

Lawn care possible under water restrictions

Taking care of your yard might seem impossible with the city's water restrictions, but an expert in lawn care says it can be done with proper timing and patience.

Gary Bruggeman, operations manager for CMA Fertilizer Distribution, does yard work in his spare time. He said a lot of yards in Oberlin aren't in the best shape.

"With the drought," he said, "many yards are looking bad and (residents) are finding

it hard to keep them up."

Now that Oberlin is under a Stage 2 Water Warning, Mr. Bruggeman said, it's better to water lawns in the early evenings, which fits in with the city's rules.

"When I lived in Hays," he said, "We were always under water restrictions. Watering lawns when temperatures are 100 degrees in the afternoon didn't do us any good. For yards that are barely hang-

ing on, (start) watering (during) cooler temperatures. In the fall, fertilize them and they should recover."

Mr. Bruggeman said anyone who is struggling with weed problems during the drought should use caution when it comes to chemical treatment.

"You wouldn't want to add to the problem by spraying chemicals if your lawn is under stress," he said. "If the problem is bad, you

may want to consider spot treatment."

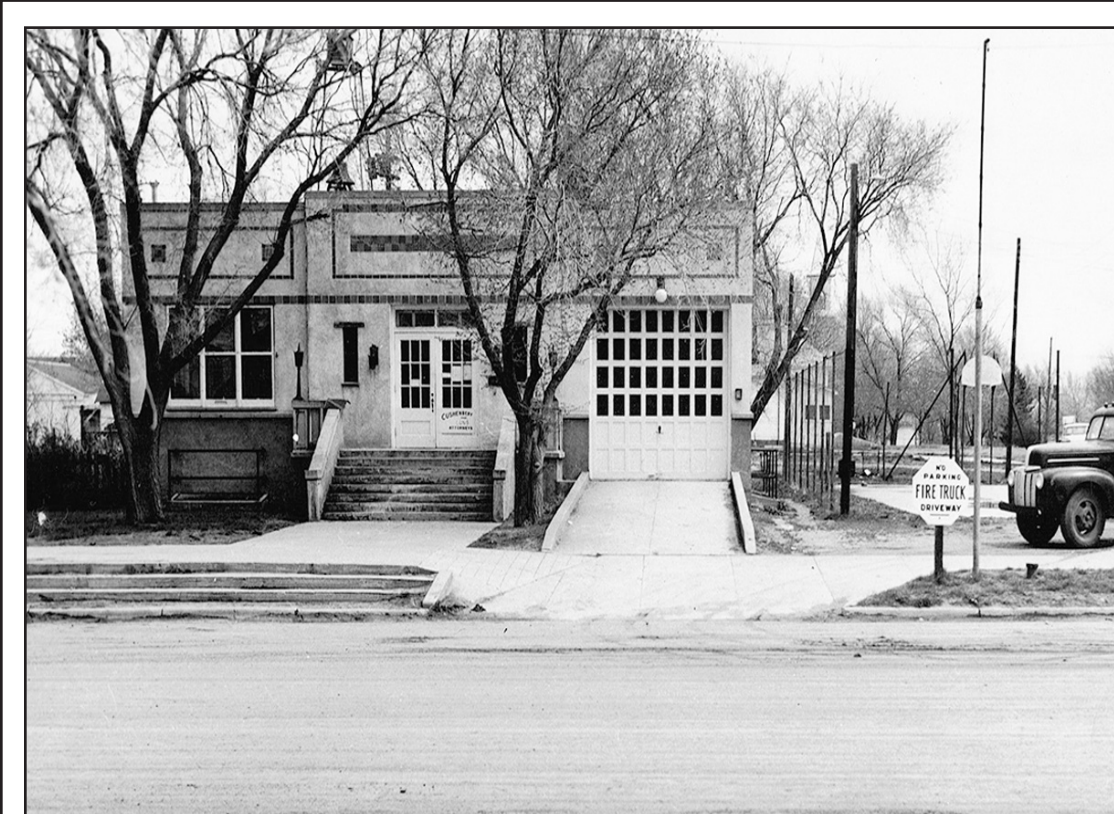
Under the city's restrictions, outdoor water use is restricted to every other day from midnight to 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight. People with odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and those with even-numbered addresses on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. No watering is allowed on Monday.

Mr. Bruggeman said Oberlin homeowners

can manage through the drought if everyone is willing to work at it.

"It's going to take people working together," he said. "A deep watering every other day is better than a 10 to 15 minute watering every day."

Mr. Bruggeman said people should water for an hour per spot or provide their lawns with an inch of good moisture each week.



