

Good Sam strikes deal for the year

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
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 Decatur County commissioners and the Evangelical Good Samaritan Society struck a deal last Tuesday to keep the Good Samaritan Center open at least until the end of the year, if not longer.

So far, the nursing home has lost \$5,000 for the year, said Administrator Janice Shobe, and the commissioners have agreed to make up for that loss, and any other losses this year, with money from the Shirley and Laura Cochran estate, which left \$600,000 to the center and the hospital for operations. Under the agreement, the center can receive up to \$75,000 a year.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said that prior to the agreement, the county used tax dollars to provide upkeep for the building, but never gave the center money for operations.

"It'd be pretty devastating to lose

those jobs if we have to," he said. "We have to keep it open, and that money that was donated will help keep it going."

"At the end of the year, we'll decide whether we'll continue to do that or not, or if the hospital should take over. We're thinking of putting an election together to see if residents would be OK with a higher tax to help operate an old-age home, whether one of the current ones or a new one."

"At end of year, we'll decide whether we're going to use the memorial money until it runs out, or if a tax should be levied to support one, both, or a combination of the two (of the county-owned nursing homes)."

"For right now," Mrs. Shobe said, "it's an open-ended agreement so that the county can extend it or alter the amount if they wish to. The funds reside with the county." (See **GOOD** on Page 8A)

Power system needs millions

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
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 City Foreman Dan Castle says he'd like to see Oberlin's electrical distribution system completely upgraded and repaired, and suspects that it will take about 10 years and \$1.5 million to do it.

Mr. Castle, who gave his second report on the electrical system to the City Council on April 4, said he knows exactly what needs to be fixed and where to start, and needs about \$150,000 to get going for the first year of renovation.

"We have a status system that shows us the status of the entire distribution system," he said, "and I can't stress enough the importance of completing this upgrade. We're at about 70 percent, and we're still looking for four more breakers."

"The trouble spots in town are the oldest spots. We base this on the number of downed power lines, outages, broken poles, rotted cross arms, anything you can think of. We know where they are."

Mr. Castle said that a lot of poles and lines people see and think are out of shape really just look bad, but may work just fine.

"We're basing all of this off mathematics," he said, "not cosmetics." And when it came time to talk numbers, Mr. Castle didn't beat

around the bush.

"The main thing I ought to tell you about," Mr. Castle said, "is that right now we have 1,600 power poles in town, and each pole will cost \$400 (to replace), so we're not talking small potatoes. We're talking \$640,000."

"All the hardware that's involved with rebuilding your line is pretty shocking, especially the insulators, cross arms and all those things that hold everything on. It's hard to put an exact total on each pole because they're all different. If we can set a goal to just pick out half of these poles as a start and do them, then when we reach that goal, we'll have a matter of selection in regard to fixing the rest of the town."

Mr. Castle said the good news is that not all of the poles need replacing, and it could be as little as half of them. One thing is for sure, however: The department needs to start with the oldest, most in-need parts of the city and work its way up.

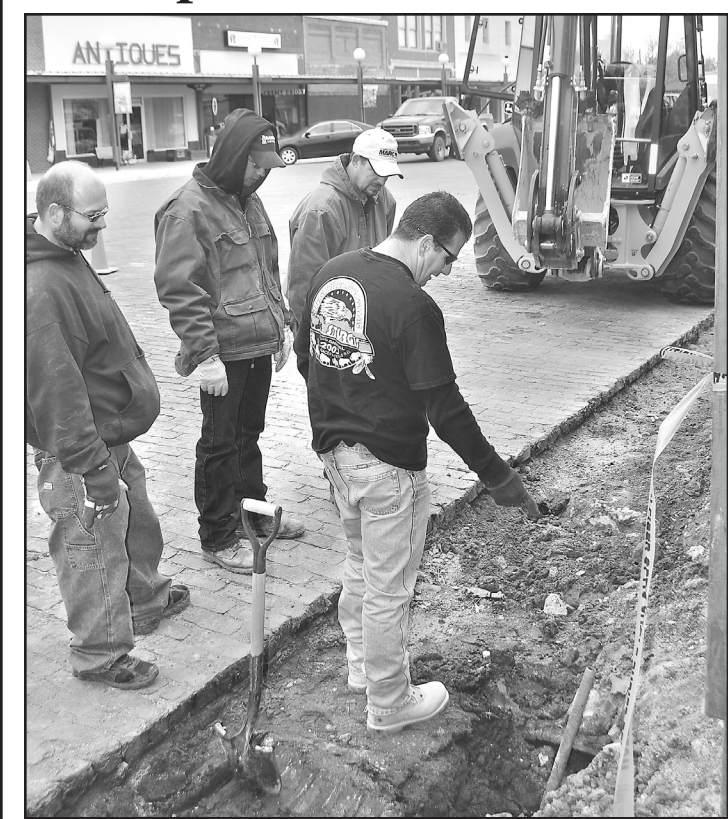
"The four circuit breakers we need are \$15,000 to \$20,000 a piece," he said, "and we usually buy them in pairs. We have one breaker right now that gives us nothing but trouble because it's an old hydraulic one. We have to create a blackout to fix it when it goes off." (See **REPAIR** on Page 8A)



