

Long runway demise premature?

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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The plan to build a new, longer runway at Oberlin Municipal Airport might be revived with help from the state Department of Transportation, even though the Federal Aviation Administration has put it on the back burner because of budget cuts.

With state helps, the runway would still get done, officials say; it just may take a little longer than planned.

The department, which planned to contribute money to the runway anyway, may

be able to keep things moving. The trick, one official says, is to do a bit here and a bit there, and be ready when federal money does become available.

It's complicated, but state officials say the big problem right now is the sequester, or mandatory across-the-board budget cuts ordered under an agreement between Congress and President Obama. The state doesn't face similar restrictions, and since Oberlin could have problems with air ambulances taking off here in the summer, the state may be able to help.

"The (department) has a \$5 million program just for rural airports," said Ed Young, who up until recently was the aviation director for the agency, "the notion being that an air ambulance is the most important feature that KDOT can support. What happens is, when you get an airport's standards up to (being air-ambulance capable), it becomes capable of doing even more for an area's economic development.

"In the past, Oberlin hasn't used a lot of state money, because the federal money has been relatively available for them, but the

state is capable of doing a variety of things for the city that the feds can't."

Mr. Young said that the money from the agency can be used in ways that federal money can't due to the bureaucracy of the federal system. For example, he said, even though it couldn't finance a whole new runway in Smith Center, the state agency was able to pay for a large part of the paving.

"It was easier for us to do that, as a state agency, than it would have been for the FAA," Mr. Young said. "The priority is lower for the FAA, and the whole federal

system has been about as dysfunctional as it could be for the last five years."

The maximum amount a city can get for a single aviation project from the state, Mr. Young said, is \$1.6 million, "but that doesn't mean that is the limit to what they can do for you.

"There are a number of grants that can be applied for over a number of years, if it's done strategically.

"Traditionally, the state is more nimble in its funding. At one airport, the state de- (See AIRPORT on Page 8A)

County, city to do surveys for grant cash

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Decatur County and the City of Oberlin both will be sending out income surveys as the first step in getting state and federal money to improve the city's water system and update the county-owned medical clinic building in Oberlin.

City Administrative Assistant Steve Zodrow, Decatur County Hospital Administrator Johnathan Owens, grant writers Corina Cox and Julie Britton and Kansas Department of Commerce representative James Foster visited with the county commissioners last week about getting started on a grant to help the hospital update the clinic.

Ms. Cox is with the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development group out of Hill City, which handles most state and federal grants, and Ms. Britton is an independent grant writer from Atwood.

The county is looking for a \$357,000 grant that will have either a 25 percent or a 50 percent match, with the rest being paid for by a Community Development Block Grant through the state Department of Commerce.

The first step for getting the grant, County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler said, is to do an income survey of the county residents.

The results have to show that at least 51 percent of the population has either moderate or low income to get the grant, she said.

Coded survey questionnaires will be sent out with stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

The county will only be surveying residents outside the City of Oberlin because the city is doing its own survey for a grant which will be used to update the water system, either to renovate one of the wells or (See SURVEYS on Page 8A)

Time to guess first wheat load

It's time to stop worrying about the size of the coming wheat crop and take a stab at *The Oberlin Herald's* 28th annual Harvest Countdown contest.

The contest starts this week. People 18 and older can pick up entry slips at any sponsoring businesses.

Entries need to include the day, hour and minute the first load of new-crop wheat will arrive at one of the participating elevators in the county. The grain's moisture needs to be 14 percent or less.

No purchase is necessary to win; just fill out an entry slip and drop it in the box provided at any sponsor's business.

The first-place winner will receive \$50 in scrip money, second will get \$35 and third \$15. The scrip may be spent at the sponsoring busi-

nesses only.

Winners in the last five years and anyone who has delivered the first load of wheat in that time are ineligible, as are their relatives.

Relatives of the person delivering the first load and employees of *The Herald* and their immediate families also are ineligible.

Sponsoring businesses include Fredrickson Insurance Agency, Stanley Hardware, Ward Drug Store, Decatur County Title and Abstract, Hansen Mueller, the Decatur Cooperative Association and *The Herald*.

