



**FLIPPING PANCAKES AT** a benefit for the Decatur County Food Pantry held Thursday at the Oberlin American Legion hall was a director of the Legion Riders, Alan Marietta. Over 100 people chowed down on pancakes, sausage and eggs at the fund raiser.

—Herald staff photo by Carolyn Plotts

## Legion flips pancakes for food pantry

Oberlin’s American Legion has sponsored lots of fund raisers, but Thursday was the first time the organization had worked to raise money for the Decatur County Food Pantry. The Oberlin chapter of the Legion Riders put on a pancake supper with the help of members of the Legion post. Alan Marietta, a director of the Riders, was the head pancake turner. Pouring batter onto a hot grill, he said, he was able to keep up with demand as people came in a steady flow all evening. Legion Auxiliary member Deanna Castle helped serve the hotcakes, eggs and sausage. “It’s a joint effort,” she said. “Everyone works to make it happen.” Legion member Bill Ladehoff sat at the donation table behind a basket overflowing with money. He estimated almost 100 people had attended. “We have no complaints,” he added. “It was a good turn-out.” Why right now? “After the holidays,” Mr. Marietta said, “the pantry needed to be restocked. There’s always a need.”

## Business group, Chamber may merge

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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The Oberlin Business Alliance, after nearly 20 years of promoting business here, is thinking about merging into the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce. The idea came up just four months after the two groups joined forces. Since then, representatives of both groups have attended the other’s meetings, helped out with the other’s events and decided to cut the fee for business membership in both groups from \$200 to \$125. The alliance, which plans business promotions year around, with emphasis on Christmas, has faced declining membership—and loss of volunteers—as the number of businesses downtown has shrunk over the years. It’s run without officers for some time, with a few volunteers doing most of the organizing. Among the options that alliance members discussed at a board meeting Thursday were changing meetings to quarterly instead of monthly, combining meetings with the Chamber board or simply dissolving the alliance and merging into the Chamber. One question is the annual fish fry the alliance holds every year on Good Friday – March 29 this year. Member Kurt Vollertsen of Ward Drug said it brings in about \$300 and costs about \$150 to put on. Since the departure of secretary-manager Carolyn Hackney from both groups, though, neither has been hurting for money. The alliance has about \$4,000 right now, said Chamber Treasurer Ruth Miesner, and all of the work needed has some thinking that it’s just not worth it. Only five hours after the alliance meeting at the LandMark Inn, the Chamber board held its monthly meeting down the street at the Business and Entrepreneurial Enhancement building. The Chamber, in contrast, has welcomed four new people to its board. Chamber membership has ballooned since the duel-membership decision, going from 48 members last year to 87 this year, including 57 businesses and 30 individuals. Mrs. Miesner said that the math hasn’t been done yet to see if or how much Chamber money has increased with those number. Both groups also discussed the flower boxes on Main Street and the idea of having a “tax-free” day to draw people to town once a month. Flowers for the boxes have increased in price this year from \$20 to \$22, and orders must be in by March 25, said Chamber President David Swank. The Oberlin Garden Club will be planting the flowers later in the spring. If you are interested in helping or joining the club, call Shirley Shields at (785) 475-3293. The “tax-free” promotion actually means the business would discount sales by the amount of the state and local sales tax, said Mr. Swank, since the business still has to pay the tax. It could be limited to certain items or have a cap. Not all members would necessarily participate, said Mr. Swank. He said he will report his findings at the next meetings for both groups, on Wednesday, April 3. The alliance meets at the LandMark Inn at noon and the Chamber meets at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Building at 5 p.m.

