

Wheat crop forecast not hopeful

By STEVE HAYNES
steve.haynes@nwkansas.com

There'll be a wheat harvest in the Oberlin area this year, but maybe not much of one. Rainfall last year was only about half of normal, only about 11 1/2 inches for the year compared to 25 1/2 the year before. Moisture from snow and rain this year has tracked with last year, with Oberlin reporting about 5 1/2 inches so far this year. It's dry and crops are struggling. In the Traer area, says Dan Grafel of D&S Grain and Cattle Co., much of the wheat

won't be harvested this year. "Our part of the county is basically screwed," he said. "We had a crop adjuster out here two weeks ago. He was basically appraising it at 10 to 15 bushels (an acre), but some of this won't make 8. "Basically, Traer has had no rain since the last time in snowed. I think a lot of the wheat will not be harvested." Mr. Grafel added that he and his brother are waiting to see how the fields develop before they take an insurance settlement. It would take 15 bushels an acre to make it

worthwhile to even cut the crop, he said. "This might be the worst wheat crop I've every seen," he said. "Planting conditions were poor in the fall, and ... we're still waiting for it to get better." From Herndon down to Colby, he added, it looks dry all the way. Some farmers may tear out their wheat and try to grow a crop of milo on dryland fields, he said, but without rain, even the milo won't do much. He said he thought D&S would leave most of its wheat standing as cover and try to rotate the fields back to corn next year.

"Chasing one failed crop with another is not economical," he noted, adding that the 90-day forecast is for hot, dry weather. Spring moisture has been enough to get corn started, Mr. Grafel said. At least where they planted into wheat stubble, there was enough moisture to get the crop up, but without rain, the corn, too, may begin to wither. He said wells in the bottom land along the Beaver Creek were down two to four feet from last year, and they may have a hard time getting enough water for irrigated

fields. Still, they keep planting. "Every year is kind of a gamble," he said. Over in Rawlins County, Extension agent Cynthia Dixson said some wheat looks OK and some doesn't. "We have some wheat south of town, a couple of fields that look very good," she said. "It's very short, and it'll take a header down on the ground (to pick it up)." Other fields have large areas where the (See WHEAT on Page 12)



BY THEIR MOTORCYCLES, members of the Oberlin Legion Riders stood at attention during Monday's Memorial Day services at the Oberlin Cemetery (from left) Lonny Brewer, Chris Johnson, Jerry Wolfram, Dick Vahling and Bret Marietta. A little soldier in training was Sage Bryan, 5,

who tried on a camouflage helmet that was part of John Bremer's weapons display at the Oberlin Cemetery during Memorial Day services. Sage is the son of Brandon and Laura Bryan of rural Oberlin.

— Herald staff photos by Carolyn Plotts



Cooler temperature doesn't stop crowd

By CAROLYN PLOTTS
c.plotts@nwkansas.com

An overcast sky and cool breeze did not dampen the spirit of the 100 plus people who stood attentively during Memorial Day services Monday at the Oberlin Cemetery.

Services were conducted by members of the Oberlin American Legion, the Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Legion Riders, and the Herndon Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A row of shining motorcycles belonging to Legion Riders flanked the crowd on the north side of the Silent Glory monument that was the centerpiece for the service. Post Commander Rollie Avery and next year's commander, Adjutant Jim Miesner, raised the American flag before the ceremony. John and Connie Simonsson, John Bremer and Gary Jensen posted the colors.

After playing "Reveille," Commander Avery presided over the program, introducing Miki Dorshort and Samantha Anderson, who sang "The Star Spangled Banner."

The Rev. Stan Chapin, Legion chaplain, gave the opening prayer, then Adjutant Miesner placed a wreath in front of the Veterans Memorial. Megan Lohofener, Miss Poppy, placed the Gold Star Memorial Wreath next to it.

