in the audience.

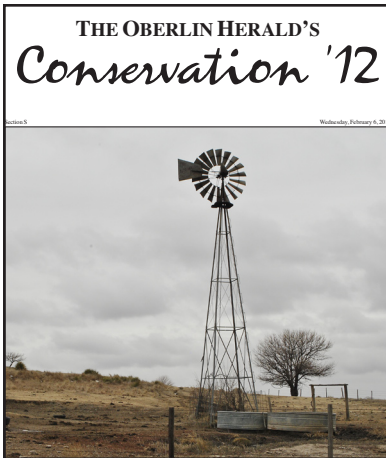
"The reason we're here has to deal with the public nuisance ordinance," said Mayor Rob McFee to open the meeting. "What we can and can't have, and what the code enforcement officer can and can't do. I've previously stated what I think; I have read every single one of these and they all came from the same book in Johnson County in 1980. I don't want to live in anything (See ORDINANCE on Page 5A)

Mayor allows motion

After saying he would announce his decision on whether or not to veto a motion to set up a public building commission to finance the pool at Thursday's special City Council meeting, Mayor Rob McFee said last Wednesday that he would allow the motion to pass — but without his signature.

Mr. McFee hasn't agreed with the idea of the pool project from the beginning, given the city's finances and debt. The motion was voted for by the council 4 to 1, so even if the mayor had vetoed it, it could have been overridden.

Conservation awards given



Each year, Decatur County farm families are honored for their work with the land. Today's *Oberlin Herald* includes the annual Soil Conservation section, which has stories about three families that received the Kansas Bankers Awards this year.

Two farmers in one family received the award for water conservation, one family won for water quality and a third for his windbreaks.

City power interrupted during maintenance

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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Power outages plunged Oberlin into the dark briefly Monday morning, one section of town at a time, as the city switched its power supply to Prairie Land Electric from Sunflower while workers upgrade the city's main substation.

City Foreman Dan Castle said that hopefully, this will be the last stage of repairs, and the project should be done in the next 10 days to two weeks — but not before another brief interruption.

"The final wrap-up should be sometime next week," Mr. Castle said, "but I can't say specifically

when. There will be another outage whenever they're ready to go back to Sunflower, too, I'm thinking the middle to end of next week."

The power went out on Main Street around 9:50 and came back on at 10:10 a.m., and Mr. Castle said that section of the town was the one that was out the longest.

"We found out Thursday evening that it was going to go out," he said, "and the guys went around to notify as many people as they could. It's hard to set a specific time for this kind of thing, but a lot of people were aware.

"There are still some surprise ones every once in a while, though."

Congressman visits courthouse

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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Congressman Tim Huelskamp visited the Decatur County Courthouse on Thursday for one of his regular "town hall" meetings, where he spoke with residents about everything from the Second Amendment to the government's debt.

"It was pretty intensive," said Bill Duncan, who attended the meeting. "He's a great true conservative, the stick-to-your-principles type, which as one fella on Main Street said, he was proud of him because he follows up what he campaigned on. He's really knowledgeable on all that's going on, and he's taken a lot of bruises. I wish we had two hours with him."

"People can disagree on the solutions," Mr. Huelskamp said after the meeting, "but we all know the problems. We're in financial straits, and we have to do something differently. Washington is broke and broken in numerous ways. Here I've heard some really particular concerns about the Second Amendment and health care — they're pretty common concerns across all Kansas towns.

"These meetings are also about me being held accountable," the



congressman added. "I tell people what I'm doing and why, what's happened on my committees, what's leadership doing and why is that."

"I pride myself on being as up-front as possible. With the bigger media in Washington, my staff always warns them that 'Hey, Tim is an open book — be ready for that,' and they're still always surprised. But I don't have anything to hide; people know what I'm doing and why."

Mr. Huelskamp has one of the largest congressional districts in the country, and just added Manhattan to it. He said he's never been daunted by the size of the job, though, and gets restless when he hasn't been out to talk with the people after a few months.

"The toughest question I always have is trying to explain something that someone else does in Washington," he said. "Trying to explain why Washington feels so out of touch is hard, because they are out of touch. People don't get out of Washington enough — conservatives, liberals, Washington as a whole tends to do (See CONGRESS on Page 5A)