

City raises rates to pay for sewer plant

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin City Council decided Thursday to raise sewer rates 72 cents per 100 cubic feet of water used, or about one-third on everything over the basic charge.

The changes will leave the base rate at \$14.50 for 300 cubic feet per month. For every 100 cubic feet a customer uses the price will increase from \$2.23 to \$2.95, or 32 percent. The rate increase is estimated to bring in \$300,000 a year.

The commercial rate for sewer is slightly

different, said City Administrator Gary Shike, but basically if they use more than the 300 cubic feet per month then they will be charged \$2.95 for each additional 100 cubic feet.

Thaniel Monaco, the project engineer with Miller and Associates, brought seven scenarios to the council meeting Thursday. The first three would have lowered the usage allowed under the basic fee, while the other four didn't touch it.

Mr. Monaco said there are 798 residen-

tial users, and if the allowable usage was changed it would affect 66 customers.

Council Member Ray Ward said he was looking at scenarios 4 and 6, but leaning more towards 4.

The other scenario, 6, which the council was looking at would have increased the base rate from \$14.50 to \$15.50 and the usage rate from \$2.23 to \$2.70 per 100 cubic feet.

Council Member Patrick Pomeroy said when the rates are increased, it will hurt

some. He said he can't come up with the economic impact and doesn't know what will be the least painful.

Council Member Joe Stanley said scenario 4 would give the council the option to make adjustments sooner to the base rate. People may cut back on water use, said Mr. Stanley, so that may change the income. He said he tends to lean more towards scenario 6.

When does the council need to make the decision? asked Mr. Pomeroy.

Mr. Monaco said if the council needs more information, he could get it for them.

The council noted that the sewer bills are based on the reading taken in March from the usage in December, January and February. Then the new rate starts by mid-March, showing up on April bills.

Mr. Stanley said he would kind of like to leave the base alone. The council approved scenario 4, leaving the base charge and usage along, but raising the rate for higher usage by about one-third.



Dancers entertain audience

THE KOSHARE DANCERS (above) portrayed the sneak dance in which warriors had to quietly approach their prey or enemies. The dancers are from a Boy Scout troop in La Junta. After the show the boys talked with the audience of more than 100, including Oberlin's Bernard Goetze (right), who danced with the Koshare as an Eagle Scout from 1952-'57. The dancers were brought to town on Sunday by the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission.

— Herald photos by Cynthia Haynes



Registration closes Monday for spring ballot

Anyone who wants to vote in the upcoming city and school election needs to register by Monday if they haven't done so already.

Voters will fill three seats on the Oberlin School Board and three on the City Council, and have a yes-or-no vote on a state constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman only.

In two of the three school board districts, though, there is no race, and only two candidates filed for three seats on the council. The third likely will be filled by a write-in vote, although there isn't any known write-in candidate at this time.

The Decatur County clerk's office will stay open until 9 p.m. on Monday to allow people more time to register. The election will be held from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 5.

The only race is between incumbent Delayne May and Jody

Robertson for the District 4 seat on the school board.

Incumbents Dewayne Jackson for District 6 and Chris Bailey for District 5 have also both filed for their seats. Only voters in the districts will get a school ballot.

Running for the Oberlin City Council are incumbents Joe Stanley and Jay Anderson. Councilman Stan McEvoy's seat is also up for election, but he is not running.

Since there are three seats open, the three who get the highest votes will get the jobs.

Louise Cressler filed for the Jennings City Council, with two seats open and the mayor position, and Frances Bader filed for the Jennings School Board, with three seats open for four year spots and two for two year spots.

Most of the positions open in Jennings, Norcat and Dresden will be filled with write-in candidates.

Owners receive 90-day extensions to remove vehicles

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

After a sometimes-heated hearing, Oberlin City Council granted 90-day extensions Thursday to three of four property owners ordered to get rid of junk vehicles.

The council gave Rob McFee, Willa Urban and Brenda Ploussard three months to clean up their property after the hearing at the regular council meeting at The Gateway.

The council gave Mr. McFee, Mrs. Urban, Ms. Ploussard and Jerry Miller time to talk. Mr. Miller did not ask for an extension.