Mr. Miesner introduced a pro-

gram of Memorial Day poetry. Alan Marietta read a Civil War era poem, "The Blue and the Gray," written by Francis Miles Finch. From the Spanish-American War, a poem titled, "Do Not Cheer, Men Are Dying," written by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, was read by Rory Wendelin. Susan May read two poems, "In Flanders Fields," by Lt. Col. John McCrae, and "We Shall Keep the Faith," by Molina Michael, to represent World War I.

From World War II came two poems, "Anzio" and "Alone and Far Removed," written by Medal of Honor recipient Audie Murphy and read by Commander Avery. The Korean War was represented by a poem simply called "Korea," written by Lt. Cdr. Roberto Prinse-laar and read by John Bremer.

Before John Stanley read his poem, "John," by Muriel Cochran, he talked about the treatment Vietnam veterans received when they returned home. Having served himself in Vietnam, he said, he wanted others to know how much they were appreciated and said, "Welcome Home," which generated a warm round of applause from the crowd.

Mr. Chapin delivered the closing prayer before Sergeant at Arms Sid Metcalf directed the firing detail to fire a three-volley salute.

The program concluded with Commander Avery playing "Taps."

Council gets an update

Nuisance cases have been on hold

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
cynthia.haynes@nwkansas.com

Code Enforcement Officer Jan Ackerman re-introduced herself to the Oberlin City Council this month and talked a little about what she does.

She said at the May 16 meeting that a lot of unkempt property problems have been on hold for a while as the council revised the nuisance ordinance. City Attorney Steve Hirsch has some of them on his desk now, she said.

Mrs. Ackerman told the council that she sends out two letters on unkempt property before sending out a notice of abatement, telling the property owner to clean up or fix up their property or else.

She said since weed season is upon us, she has a form that she can fill out and fax to the city on overgrown properties.

She went over her report, which shows the address, owner, mailing address, date notice was mailed and reason for notice — health nuisance, weeds or nuisance vehicle. There is then room to show if the notice was complied with, sent to the city attorney or in process.

The mayor called for a 12-minute closed session to discuss attorney-client privilege with Mr. Hirsch, Mrs. Ackerman and City Administrator Karen Larson.

No action was taken after the session.

(See OFFICER on Page 12)

County says wait for year

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
cynthia.haynes@nwkansas.com

Decatur County commissioners decided not to give any money this year to a service that helps victims of sexual assault and domestic violence but to put the agency in next year's budget for \$500.

Options Domestic and Sexual Violence Services of Hays served four victims of domestic violence and one sexual assault victim in Decatur County last year, Director Charlotte Linsner told the commissioners during the meeting last Tuesday.

In 2011, the service took care of four victims of domestic violence in the county and two victims of sexual assault, her data showed.

She said that Decatur County has not given the service anything to help it with its work for several years.

"I know Decatur County used to give something," she told the commissioners, two of whom just took office in January.

Stan McEvoy said that he didn't remember the county helping out in the seven years he's been on the commission but asked County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler to check the records to see what the county (See ABUSE on Page 12)

Commissioners sign four-year extension with appraiser

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

It looks like Decatur County Appraiser Alan Hale will be around for another four years after he and the county commissioners sign a new contract at the commissioners' meeting last Tuesday.

Mr. Hale said he'd come to the meeting to discuss renewing his

contract.

"We need to renew you," Commissioner Stan McEvoy said.

Mr. Hale said that yes, if they wanted him, they needed to appoint him for another four years as of July 1. He said that he has enjoyed working with Decatur County.

"This has been a real joy," he said about his job. "You've been kind

and treated me well."

Mr. Hale, who is one of the few state certified appraisers in this area, serves as county appraiser for Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties.

He said barring any health concerns or emergencies, he will do his best to never leave the county without a qualified appraiser.

He said he could use a little more

help in his office, since Tom Mullen has retired.

Right now, he said, he just has Peggy Gassmann helping, and although she does a great job, the county really needs to find and train another person.

In Norton, he said, he has four full-time people in the appraiser's office and in Phillipsburg three.

"I'd like to find someone and preferably someone to train and who would stay here," he told the commissioners.

The commissioners asked County Attorney Steve Hirsch to draw up a standard contract for them and Mr. Hale to sign.