

In a day's work



AT THE CITY POWER PLANT last Tuesday, a crew from Midstates Contractors of Salina, Solomon Transformer Co. out of Solomon and a Hixson Construction crane from McCook helped put in the new transformer. The city crew generated power while the transformer was installed and hooked up. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

*** Fire case in federal court**

(Continued from Page 1A) then the insurance firm doesn't have to pay. Mr. Shultz said he doesn't think the case will actually go to trial until next summer. The Decatur County sheriff's office, which worked the case, hasn't had anything to report, except that the state fire marshal who investigated said it was arson. There is a pretrial conference set in November. That will be the final

formal conference before the trial. The case will then go from a federal magistrate judge to a federal district court judge. The court, said Mr. Shultz, will require the two sides to sit down and try to come to some settlement on the case. The defense request at this point has been for a jury trial. Since the case will be heard in front of a federal judge, trial will be in Wichita. Mr. Shultz said during the trial, it

will be his job to prove that there was a fire and there was damage. The lawyers for the insurance company, Heritage Managing Agency, will have to prove that somehow, someone with the plaintiff was connected with the fire, he said. If they can prove that, then they can avoid liability and the insurance company won't have to pay. As far as he knows, said Mr. Shultz, the owners haven't received any money from the insurance firm.

Center selling flags to be on display

The Decatur County Good Samaritan Center will have its own Avenue of Flags this year for Memorial Day. The staff and residents plan to set

up the flags in front of the building in honor of the nation's veterans. Lisa Stacy, activities director, said they will be selling the flags for \$10 each. Flags can be purchased in

honor or memory of a loved one. All of the money will go to help buy supplies for Alzheimer and dementia patients. Anyone interested should call her at 475-2245.

*** District has retirement policy**

(Continued from Page 1A) qualify for full regular retirement. There are times when early retirement can be good for the district, said Mr. Glodt. For example, if a teacher applies for early retirement and isn't going to be replaced, then the district can pay the 95 percent over a five-year period and then be done. That can save the schools a lot of money, so it makes sense then. Often, if a position is going to be filled, it will be by someone with less experience, said Mr. Glodt, which would mean less salary. Originally, he said, the early retirement policy was put in the negotiated agreement for teachers and administrators. Mr. Glodt said the first year he was here, the board

chose to take the administrators out of the policy, which means early retirement isn't available for them. Seven employees have applied for the early retirement, and the first three were approved by the school board. The first year, 2001, the board approved Gordon Matson, former high school principal, and teacher Carol Morford for early retirement. Both took the five-year plan. The district will have paid Mr. Matson \$66,837 as of this year, Mr. Glodt said. They will have paid Ms. Morford \$35,881. Sharon Addleman, a high school teacher, got early retirement starting in 2002 for three years. The district paid her \$17,693 by the end of 2005.

Since then, teachers Audrey Pavlicek and Maria Sanden both applied. Both were denied, even though Mrs. Sanden applied two years running. This year, both counselor Nita Lavielle and teacher Cynthia Matson asked for early retirement. The board said no to both. The board didn't give any explanation for the denial, Mr. Glodt said, though members said paying teachers not to work might be hard to explain to taxpayers when the schools have been cutting back. The teachers can still choose to retire through the regular system. Early retirement payments, said Mr. Glodt, are the only long-term debt the district has.

*** County looks at tax breaks**

(Continued from Page 1A) county can't do that kind of work for a private firm. Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city-county Economic Development Corp., said the City of Jennings is going to own the runway for 30 days, which will allow time for the county to do the dirt work. The group, including Jim Kredler, with the Department of Commerce, talked about providing the firm with an exemption on sales tax or a property tax exemption for a set time. The land has been tax exempt, since it was a school. Business property tax valuation is normally 25 percent of the market value, said Commissioner Ralph

Unger. The building sold for \$150,000, so 25 percent is \$37,500. That is just the building, said Commissioner Doyle Brown, not everything else they plan on doing. Mr. Kredler said he just worked with a helicopter company that went into Ellsworth, and there was some question to how financially sound the company was, so the county took different steps. This company is a cash operation, said Mr. Unger. It sounded like they didn't want to get into any debt. If the state can do anything to help the county, said Mr. Kredler, they will. Mr. Brown said he thought the commissioners needed to find out what the company wants and then they can get more information. It seems like a tax break won't cost the county any money, but it would pro-

duce some paperwork. Is the county ready to say they will help out? asked Mr. Brown. Whether Jennings wants to own the airport for 30 days or not, he said, that is up to them. What about tax abatements? asked Mr. Unger. The county can decide how to tailor that, for how long and what percentage is abated, said Mr. Kredler. It seems like a logical place to use a tax abatement and phase it out, Mr. Unger said. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he isn't sure if the county can do a tax abatement or if just a city can. Mr. Kredler said the company needs to say what they want the county to do and then the county can check and see if it will work and if they are interested.

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*** Wheat prices are up**

(Continued from Page 1A) These aren't the highest prices the market has ever seen for wheat at this time of the year, said Mr. Shields, but they are high compared to most years. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that in January, Kansas had 10.2 million acres of wheat planted. Oklahoma had 5.8 million acres, said Mr. Shields. In Kansas, not all of that wheat will be harvested, but the vast majority will be. In Oklahoma, he said, they may only cut 60 percent, with the rest going for grazing. The fact is that the price of wheat is good right now, said Mr. Shields, the highest since the fall of 2002.

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