Mr. McFee said he had come to the council meeting a month ago to see what he needed to do to get into compliance and request a public hearing. At this time, he said, he has just one inoperable vehicle. He said he titled two of the cars, sold two and took two off of the property.

Mr. McFee said the one is not tagged because he is taking parts off of it. He said the city ordinance says consideration will be given for vehicles people are taking parts off of. It is on ramps, he said, and no one can knock it off.

Once he is done using it, he said, he will have the vehicle moved.

Mr. McFee said he has one vehicle that has a non-highway title, so it isn't tagged.

Councilman Jay Anderson asked when Mr. McFee will be finished taking parts off the car. Mr. McFee said he isn't sure, although he wants to finish getting the parts off of it. It depends on the weather and his hands, he said.

"It sounds like you have made significant strides," said Councilman Patrick Pomeroy. "There shouldn't

be a reason why you can't finish."

Dr. Anderson suggested 60 days and then 90 days for Mr. McFee.

If the council says 90 days, said Mr. McFee, it can be done in 90 days.

Council Member Ray Ward said he thought that 90 days was reasonable. He said he didn't have a problem with it as long as something was being done, noting that Mr. McFee has made quite a few improvements.

After some heated discussion between Mr. McFee and Dr. Anderson, Mr. McFee said he talked with the animal control officer, who said that with the vehicle up off the ground rodents aren't going to breed in it, nor is it a breeding place for flies or mosquitoes.

Dr. Anderson said he thought they had been through this before. Mr. McFee said these weren't the same vehicles.

"They are the same rules," Dr. Anderson replied.

The council agreed to the 90-day extension, saying that if Mr. McFee realizes that it isn't enough, then he needs to come back before then to ask for more time.

The group agreed that the best thing would be for Mr. McFee to get the vehicles tagged. Mr. McFee asked if a non-highway title would work.

The council members said Mr. McFee also could put up a privacy fence to screen the vehicles.

If the council is elected to represent the city's best interest, said Mr. McFee, why did it take the lower bid on the lake ground, closed bids, then take one more? The council should (See COUNCIL on Page 10A)

Representatives talk school finance, taxes

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. John Faber visited with county officials, business people and other voters at the Decatur County courthouse on Saturday, bearing a mixed message on school finance and a possible tax increase.

Sen. Ostmeyer said while the Senate might pass a tax increase to pay for schools, he didn't think the House would. He said voters elected even more conservatives to the House last year, ousting some liberal members who supported tax increases.

Rep. Faber warned, however, that if the powerful Johnson County bloc doesn't get what it wants, they might join Democrats to pass a tax increase.

The two men spent a little over an hour talking and answering ques-

tions at a "town hall meeting" set up by the Decatur County Farm Bureau and co-sponsored by the Decatur County Republican Women.

Sen. Ostmeyer, a Grinnell Republican, opened the meeting talking about the state's school finance problems. He said that the education finance problems are taking up 80 percent of his time.

He said that to get a finance bill passed, the Legislature will have to increase the amount districts can collect from local option budgets, which are raised with local property taxes.

Johnson County, he said, wants to be able to raise all the money it can from the local options, but most of the rest of the state isn't too hot on the idea. To get money in the base for small schools, though, rural lawmakers will have to compromise

and give Johnson County what it wants.

He said otherwise, legislators from Johnson County will never vote to raise the base amount that districts get per pupil. He said the poorer and rural districts can't get enough money out of local option budgets.

The Senate plan would raise the per pupil base, he said, and the Oberlin district would get another \$291 per student.

"I know it's not enough to cover the losses (of pupils) in Atwood, Hoxie or Oberlin," he said. "I know we're not going to get all the money we need out here, because if we did, the larger districts would break us."

He said that he hopes the House and Senate can work out a compromise that will keep the courts happy and help pay for the schools for the

next three years.

Other issues he touched on included:

- The so-called clunker car bill. Already passed, the law provides a six-month window for people who paid extra sales taxes on old-car purchases to get their money back, he said.

- The alcohol industry is pushing to remove the requirement to label gasoline with ethanol, he said.

- Since the grain used to make ethanol is cheap and oil is expensive, consumers need to use more of the blended fuel, he said, but supporters think required labeling holds sales down.

- Racial profiling, while not a big issue out here, is still a problem in the urban areas, he said.