The deadline to sign up is 4 p.m. Friday, June 21, or whenever the first load arrives. The eligible first load can be taken to Hansen Mueller in Oberlin or Cedar Bluffs or to Decatur Co-op elevators in Oberlin, Norcat, Jennings or Kanona.

Newspapers win statewide awards

The Oberlin Herald won two first-place awards and a second in the Kansas Press Association's 2012 Better Newspapers contest.

The Herald took the first place award in special sections in the class for small weekly newspapers for its Fire extra that came out July 4.

"Great coverage on the devastating effects of these fires and the damage it caused," wrote the judge. "Very informational. Nice salute to the firefighters, volunteers and community for their support. A donation of the proceeds to go to the cause is wonderful."

Reporter Stephanie DeCamp, assistant publisher and ad sales manager Kimberly Davis and graphic artist Crista Sauvage worked on the section. Ms. DeCamp covered the fires from the front lines. Mrs. Davis handled getting news on Facebook, writing stories, selling ads and laying out the section. Mrs. Sauvage made up the ads and she put the section together as fires raged across the county.

Mrs. Sauvage won a first-place award for the most adaptable promotion in the press association's

advertising division for the ads for Oberlin merchants' annual \$1,000 Shopping Spree, which goes over six weeks in July and August. The contest ends during the annual Back-to-School picnic in the park with one lucky person winning \$1,000 in scrip money which may be spent at the participating merchants.

Mrs. Sauvage took a second place for the best entertainment ad for the announcement of a Ronnie Kole concert at The Gateway put on by the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission. The ad was in the paper Jan. 24.

Goodland Star-News Editor Kevin Bottrell won first place in the small-weekly news photo contest. His black-and-white photograph of firefighters putting out a dumpster fire was taken in August.

Goodland graphic artist Jessica Corbin won a second-place award for political ads for her advertisement entitled "Vote: Re-elect Sheriff Kevin Butts."

Mr. Bottrell also won a third-place award for best education (See PAPERS on Page 8A)



AMOB OF RUNNERS (above) started up the trail at Sappa Park on Saturday during the first Rainbow Run put on by the Helping Hands. Lacey Roe (right, right photo below) and

a friend held her toy poodle for a quick photo. Dru Kasson (below left) reacted to a shower of colored chalk dust during the race. — Herald staff photo by Ramell Taylor

Rainbow run draws a crowd

By RAMELL TAYLOR
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Even on a cold, windy Saturday morning, rainbows could be spotted along the road in Sappa Park. Not in the sky, but on the clothes of runners who participated in the first Rainbow Run.

The colorful event featured a 5K run put together by the Decatur County Helping Hands, a group which raises money to help people pay medical expenses. Participants, mostly wearing white, were sprayed with colorful chalk as they ran the course.

As the runners finished, they were met with bottled water and sounds provided by DJ Full Throttle.

The day also featured the Sherri Ruf benefit raffle, intended to help the popular Oberlin coach's expenses for treating colon cancer. The Helping Hands gave away shirts and socks as a small token of appreciation to those who came out.

Among one of the chalkers was Helping Hands President Chris Dempewolf. With such a big turnout — 144 — she said the group believes chances of doing it again next year are strong.



New police officer joins Oberlin force

By RAMELL TAYLOR
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Meet Brad Messersmith, the new officer for the Oberlin Police Department.

Officer Messersmith just finished 14 weeks of training at the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center and started his first day on the force last week.

Originally from McCook, he said, he moved to Oberlin about 15 years ago and lived here for almost five years, and worked at the Decatur County Feed Yard for seven.

His resume dates back before the first Gulf War, when he served as a security specialist in the Air Force. He said he served nine years in the Air Force, three on active duty and six in the inactive reserve.

Officer Messersmith said he began his law enforcement ca-

reer at the McCook Work Ethic Camp in Nebraska, where he worked for six years.

He was a corporal for the first four years, then was promoted to field training officer, teaching the new corporals.

After taking the sergeant's exam, he was promoted. As a sergeant, he did everything from training new corporals, to acting as warden of his building when the lieutenant was absent.

He is engaged and has a family of three girls and two boys.

"I'm happy to be here," Officer Messersmith said. "After waiting 25 years to be a part of the law enforcement family, Chief Haas and the city of Oberlin gave me a chance to prove myself. Oberlin is a nice city with really nice people, a nice hometown community."



Messersmith

