

Highway 36 Association considers four-lane expressway

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Oberlin Herald

OBERLIN — Representatives from the U.S. Highway 36 Association talked with the Decatur County commissioners Tuesday morning about plans to make the road a four-lane expressway.

Steve Haynes, publisher of *The Oberlin Herald*, and Bob Strevey, a Norcatur area farmer and retired military man, met with the county officials to tell them the association and its long-term goal.

Haynes said the association represents 13 counties along U.S. 36 in Kansas. The idea is to have two board members from each county, he said. They try to promote traffic on the highway and keep the condi-

tion of the road up.

The long-term project, said Haynes, is to widen the highway to four lanes starting at the east end. He said the association doesn't have any illusion that the project will happen overnight, but thinks it is worth working on.

A lot of the Kansas Department of Transportation's money goes to working on existing roads and re-building them, he said, not building new ones, but the association is starting to look into the whole process.

When the board met in Phillipsburg in late October, the group decided to get a study for the four lane highway and get the process started.

Haynes said the vision of the association in the next 20 years is to justify a four-lane highway as far as Belleville.

The state, he said, moved much of the traffic and highway-related businesses to the Colby and Goodland areas when it built Interstate 70. He said he would like to see some of that come back this way on U.S. 36.

The association isn't asking the county for anything at this time, he said. The project is going to cost about \$50,000 among 13 counties.

Haynes said the association will probably look at private money first, then grants and then maybe ask for some help from those 13 counties. The study would be done

by the Docking Institute at Fort Hays State University.

How many miles are there across Decatur County? asked Commissioner Patricia Glenn.

Haynes said the county is 30 miles wide and the highway is pretty much a straight line. He added that the highway through the county is in pretty good shape.

Strevey said that counties in this area don't have the same kind of pull with representation in Topeka like it used to be. Mr. Haynes said the association will have to take the facts to the state, and then it is a big money game.

The highway, said Strevey, is vital to economic development in the whole area, and

this is one of the least developed areas in the state. Haynes said they want to try to have the project in the next state highway plan.

Glenn asked how they would put a four lane through Oberlin. Haynes said the study would provide an answer to that question, but it would have to come from people in Oberlin.

It might come right through the present location with a little widening, he said, or shift north of town.

The men asked the commissioners to talk with other commissioners along the highway and see what they think. Haynes said in order to get the project done, the counties need to join together.

Goodland approves grant for new lights

GOODLAND — Renner Field will get lights on the crosswind runway under a \$170,000 grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation aviation division, and last week, the commission approved the city's portion of the project.

City Manager Ron Pickman said at a City Commission meeting Dec. 15 that the grant letter had come in that day, and required action by the commission before the next meeting. He asked the commission to amend the agenda to add the item.

Pickman said the project will install new lighting for the crosswind runway paid for 75 percent by the state and 25 percent by the city. The total cost is \$170,000, with the state paying a maximum of \$127,500 and the city \$42,500.

City Commissioner Chuck Lutters said this is a great upgrade for the airport, and that having lights on the crosswind would be a tremendous improvement.

Commissioner Dave Daniels

said he thought it was a valuable project, and that the airport was important to the future of the city.

Commissioner Dean Blume agreed.

"We need to keep upgrading our airport," Blume said.

Mayor Rick Billinger asked if the city had the match money in the budget, and Pickman said that there was money set aside for the airport.

"We tried to do this through the federal program when we got the new lights this year on the main runway," he said.

"However, we were unable to get that done because there were no existing lights on the crosswind runway.

"With this grant from the state, we will be able to qualify for any future federal grants for that runway."

The commission unanimously approved the grant and told the mayor to sign the papers to be sent back to the state to accept the money.

Cattle auctions canceled as prices fall with mad cow

TOPEKA (AP) — Some Kansas cattle auctions were canceled last week as prices fell in response to the discovery of mad cow disease in a

Washington state Holstein, but sellers said they planned to hold auctions this week.

Delaine Rezac said no once complained last week about his canceling his auction at the Rezac Livestock Commission Co. that's normally held each Tuesday in St. Marys, about 30 miles northwest of Topeka.

By Tuesday, feeder cattle had fallen about \$15 per hundred-weight.

Deaths

Jack G. Grove

Jack G. Grove, 74, of El Dorado, died Friday, Jan. 2, 2004 at Via Christi/St. Joseph Medical Center in Wichita.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6 at Carlson Funeral Home in El Dorado. Cremation will follow the services. Mr. Grove is survived by his wife, Marlene, three sons, Mike Grove of Colby, Rick Grove of Pine Bluff, Wyo. and Scott Grove of Soldier; one daughter, Sarah Cope of Florence; one brother, Don Grove of El Dorado; one sister, Patty Haskell of El Dorado; nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

He was born April 21, 1929 at Wewoka, Okla. to Clifton G. and Pearl G. Johnson Grove. He lived in El Dorado for most of his life and graduated from El Dorado High School. He also attended Butler County Community College.

Mr. Grove worked for Skelly Oil Company for 25 years and also farmed and ranched in the Chelsea and Cassoday communities. He married Marlene Dickerson on Sept. 29, 1950 in El Dorado.

He had also worked with the El Dorado Lake Parks and Wildlife. He was a member of the First Baptist Church and his hobbies were fishing and woodworking.

Memorials are suggested in his name to the Leukemia Society and may be left at Carlson Funeral Home in El Dorado.

Don Wilson

Don Wilson, 61, of Wichita, died Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004 in Wichita. Services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2004 at Gehric and Sons Funeral Home in Sydney, Neb. Visitation will be from 5 to 7 p.m. at the funeral home Tuesday.