- Pseudoephedrine, a major ingre-

(See MEN on Page 10A)

Invite to lobby for schools open to public

Oberlin School District board members, staff and citizens are invited to go to Topeka next week, on Thursday, March 17, to talk with members of the Legislature about small schools.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said the lobbying is a cooperative thing between the Kansas National Education Association, the teachers union, and the United School Administrators. The goal is to have

someone from one of the organizations lobbying every day while the Legislature is in session.

The purpose of the trip, he said, is to lobby for small schools.

Mr. Glodt said he isn't able to go because he will be gone for a superintendent forum, but he is setting the trip up.

A few staff members have said that they want to go, he said, adding that it will be a long day.

The group from Oberlin will meet at the transportation barn at 4:45 a.m. They will be taking one of the district's vans.

The group will drive to Hoxie and meet with the superintendent there. Mr. Glodt said they may all ride in one vehicle to Topeka. They will be driving back after the session.

The group will meet with representatives from the administrator and teacher's groups at 10 a.m. in

Topeka. Mr. Glodt said they will be lobbying legislators from this region.

Last year, he said, the small group that went was able to go onto the floor and into the speaker of the House's office.

Anyone considering going should call Mr. Glodt's office at 475-3805. The school district is paying for the gas to Topeka, unless there is a huge response.

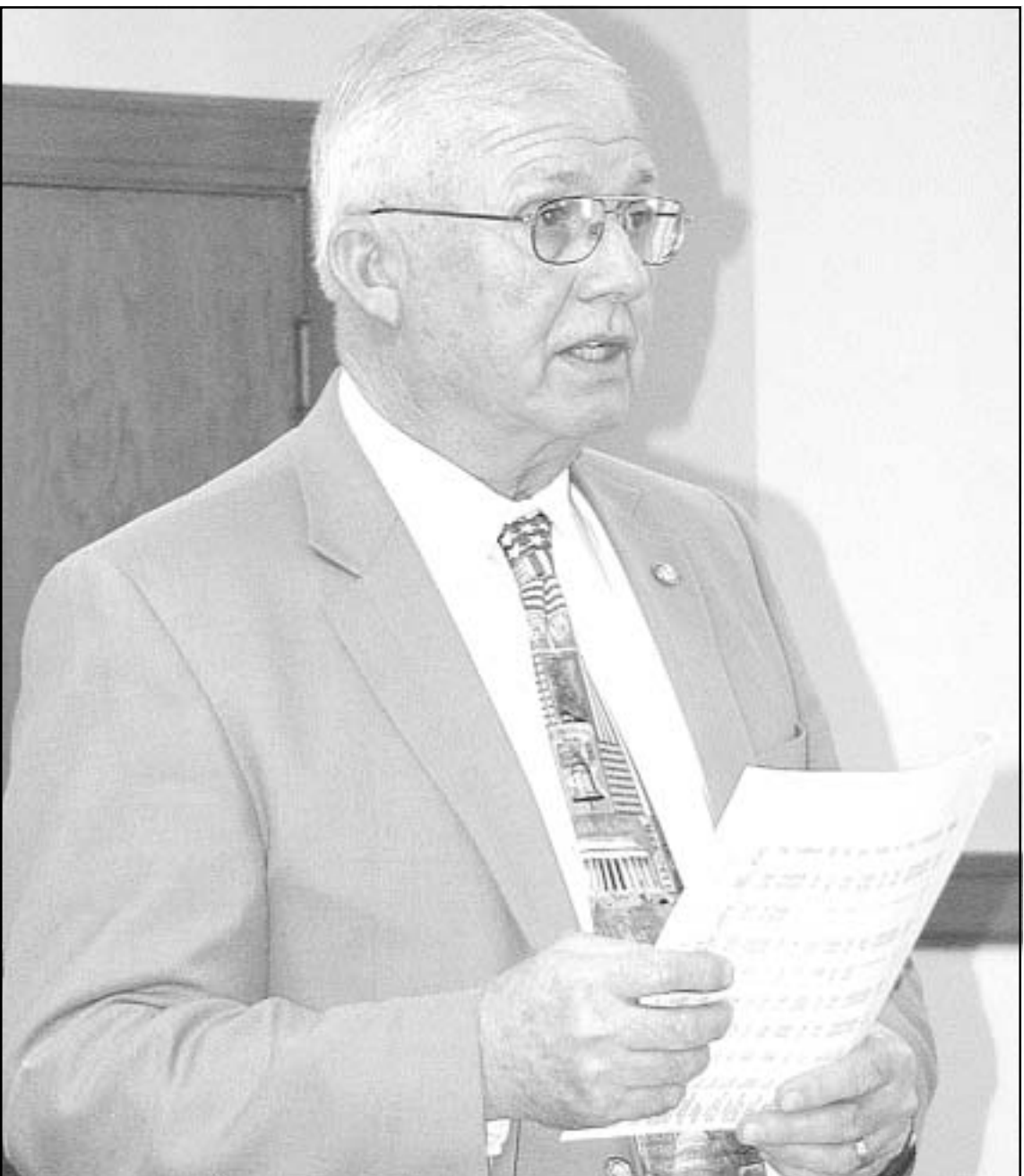
Annual storm classes to be held on Thursday

