

## Water project almost ready to bid

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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The project to pump safe, drinkable water into the City of Oberlin is trucking right along on schedule, and may include some repairs to existing water mains if the City Council gets enough grant money to help cover the cost.

Chris Miller of Miller and Associates, the engineering firm out of McCook that's working on the project, made a report to the council at their meeting Thursday, May 3, to bring new council members Marilyn

Horn and Rachel Johnson up to speed on the project and let everyone know where the city stands on deadlines.

The next deadline, he said, is June 1, when all of the designs for the project have to be submitted to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for review before construction can begin. After that, he said, the project will go out to bid, and a contractor will be hired to begin construction on the three new well sites.

The council would like to replace some existing water mains that will help bring the

water to the city, and build a treatment plant that would remove manganese from water pumped by existing well No. 11.

The city currently has four operating wells, Mr. Miller said, but only No. 11 is within the state regulations and considered safe for drinking. While the water doesn't violate any regulations, he said, it does have a surplus of manganese, which over time, clogs and deteriorates the city's water pipes.

"If you've ever looked in the tank of an old toilet or something where the porcelain

has all turned black," he said, "that's manganese. It's not harmful, but it can cause problems. So what we'd like to do is replace all of these pipelines that are so clogged with the stuff so that when we do start pumping in the new water, it won't immediately be polluted by the old pipes."

"We also want to build a treatment plant for well 11 so that after those distribution pipes are replaced, the water running through them won't create the same problem again down the line."

Once the project is finished, he said, the

city will have four wells pumping in clean water, and three back-up wells that, while not within state regulation themselves, could supply water to be blended with that from new wells to remain within health regulations during times of drought or other emergencies.

In the long run, Mr. Miller said, it will cost the city less to drill the new wells it's found than it would to simply treat the water from wells it already has. If the city just built a treatment plant to filter out the harm-

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## Almost prepared to play ball

**PREPARING THE BASEBALL** fields for summer action was no easy feat, but the Oberlin Lions Club was up to the task last Monday. County Commissioner Brad Marcuson (above) brought out his machinery to help set a new fence around the east field, while Lions member Boyd Wilson helped make sure the posts were level. The men worked for hours digging holes and measuring everything twice to make sure that this year's teams would be playing on a top-notch field. It's also going to get some new, heavy red clay this year from the Decatur County Recreation Board to help keep the dust down.

— Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCAMP



## Artist's print raises thousands, thanks to donor

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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A print by Oberlin artist Anna Shaw is selling like hot cakes across the country, raising money to keep kids outdoors — and all thanks to a mystery donor no one could seem to track down.

The painting, "Pride and Joy," is special to Mrs. Shaw, as it pictures her late son, Isaac, shooting with his father. But it's also special because the story behind the painting — and what it's done for the organization Pheasants Forever, to which it was given — goes a little deeper than anyone would have guessed.

"There was someone in Kansas that had roughly 500 of the prints," said John Linquist, national director of the Pheasants Forever youth sec-

tor, "and this person donated them to us with the stipulation that they wanted the paintings to be used for youth programs. So the staff guys (in Kansas) called me up and said I could use them for my program to get kids outdoors."

It turns out that the donor was Sam McCleneghan, who used to run Spring Creek Castings with Carol Barrett. The two commissioned the painting, Mrs. Barrett said, and then when the company went out of business, Sam decided to donate it for the Pheasants Forever youth program.

"Sam is just a wonderful guy," Mrs. Barrett said laughing. "Right now he's sailing his boat through the Caribbean, so you won't be able to get a hold of him for at least another

few weeks. But he was the one who wanted to see the prints continue to give through that program."

Mr. Linquist said he and a friend were raising money for the Forever Shooting Sports Endowment, which makes grants for local chapters to set up youth programs. His friend, he said, figured out a way to take the prints and put them back onto a canvas, with a special coating that made it look like the original painting. The trick was inexpensive, Mr. Linquist said, and when framed without glass, the print comes alive just like the original.

Mr. Linquist said that the team did a couple prototypes, and the various chapters they took them to loved them so much that they decided to make them available to

every chapter for free. They were shipped to each one packaged, framed and including a special challenge: to auction them off to the highest bidder for the kids' endowment grants.

Here's where the best part of the story comes in: One by one, the chapters would stand before their members and tell the story of Mrs. Shaw, her husband, Rich, and their son, Isaac. And one by one, the paintings began to sell for more than Mr. Linquist could have imagined.

"Our goal was to get \$125 for them," Mr. Linquist said, "and I know that's a pretty low figure, but it was our goal because it would double the money in our endowment. But when we gave them out, they (See MONEY on Page 12A)

## Internet taxes may be too high on rural sales

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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Better think twice before you click that "purchase" button online. You could be paying more sales tax than you need to.