Historical enactments ring true

WHILE IT'S CALLED a "wax museum," there was nothing unreal about the eighth grade's historical performances Saturday in the high school gym. Nurse Jo Mason (above) listened as Carmen Winder talked about her portrayal of Helena Rubinstein. Gavin Gomez (left) as Nat Turner talked about his life as a slave. — Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCamp

A bump in the road



LOOKING INTO a hole, Wayne Hackney of Oberlin Concrete (front) pointed to where workers found an old tank under the sidewalk on the east side of Penn Avenue. City workers (from left) Charles Stately, Jacob Fortin and David Sporn were helping. The men were replacing part of the sidewalk on Monday when they came upon the tank, which was to be removed.

— Herald Staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

Building panel to name officers

The board of the city's new public building commission has been picked and approved by the City Council, and at a council meeting Thursday, that board will be electing officers, a president, vice president and secretary, and designating meeting times.

That meeting has been moved up from the original time of 7 p.m. to 6 p.m. to accommodate John Haas, the city's financial advisor, who is coming to further discuss the commission and how it will work.

Those appointed to the commission include former mayor Ken Shobe, for a 3-year term;

retired farmer Gaylord Shields, for a 3-year term; insurance agent Abby Hissong, for a 2-year term; Dollar General employee Colleen Gee, for a 2-year term; and retired oil-field worker Bob Ross, for a 1-year term.

"The Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. will also be here to talk about the neighborhood revitalization program they're interested in," said City Administrator Karen Larson, "and Theresa Diederich is on the agenda to talk about the Fourth of July, regarding a light show in place of fireworks."

Something else that was brought up at the

last council meeting, on Thursday, April 4, has been put off until the meeting after this one, on Thursday, May 2. That is the question of whether the city should allow Dollar General to sell beer at its store. To do so would violate a city rule that says no alcohol or malt beverage can be sold within 200 feet of a church, Mayor Rob McFee said, so the council members are taking the time to think over whether they would like give the store a waiver. Anyone who has an opinion on the subject should attend the May meeting or talk to one of the council members, the mayor said.

County sets up designated shelters

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
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 Do you know what to do if you're caught away from home in a severe storm and the tornado sirens sound "take cover"?

If you're home, most people will head for the basement or innermost room for safety. But what if you're out around town? Or worse yet, what if you're on the highway?

The answers to those questions might surprise you.

Jacque Boultinghouse, emergency preparedness director for

Decatur and Sheridan counties, is head of the Local Emergency Planning Committee, a group that thinks of possible scenarios before they happen so that you don't have to figure them out when something does.

"Right now," she said, "the main shelter is at the BEE (Business and Entrepreneurial Enhancement) Building (on Commercial Street and Penn Avenue). If the weather hits to where the sirens are going off, it will be unlocked and the shelter will be

unlocked and the shelter will be (See **STORM** on Page 8A)

High school prom, promenade Saturday

The annual Decatur Community High promenade will start at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at the Sunflower Cinema. Prom Marshal Zach May will lead the procession down Main Street.

Public viewing of the prom decorations will be from 5:30 to 6 p.m. at The Gateway, said Principal Ben Jimenez, with the banquet starting at 7 p.m. The dance will go from 8 p.m. to midnight.

"The theme is — we've wrestled

with this a bit — but it's a surprise," he said.

Each student in the senior class is a candidate for prom king and queen, and though the vote has already taken place, he said, the winners won't be announced until the dance.

"I think prom is important for kids to have something to remember," the principal said.

