

County asks for opinion

Letter sent to attorney general

Decatur County commissioners asked the county attorney get an attorney general's opinion on a payment the state is asking for a router that allows dispatchers to access state and national computer databases.

The state has provided the routers since they were installed, but recently asked counties to pay \$200 a month for the service. County Clerk Marilyn Horn said the county paid the bill for a few months, then some commissioners in northwest Kansas started to raise the question of whether commissioners needed to pay for them.

Commissioners questioned whether Decatur County needed to pay for the bill, and asked Mr. Hirsch to look into it.

Chief Dispatcher Jeanne Pachner met with the commissioners Tuesday morning to talk about the bill.

Commissioners agreed to send a copy of the letter to state Sen. Stan Clark. Mr. Hirsch said it seems like the state is shoving its responsibility off on the counties.

Ms. Pachner said if the state says they are going to shut the county off, dispatch would be in a bad way. The router allows them to check criminal records or warrants when an officer stops someone. They use the service dozens of times each day.

The commissioners agreed that if the state calls, she can say that the check is in the mail.

Mr. Hirsch said the Federal Communications Commission had delayed an order changing public service frequencies to narrow bands, which means the county won't have to buy all new radios right away.

The rule is on a stay, which means that it may be put into effect later.

The commissioners talked with Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy, who said the crew had 13 calls since Friday and had been very busy.

He said he got an agreement for payment on patient transfers to Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden, but she wanted to discuss two items in it.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he had asked Mrs. Doeden to come in to talk about it.

In other business, commissioners:

- Held a closed session for non-elected personnel with Ms. Pachner for 10 minutes. There was no action taken.
- Agreed to transfer \$500 for the Pitney Bowes Co. bill for postage.
- Held a closed session for attorney-client privilege for 10 minutes with Mr. Pomeroy and Mr. Hirsch. There was no action taken.
- Held a closed session for non-elected personnel for 5 minutes with Mr. Pomeroy. There was no action taken.
- Heard there is an opening on the hospital board because Greg Lohoefer wants to move to the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. board. Anyone who is interested in serving on the board should contact the county clerk's office.

Car fire false alarm

The Oberlin Fire Department responded to a false alarm on a report of a car fire on Tuesday, Dec. 16.

Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said the call was about 12:50 p.m. in front of The LandMark Inn. A station wagon belonging to Mary Lemman was smoking and the incident was called in as a fire. The chief said a bearing had gone out on the car's alternator.

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Window fills up with gifts

GOING OVER THE TOP, Stanley Hardware owner Joe Stanley stacked food in the store's front window on Saturday, then grabbed the sign to change the count. The annual food drive was at 1,929 items, but hit 2,015 by the time he was done. The drive will end on New Year's Day, and the food will be taken to the Decatur County Food Pantry in the basement of United Church to help those in need. Mr. Stanley said there's still plenty of room for more.

— Herald staff photos by Steve Haynes



Businesses to close for New Year's Day

Most Oberlin businesses will be closed on Thursday for New Year's Day, including federal, state, county and city offices.

The post office counter will close at noon on New Year's Eve and will be closed New Year's Day, with regular hours on Friday.

First National Bank will close at 1 p.m. today and Farmers Bank and Trust will close at 3 p.m. The Bank has scheduled cutoff at 1 p.m., but will be open until 4:30 p.m. with the

drive-through open until 5 p.m. Raye's Grocery will be open regular hours on New Year's Eve, but will be closed on Thursday.

Frontier Restaurant will be open on New Year's Eve until 8 p.m., while the LandMark Inn and Oberlin Mercantile will be open until 8:30 p.m. Pizza Hut will be open New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Red Crown Lounge will be open from 5 to 9 p.m. with a dance from

9:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. on New Year's Eve. The Oberlin American Legion will have a New Year's dance from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Mean Gene's will be open New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. A&W Restaurant will be open New Year's Eve until 8 p.m. and closed on New Year's Day. Daylight Donuts will be closed New Year's Day.

Dollar General will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on New Year's Eve and regular hours on New Year's

Day. D&M Sinclair will be open New Year's Eve, but will be closed on New Year's Day. Crossroads Express and Ampride will be open both days.

The Decatur County treasurer's office will close at noon today, and other county offices will close at regular time.

Federal, state and city offices will be open today. The Oberlin Library will close at 3 p.m. on New Year's Eve and reopen on Friday.

City approves Scout camp at park

The Oberlin City Council gave the Boy Scouts permission to use Sappa Park for a "mobile day camp."

At a meeting on Thursday, Dec. 4, Dennis Riggs explained the camp to the council. He asked if the Scouts could use Chautauqua Park, also known as Scout Park, for the camp, but because of city ordinances, that wouldn't work.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said an ordinance bans firing of any kind of firearm inside city limits. At the camp, the boys will be shooting BB guns, and a BB gun is defined as a type of firearm.

Mr. Riggs said that the shooting exercise helps teach range and gun safety.

The Scouts will be mobile, moving from station to station for exercises including firearms and archery.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the council would have to change the ordinance to allow the BB guns inside city limits, but the Scouts

could shoot the guns at Sappa Park. Mr. Riggs said the BB guns are one shot only. The Scouts will shoot the guns into a bank from about 16 feet away from the target.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said it would be a good idea to have the camp at Sappa Park. Councilman Joe Stanley agreed.

The council agreed that Sappa Park would work for the camp.

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Council approves licenses

The Oberlin City Council has renewed beer licenses for two convenience stores, the grocery and a restaurant/bar.

At a meeting Thursday, Dec. 18, the council renewed permits for Crossroads Express, Raye's Grocery, Decatur Co-op for Ampride and Mick and Rhonda Barth for The Re-Load.

Mayor Ken Shobe said he talked with City Attorney Steve Hirsch, who said there had been no complaints about any of the retailers.

The council approved the licenses, with each business having to pay \$125.

City Administrator Gary Shike said The Gateway has had 84 more events this year than last year. He said it doesn't really bring in more money because of the costs for the people, but there will be an end-of-the-year report to show all of that information.

The Gateway grossed around \$30,000 more on food, he said.

Councilman Patrick Pomeroy said that he got the city a free 30-day trial website. The address is www.oberlincity.net. Mr. Pomeroy said the site will cost about \$440 a year.

The council two 20-minute closed sessions with Mayor Shobe, Mr. Shike, Mr. Hirsch and Foreman Dan Castle for non-elected personnel. The council voted to allow for \$12,800 increase in wages for 2004. Mr. Shike will present the individual breakdown at the Thursday, Jan. 8 meeting.

Husband shoots wife in Brewster

A 27-year-old woman was killed by what her husband said was an accidental gunshot Sunday morning at their home south of Brewster.

However, investigators ordered an autopsy and the husband was being held Monday in the Sherman County Bastille. Formal charges were awaiting final details from the postmortem.

Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson said Lanny Bevington, 33, told officers his wife, Kerrie A. Bevington, was hit while he was removing a shotgun from the pickup she was sitting in. He said dispatch got the report of a gunshot victim at 7 a.m. on Sunday.

The Bevington home is 3 1/2 miles southwest of Brewster on County Road 37 in Sherman County. Whitson said the couple had moved to the county in August.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said the KBI was investigating. A search warrant was issued on Sunday for three agents to check the scene.

Bevington was pronounced dead at the scene, and her body was taken to Bateman Funeral Home. It later was moved to Topeka for an autopsy.

Funeral arrangements were pending with Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel of Colby.