With the 1.5 cents added to pay for a new pool, the sales tax for the City of Oberlin is now 8.8 percent, but in the rest of Decatur County, it's 7.3 percent. The problem is, a lot of people who live outside of the city limits still have the Zip code for "Oberlin" in their address, so they may be paying the steeper tax even though they shouldn't.

And it's not an uncommon problem, either. Just ask the Kansas Department of Revenue.

"It's probably going to get worse before it gets better," said Steven Brunkan, a financial economist with the agency. "It depends a lot on the retailer. A bunch of them go strictly by address and get it right, but others will (calculate your sales tax) on the Zip code alone, and when they do that, it defaults to the City of Oberlin's tax. The best thing you can do when you're ordering is to double check, but we hear this complaint on a regular basis."

Jim Wesch, who used to be on the board of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. and lives in Finley Township, said he realized that he had been paying the higher rate while he was shopping on websites like Amazon.com and Cabelas.com, so he called County Treasurer Jean Hale, who called the Department of Revenue and quickly discovered that it was, as Mr. Brunkan said, a mistake on the vendor's part.

"The online vendor sees Oberlin listed as the town," Mrs. Hale said, "and so just puts in 'Oberlin' for the point of destination of the product, which gives it the 8.8 percent tax, instead of putting in the whole address of the recipient, which would mark them as being outside city limits, and therefore be given the 7.3 percent sales tax."

But of course, nothing is easy when it comes to taxes. Mr. Wesch sent *The Oberlin Herald* his com-

## Congress to debate tax act

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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The Marketplace Fairness Act, which has already passed through the Senate and is now in the U.S. House of Representatives, might solve problems that rural Decatur County residents are facing when they purchase goods online, only to be charged the higher sales tax of the City of Oberlin.

While the difference in tax rates doesn't seem like too much to some residents (it's only 1.5 percent higher in the city), on larger purchases, it can make a big difference. And the problem of the "internet sales tax loophole," where online vendors don't charge their customers any sales tax if the vendor itself doesn't have any operations in that customer's state, has put mom-and-pop stores at a disadvantage in the ever-more international marketplace.

According to a May 9 story on the law in *Time Magazine*, vendors who sell their wares online have long benefitted from this loophole, escaping sales taxes that brick-and-

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plete correspondence with Quill.com, an office product supply company that has charged him the city's higher sales tax. The many pages of e-mails showed how his request for the proper sales tax on his purchase got sent to one person, then another, and another, until finally a response was sent to him that appeared to have been written by someone (See SALES on Page 12A)

## High school grads ready for big day

Decatur Community High School commencement exercises will begin at 2 p.m. Saturday in the high school gymnasium.

The two top students, the valedictorian and salutatorian, will speak, but Principal Ben Jiminez said that their grade point averages are so close that they may have co-valedictorians.

Before the ceremony, "El Relicario" will be played by the saxophone ensemble, which includes Regent Erickson, Kade Grafel, Jonathon Howland, Molly Jansonius, Caleb Koerperich and Dakota Tate.

Seniors will march into the gymnasium as Morgan Jansonius plays "Pomp and Circumstance."

"Childrens Suite, Opus 27" by Dimitri Kabalevsky, will be presented by the Woodwind Ensemble, Hannah May, Sierra Lohofener, Grace Randel, Kassidie Jensen, Darbi Rouse, Alexandra Waterman, Morgan Jansonius, Rebecca Wentz, Ara Marine-Singleton, and Nick Ashley, directed by band teacher Sarah Bricker.

Other selections include "Our Journey Continues" by Gilpin, by

the high school choir, directed by Susan Nelson. After the presentation of diplomas by school board members Dan Nedland, Dan Wasson, Abby Hissong, Dan Grafel, Jerry Chambers and Doug Brown, the DCHS Singers will sing "Letting Go" by Mac Huff. The exit song will be the class song, "Home" by Phillip Phillips.

Door ushers will be juniors Kyle Breth, Konner Fortin, Lara Zodrow and Hannah May. Marching ushers are Kennedy Fortin and Jalyne Shaw.

Class members are Kade Brown, Tyler Bruggeman, Cassandro Cantto, John Carlisle, Dakota Cook, Mikaela Dorshorst, Ashly Farr, Keatra Fisher, Channing Fortin, Meghan Gault, Matthew Glading, Mika Hackney, Matthew Helm, Taylor Macfee, Zachary Macki, Kaylee May, Ryan May, Zachary May, Samantha Meitl, Elizabeth Nedland, Dannay Rhein, Jona-

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