Wilson was a long-time resident of Thomas County.

Editor's note: See page 4 for other deaths.

Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day Hi-Plains Co-op	
Wheat	\$3.78
Corn	\$2.47
Milo	\$4.10
Soybeans	\$7.36

Regional Medical Center approves new budget

By **SHARON CORCORAN**

The Goodland Star-News

GOODLAND — The Goodland Regional Medical Center board approved a 2004 budget with a proposed \$288,000 net income at a meeting Monday, Dec. 15.

The board reviewed November's financial reports and approved an asset transfer agreement to merge Rural Health Ventures.

Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht presented a projected budget to the board, showing total operating revenue for next year of \$9,041,000; revenue deductions of \$4,543,000; operating expenses of \$9,240,000; a \$94,000 loss from operations; and \$288,000 in net income after county tax support is added back in.

Precht said he was conservative on some projections to allow for changing circumstances. One figure he said might be low was the estimate of tax collections by the county of \$375,000 for the year. He said he was allowing for the possibility that some people wouldn't be able to pay their property taxes.

Although the hospital's acute patient census has dropped 30 percent in 2000-03, Precht said, nursing administration projected a 19 percent increase for 2004, a patient volume comparable to that in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

The patient volumes for those years were 884, 879 and 820, respectively. The projected patient volume for 2004 is 893. The patient volume in 2002 was 685, and hospital officials have estimated finishing 2003 with 751 patients for the year.

Precht attributed the drop in patients to changes in the medical staff. He said the current staff of five family physicians and three nurse practitioners will provide stability and likely increase referrals.

The proposed budget anticipates that the hospital will become a critical access hospital and have a hospital-based rural health clinic beginning March 1, Precht said, and that the hospital will thus see improved Medicare reimbursement.

The budget reflects reductions of the equivalent of 2.35 full-time employees, Precht said, between the insurance office, admitting and information systems. The hospital does not plan to lay anyone off, Administrator Jay Jolly said, but will continue to reorganize. When some employees leave, he said, their duties will be absorbed into other positions.

There is a projected net increase

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: New Year's Specials

Pre-owned pianos
Baldwin Spinet like new
Baldwin Home studio oak cabinet
Young Chang walnut console
Yamaha P22 walnut studio
Yamaha P22 Oak studio 2 yrs. old
4 repossessed Grand Pianos - Great buys
Steinway console piano - very good.

Delivery-financing-warranties-service

PIANOS UNLIMITED, INC.
1-800-201-4551

American Profile

Celebrating Hometown Life

(available in trade area only)

See American Profile Magazine in today's issue of the

COLBY
FREE PRESS

Brought to you by
the Free Press and:

FIRST
NATIONAL BANK

1195 S. Range
Colby, KS
460-2000

"Neighbors helping neighbors"

RAWLINS SPECIALTY CLINICS

707 GRANT STREET - ATWOOD, KANSAS 67730
(785)626-3211

Bringing Specialized Healthcare To Your Community

January 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Dr. Rubinowitz Hematology/ Oncology Clinic	6	7	8 Dr. Reeves Podiatry Clinic	9 Dr. Reeves Podiatry Clinic	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Dr. Curtis Cardiology Clinic	22 Dr. Curry Urology Clinic	23	24
25	26	27 Dr. Miller Cardiology Clinic	28 Dr. Albers Cardiology Clinic	29	30	31

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CALL (785)626-3211
Cheryl Banister, RN - Specialty Clinic Director
Thank you for allowing us to assist in your healthcare.

**RE
HE**

Sweet Thunder
Annual Early Sign-up Meeting
January 11, 2004
3:00 p.m.
CCC - Student Union
Room 106

Colby Girls Fast Pitch Association
P.O. Box 275 • Colby, KS 67701
For information contact:
Bus. Mgr. Tanya Staats
460-6537

LEARN TO Fly
FOR BUSINESS, PLEASURE OR A CAREER
PRIVATE PILOT GROUND SCHOOL
BEGINNING Mid-JANUARY AT THE
Colby Municipal Airport
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:
KEN BIXENMAN @ 462-7333 OR
MARK OSTMEYER @ 462-4438

Closing Business Sale

After Seven Years of service to Oakley and Northwest Kansas,

The Olive Branch Books and Gifts is closing it's door.

Becky, Chris, Melissa and all our past employees want to sincerely thank you for your encouragement and patronage.

Entire store inventory will be 30% off:

Dec. 30th - 10:00 to 5:30

Dec. 31st - 10:00 to 3:00

Closed on New Year's Day

40% off on these final four days!

Friday, Jan. 2nd 10:00 - 5:00

Saturday, Jan. 3rd 10:00 - 5:00

Friday, Jan. 9th 10:00 - 5:00

Saturday, Jan. 10th 10:00 - 5:00

Sale excludes all consignment items

All Gift Cards must be redeemed by Jan. 10th.

Olive Branch Books & Gifts
217 Center Ave.
Oakley, Kansas 67748
785-672-4075

along with estimated costs. Possible purchases include office equipment, especially copy machines; kitchen equipment; radiology equipment; medical equipment; and repairs on the hospital's airplane. Precht said with the amount of money likely to be spent on aircraft repairs in the next three years, the board could consider trading the plane rather than repairing.

SAVE THOUSANDS ON YOUR TRUCK
don't replace - REPOWER

With a Remanufactured Marshall Engine

3 YEAR
100,000 MILE

Parts and Labor Warranty



S & W SUPPLY

185 West Fifth Street, Colby, Kansas 67701
(785) 462-3373 (800) 747-3394

MARSHALL
ENGINE HEADQUARTERS