THE OLD CITY HALL SERVED Norcatour as the center of activity for many years. The trees are gone now and it stands idle, but plans are in the works to bring life back to the old building. — Norcatour Museum collection

Old City Hall in Norcatour to get new life as museum

The U.S. 36 Highway Association has given its blessing to a project to renovate the old City Hall in Norcatour as a museum for the highway.

The historic building, completed in 1937 by the federal Works Progress Administration, has fallen on hard times since the last tenant moved out in 2006.

A nine-member delegation from Norcatour headed by Bob Strevey talked up the proposed museum at the association's annual meeting June 21 in Phillipsburg. The association's board gave its approval to the plan as a designated U.S. 36 museum.

Mr. Strevey said backers went to the Norcatour City Council meeting last Monday and got the city's approval to seek designation as a National Historic Site from the state and federal governments. Mayor Carl Lyon will sign the papers.

Mr. Strevey said the council voted to have the museum set up as a private, nonprofit corporation rather than a city agency, and he will be meeting with City Attorney Steve Hirsch to draw up paperwork for that. He also met with the board of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation to talk about the plan, Mr. Strevey said, pointing out that Mr. Hansen made his money building highways, including parts of U.S. 36.

An inspection by an experienced mason showed the building to be sound, he said, but in need of a lot of cosmetic work. The roof was redone a few years ago and should be good.

The city used the old hall for nearly 50 years. In 1935, the council approved a resolution to build a public building for the accommodation of its offices, a public library, the city fire truck and a public auditorium.

Plans called for the one-story building to be 40 feet wide, 45 feet, 6 inches long and 27 feet high. It was to be fireproof with the exception of a wood roof

covered with asphalt and gravel. Estimated cost was \$21,000, with work to be done by the Works Progress Administration. Construction was completed July 31, 1937.

The building was equipped with a modern kitchen in the basement featuring cupboards, a large sink, hot and cold running water, a gas range and cooking utensils. The basement served the town as a gathering place for family reunions, anniversary celebrations and club meetings.

Over the years, repairs and improvements were made to the building. In 1978, Averill Fullerton and Gary Anthony patch-plastered the ladies restroom and members of the Three Prairie Home Demonstration Unit painted it. Larry Lyon spray painted the ceiling in the banquet room and Glenn Alexander plastered the walls. In 1980, the Decatur County Amusement Authority donated \$1,500 to repair the wide front steps, which had deteriorated over the previous 43 years.

In 1985, the city offices and library moved to the former Norcatour Grade School and the Three Prairie Unit began operating the Prairie Hobby Shop in the former library as a place where crafters could have an outlet for their wares.

Mary Long's beauty salon, Shear Creations, moved into the former city clerk's office in January 1986. Twenty years later, in January 2006, Mrs. Long moved her business to Oberlin and the old city hall has been vacant since. The council has talked about what should be done with the building.

"We'd hate to see the building torn down," said Mayor Lyon, "but it is in dire need of some work. Ideally, we'd like to see it restored and put back to good use."

Wreck victim back in Oberlin

By RAMELL TAYLOR
rtaylor@nwks.com

Ruby Strong, 78, who was flown to a Kearney hospital after her pickup rolled June 25, is now recovering at the Decatur County Hospital in Oberlin.

Undersheriff Alan Marcum said Mrs. Strong lost control of her pickup and the truck ended up rolling in the north ditch near the Kanona turnoff from U.S. 36.

Her son, Glenn Strong, said she needed 400 stitches for wounds to her head, multiple stitches to her arms, and suffered three broken ribs and broken bones in her left arm.

"She was bruised from her head to her toes," he said, "but the doctors

said she's very lucky."

Mr. Strong said his mother came back to Oberlin last Wednesday. She will undergo therapy until she goes back to Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney to have her stitches removed and a cast put on her left arm.

"I'd like to thank all the people involved with assisting my mother during the incident," Mr. Strong said. "I ask that you keep her in your prayers."

Mr. Strong said his mother, originally from Prince Alberta, Saskatchewan, in Canada, came to Oberlin six years ago to live with him after her husband died.

He said she enjoys gardening and

interior remodeling, which she does a lot of around town.

For anyone who would like to see Mrs. Strong or send cards, Mr. Strong said, she is in room 106.

He said her insurance will cover nearly all of her medical expenses, but they will have to make several trips to the hospital in Kearney, which Mr. Strong said will be costly.

Anyone who would like to make a donation for traveling expenses should call him at (785) 470-1322 or send donations to the hospital, 810 W. Columbia, addressed to Ruby Strong, room 106.

Council to discuss budget Thursday

The Oberlin City Council will meet a little earlier than usual Thursday after taking last week off to observe the Fourth of July, starting at 6 p.m. to give council members plenty of time to hear requests for the 2014 budget.