## Four new members join Area Chamber board

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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The Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce has canceled a pancake feed set for Sunday because, board members said, too many other fund raisers are scheduled that weekend and they don’t want everyone to have to compete. Despite that setback, board members talked about gearing up for spring at their meeting last Wednesday, with many projects on the table and four new members of the board to help make it all happen. Joining the board are Lee Gilliam, owner of Creative Dimensions; Whitney True, activity director at the Good Samaritan Center; Jo Ann Lerew; and Norcatur City Clerk Deb Marshall. Chamber membership has increased, going from 48 members last year to 87 (57 businesses and 30 individuals) this year, said President David Swank. Board member Sharleen Wurm told the group that the Last Indian Raid Museum will sponsor a Chamber coffee hour from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2. While Chamber and Oberlin Business Alliance members have the coffee hours throughout the year, this one will mark the opening of the museum’s 55th year. The museum will be having its annual membership meeting that day as well, at 12:30 p.m. Next on the agenda, Chamber members will be helping the Oberlin Pool Committee with one of its fund raisers: a movie, wine and cheese night from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday, April 7, at the Sunflower Cinema. The show will be of Charles Dickens’ “Great Expectations,” and tickets are \$15. The chamber will be assisting the “pool moms.” Next on the calendar is an “era dance” at the old school gym in Norcatur, Mrs. Marshall said. It will raise money for a new roof for the school, now the city building. Jonathan Fick will be the deejay for the event, from 8 p.m. to midnight on Saturday, June 1. A citywide garage sale is scheduled for Saturday, June 8. In other Chamber business, the board:

- Made a motion to order \$25 in bags (at 50 cents a piece) from Nannette Zander’s charity in Haiti for the “Welcome Wagon” packages. The packages are being assembled by residents at the Good Samaritan Center.
- Donated \$100 to the Oberlin Rotary Club for its after-prom party.

# City gives OK to airport plan

By **CYNTHIA HAYNES**  
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Airport supporters asked for and got the Oberlin City Council’s blessing on Thursday to seek money to help pay for a new, longer runway able to safely accommodate larger planes in all weather. Spokesman Greg Lohofener told the council that the group wanted to know that it will have the support of the city when it goes to ask for money from the Federal Aviation Administration in Kansas City. One problem is that the existing north-south runway was shortened by 300 feet when the city rebuilt it last year. That was done to meet new federal regulations requiring a safety zone between the end of the runway and outside activity or buildings, in this case traffic on U.S. 36 and the fairground parking lot. The federal agency said it could only pay for rebuilding the old runway under that project, though because the ground drops off to the north, it can’t be extended. Mr. Lohofener said that the airport supporters have shown there are 12 planes based here instead of the five figured in the last government estimate. He gave out a sheet breaking down cost estimates for a 5,500 foot runway, which he said would cost about \$6 million. With a 10 percent match for the city, that would translate into a cost of \$750,000 to \$800,000, he said. This is because they will need to add about a 10 percent cushion for extra expenses and the cost of land acquisition, which could be close to \$1 million. “We don’t want the FAA (ap- proval) resurrected and then not (be able to) meet our 10 percent obligation,” Mr. Lohofener said. He noted that it is possible that Oberlin would only have to pay a 5 percent match on the project because it was underway when Congress changed the law on matching amounts. “If we’re going to work on it, by God, let’s work on it,” Mayor Rob McFee told the group, adding he wasn’t sure it’s the right thing for the city to do. Sid Metcalf, an airport committee member and Decatur County commissioner, said that the group wants to talk to state and federal officials in person. Another committee member, Doc Franklin of Jennings, said the hospital needs the longer runway for fixed-wing medivac (medical evacuation) planes to take off. This is important to keep the hospital’s accreditation, he said, adding that the Kansas Department of Transportation might help pay the additional 5 percent that the feds have added onto the bill. City Administrator Karen Larson said that she thought that the city should send its engineer with the group. And since the engineer’s office is right next door to the Federal Aviation Administration in Kansas City, she said, it shouldn’t be too expensive. “We just need solid assurance from the council (that the matching money will be available),” Mr. Lohofener said. The council voted unanimously to support the group.

## Blood draws planned

The Decatur County Health Department will be taking blood draws from 7 to 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday and next Wednesday at the department clinic west of the Decatur County Hospital. Administrator Marilyn Gamblin told county commissioners about the project at their meeting last Tuesday. In other business, commissioners:

- Heard from Ms. Gamblin that three positions will be open on the Health Department Advisory Board in April and reappointed Lisa Davies, a registered nurse at the Good Samaritan Center, to the health department advisory board.
- Reappointed former County Clerk Marilyn Horn to the Northwest Kansas Regional Recycling board in Colby, and appointed Commissioner Brad Marcuson to represent the commissioners.
- Approved a motion to oppose the listing of the lesser prairie chicken as an endangered species.
- Passed a motion backing preservation and defense of the Second Amendment to the Constitution.

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**NORTON COUNTY, KANSAS**

**Thur, March 28, 2013 @ 10:30 AM, CDT**

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Norton, Kansas

**SELLERS:**  
Leitner Family Trust



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