The annual storm spotter training class will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

The free class, which normally lasts around 2 1/2 hours, is presented by the National Weather Service out of Goodland. It is

open to the public.

David Floyd, with the weather service, will be teaching the class. He said the service also will be offering advanced spotter classes, but the dates haven't been determined yet.



AT THE Decatur County Courthouse Saturday State Sen. Ralph Ostmeier (above) and Rep. John Faber (below) spoke to voters and public officials about school finance and a possible tax increase.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

* Men talk money

(Continued from Page 1A)
 dent of methamphetamine, is being put behind the pharmacy counter to discourage sales for illegal purposes.

"It's too bad that we have to do this," Mr. Ostmeier said. "It's not a free society but ... not only is the drug (methamphetamine) dangerous, it's dangerous to make."

• A military unit is returning from Germany to Fort Riley and the schools there need to be ready to count about 700 new students. One bill would allow a second "count day" for budget purposes.

There's always talk of closing military bases, the senator added.

"When they come in, we need to be military friendly," he said "We want Fort Riley. It would be devastating to that county and the surrounding area to lose it."

Rep. Faber said that he is the vice chairman of the House Transportation Committee and serves on the Education and Insurance committees this year.

Besides education, he said, he has been dealing with agriculture problems, including a resolution to close our borders to Canadian cattle to prevent the spread of mad cow disease to the U.S.

A bill, which failed because it was too broad, would have dealt with the inspection of dog breeding facilities by increasing the inspection fees 50



percent. In the early '90s, he said, Kansas has been notorious as a puppy-mill state.

Rep. Faber said he is in favor of a bill that would move the livestock commissioner under the Department of Agriculture. This would save money and solve several problems, he said.

Other issues were he discussed were:

- To allow veterans to add more stickers for medals to their license plates.

"This is not a big deal to many people, but it's important to veterans," he said.

- Adding \$5 to all car tags and allowing people to enter state parks

for free. This would be unfair to those who own a lot of vehicles, he said. On the other hand, state park fees have gotten so high a lot of people have stopped using them.

Mr. Faber said that he would not rule out a tax increase to pay for schools.

If Johnson County doesn't get what it wants on local option budgets, he said, they may have the votes to get a tax increase passed.

After the meeting, the legislators and 18 citizens adjourned to the hallway for a coffee, cookies and a lunch of sandwiches, pop and pizza provided by private donations. Then the legislators headed off for their next stop in Norton.

* Council gives extensions to three vehicle owners

(Continued from Page 1A)
 have taken the higher bid, he said, saying that he always reads that the city needs more money and then the council passes up the opportunity.

"You are residing over the demise of Oberlin," said Mr. McFee. "Age is up and births are down."

There has to be a reason why people want to live in Oberlin, he said, and restrictive ordinances don't help.

"The vehicles on my property," said Mr. McFee, "aren't hurting people."

Mr. McFee gave Council Member Stan McEvoy, who was sitting in for Mayor Ken Shobe, the license plate off one of his trucks, which he said had been ripped off because of the difference between the height of the street and his driveway.

Mr. Miller said he broke his ankle last April and he hasn't had a chance to work on a truck which he is making it into a trailer. He said it is in his garage and there aren't any weeds around it.