City Administrator Karen Larson said the council will start working on the budget after hearing depart-

ment requests. The meeting will be upstairs at The Gateway, as usual.

"The budget is pretty tight (next year)," she said, "and we will be making a lot of cuts to work what we have."

Mrs. Larson said the council will discuss fees for overnight camping in Sappa Park, as well as installing hookups for electricity.

A petition filed against issuing bonds for a new swimming pool will not be discussed at Thursday's meeting, she said. The council will have to wait until July 19, when the petition period is over.

"Until the petition is accepted," Mrs. Larson said, "there is no reason for the council to review it."

Commissioners plan to 'stick with their guns'

After reviewing letters from two judges asking them to consider a security plan to comply with a new state gun law, Decatur County commissioners decided last Tuesday to stick with their decision to remove "no-carry" signs from county buildings.

The commissioners met with County Attorney Steve Hirsch to look at alternative safety procedures that could be imposed for the courthouse.

The letters came from Chief Justice Lawton R. Nuss of the Kansas Supreme Court and Preston Pratt, chief judge of the 17th Judicial District including Decatur County, asking the commissioners to exempt the courthouse until Jan. 1 to give everyone time to discuss a security

plan for the courthouse.

Commissioner Sid Metcalf said the only alternative would be to put metal detectors in the courthouse, which would require four, one for each entrance. He also said that would require paying someone to guard each door, which Chairman Stan McEvoy said the county couldn't afford.

The commissioners considered shutting down three of the entrances and having one metal detector at the open entrance, but agreed to continue with the plan to remove the signs.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard Road Supervisor Tim Stallman present two bids for grader blades and culverts. The commis-

sioners approved \$15,700 for the grader blades and \$5,228 for the culverts from DC Wholesale Co. of Concordia.

- Agreed to adopt an anti-drug and alcohol policy for transportation bus drivers, who could be subjected to drug and alcohol testing.
- Reviewed the budget for the first half of the year. The commissioner said they felt the budget was in good shape.
- Approved having emergency medical responder classes in September. Ambulance Director Linda Manning said the class will last three months, with the potential for students to take emergency medical technician classes in the future. The county will pay \$300 per student for books and testing supplies.

Sick leave bank in the making for Decatur County workers

By RAMELL TAYLOR
rtaylor@nwks.com

The Decatur County commissioners discussed the possibility of starting a sick leave bank for county employees during last Tuesday's meeting, hoping to help prevent employees from having to take unpaid leave for a severe illness or injury.

County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler said the bank would accumulate sick days donated by participating employees for members to use in case of a catastrophe.

She said employees would be allowed to use up to 25 days from the bank. Employees would have to have used all personal and sick days and have a doctor's note before they

would be permitted to use the bank, she said.

Ms. Geihlsler said she didn't think 25 days might be enough time for employees suffering from catastrophic injuries.

Commissioner Chairman Stan McEvoy said the 25 days is intended to provide some extra time to recover from a more severe illness.

"After a certain number of days," he said, "(the employee) would eventually have to go on leave."

Ms. Geihlsler said a county employee must work for six months to receive sick pay. After that, she said, the employee would donate two sick days to the bank.

New employees wanting to sign up right away, Ms. Geihlsler said,

could be allowed to enroll after a two-month probation. She said the worker would then be required to donate a sick day every year.

Current employees who choose not to participate in the program, but decide they want to enroll later, would also be subject to this rule, Ms. Geihlsler said.

After enrollment, she added, employees must maintain five sick days to stay in the bank program. They are allowed to accumulate up to 30 total.

Commissioner Brad Marcuson presented these guidelines to department heads at a meeting July 2. He said the guidelines are just a proposal for what the program could be.

Seminar on open-government laws in Colby

A free seminar on the Kansas Open Meetings and Open Records laws will be put on by the Kansas attorney general's office from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday, July 23, at

the Colby Community College student union.

Elected officials, reporters and the public are invited to learn the basics of Kansas' open-government

laws, the office said. The session is open to everyone, but space is limited and registration is first come, first served. Go to www.ag.ks.gov or call (785) 296-2215.

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-Leota Brown
(With her pal, Bubbles)

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Receiving chemotherapy treatments in McCook is important for Leota. The time she lost driving from her home in Trenton to North Platte is now spent with family, friends and Bubbles!

Thanks to the Infusion Center at Community Hospital, patients requiring chemotherapy, shots, or lab work can receive safe, convenient care that's close to home.

Six more chemotherapy bays have been added, and patients are cared for by nurses who are specially certified to administer cancer-fighting medications. Visiting oncologists, Dr. Maria DeVilla and Dr. Ahmed Awais of the Callahan Cancer Center in North Platte, also work individually with each patient.

A medical team so thoughtful and caring make patients like Leota feel right at home – close to home!

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