When the city has someone who can drive around alleys and take pictures of vehicles, he said, that person is overpaid.

Mr. Miller said he counted vehicles in the city and there are 126 that could fall under this ordinance.

What about people who have

moved in from Colorado and have been living here for three or four months and they still have out-of-state tags? he asked. Don't they have to get Kansas tags within 30 days?

"You said there are a lot of other vehicles," said Dr. Anderson. "Will you go out with the police chief and point them out?"

Mr. Miller said he wouldn't ride across the street with him. Dr. Anderson asked Mr. Miller if he would go with him.

"No," said Mr. Miller, "because you are an instigator."

Mrs. Urban said she wanted to see if she could get some extra time to remove the vehicles from her property. She said her boys only come back once a month. She said she needs to know what all needs to be cleaned out.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said he can only go on what the ordinance says, whether the vehicles are inoperable or untagged. He said there are enough at her place that it is getting close to a junk yard.

Mrs. Urban said she is going to need three months at least. Chief Lockhart said he has no problem with that, and the council approved the extension.

Ms. Ploussard said she received a letter about her son's race car, which has been sitting in her yard because

of a lack of money. Since she received the letter, he said, her son has taken off all of the operable items. There is someone coming in to remove it, she said, but she needs an extension.

"Isn't there a better way to handle this?" asked Ms. Ploussard. "Couldn't someone have talked to me?"

That isn't the way the ordinance is written, said Chief Lockhart. The city has to send a written notice.

She said she thought when they went through this before, and race cars were OK. Running race cars are, the chief said.

Ms. Ploussard said she talked with Mayor Shobe, and he was very rude. He was inconsiderate and basically, she said, he called her scum.

The council approved a 90-day extension.

Mike Ferguson, who was at the meeting about the lake lease, commended the council for enforcing the codes, but he said they need to do the same for individuals and businesses. He said the council needs to be straightforward and treat everyone the same.

Mr. McEvoy said he appreciated everyone coming in for the hearing. The ordinance the council is using is the one that was overhauled two years ago with the help of 15 to 20

Workshop to cover riparian

A two-day workshop on riparian, or riverside, areas and the waters that affect them will be Wednesday and Thursday, March 30 and 31, at the Red Willow County Fairgrounds in McCook.

The workshop, "Republican River Valley: Living on the Edge," will allow owners to discuss management of their land along the river and its tributaries. It is sponsored by the Republican River Riparian Project advisory committee.

The event will include a panel discussion with landowners, land managers, conservation supervisors, educators, water managers, county and city officials, state and federal

officials and others, from Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas. Keynote speaker on Wednesday will be Rich Straight, U.S. Forest Service lead agroforester with the National Agroforestry Center in Lincoln, Neb.

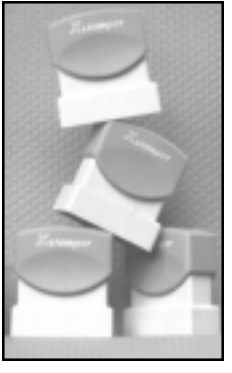
A field tour will highlight the second day, with a stop at Swanson Reservoir. It will feature woody

vegetation management techniques and equipment, a portable saw mill and an assessment of a short segment of the river to see if it is in proper condition.

Registration, at \$40, includes meals. For details, contact the Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development agency at (785) 462-2602.

The City of Oberlin is accepting bids on a boiler for the municipal swimming pool.
Contact the Oberlin Water Department at 785-475-2217 with questions.
Bids should be submitted to the City Administrator at 1 Morgan Drive, Oberlin, KS. 67749 by March 30, in sealed envelope marked "Pool Boiler Bid".

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Dr. Mark Wahlmeier, Optometrist, Opens Office in Goodland!

Drs. Morrison & Wahlmeier, Colby, are pleased to announce the opening of their eyecare office in Goodland. Dr. Wahlmeier is committed to bringing professional, patient centered vision and eye health care to area patients. Beginning March 7th, Dr. Wahlmeier will be available to see patients in the Goodland office on Mondays and Wednesdays and office hours will be maintained Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Appointments may also be scheduled with Dr. Wahlmeier in the Colby office on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

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