

* Men pitch items

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 dresses and mapping. He said he had some aerial photography in the quote for Decatur County, but doesn't see that being needed.
 The county needs to get a rural addressing system, he said, urging commissioners not to turn the money back in. The project, said Mr. Hardesty, needs to be finished by the end of the year.
 He said the state provides aerial photography free and it would work for mapping. If the photography had to be included in the bid, he said, it would go up to \$55,000 to \$59,000.
 The grant papers show the county will receive only \$48,000 for the mapping part of the project, however.
 Appraiser Alan Hale said he would be interested in the photography, which could help in his office.
 Decatur County already has a call logger in dispatch, said Mr. Ryan, so if that is taken out of the grant, the extra money could be used for photography.
 Sheriff Ken Badsky agreed they don't need a new call logger, which could cost about \$16,000.
 Mr. Hardesty said aerial photography will be about \$13,000.
 The commissioners didn't make any decisions on the grant or the project. Another bidder is supposed to be at the next meeting.

* Loan gets support

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 raised, but the money isn't actually available until the next year.
 She asked if Randy Hrade, with the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission, makes the application. It might be Amy Griffey, also with the agency, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn.
 Commissioner Ralph Unger said he thought the program was a good one to use and people would be interested in buying the tax credits. It seems like the program will encourage people to give gifts, he said.
 Ms. Grafel said the hospital board needs to come up with a timeline for the project because the bids they received are only good until March 1.
 Mr. McEvoy said he doesn't think any contracts should be signed until the hospital finds out about the loan.
 The hospital also has to find a way to pay for the bond counsel, said Mr. McEvoy, because that wasn't included in the loan amount. Mr. Hirsch said he doesn't know what that will cost because he hasn't received the list yet.
 Mr. McEvoy said he would hate to get too far ahead on the project because the county doesn't have the money for the construction or to pay for bond counsel. When it gets to the point where a signature is needed on a contract, he noted, the commissioners will be the ones to sign it.
 "I am all for the project," said Mr. McEvoy, "but I just want to see it done right."

Council to meet

The Oberlin City Council will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.
 The meeting will be aired on local access cable channel 7 and is open to the public. As of Monday afternoon, said City Administrator Gary Shike, the council's agenda was open.

Storm spotter class planned

Ever want to learn what kind of clouds signal a big thunderstorm or the warning signs for tornado activity?
 People in Decatur County will get the chance to learn about weather during a basic storm spotter class at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 4, at The Gateway, offered by the National Weather Service forecast office in Goodland.

Women praise God



AT THE LANDMARK INN Sunday, the group Sweet Prairie Fire, sisters Amy Carman and Angie Fortin, played for about 15 people. The concert included music by the women and dinner in the Teller Room. The sisters said they have been playing together for years. They said they chose their name because God gave them such a sweet harmony, they live on the prairie and the fire because of the fire in their hearts for God. They played praise and worship music and several original pieces.
 — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Blowing snow closes roads in Kansas

Roads all over northwest Kansas closed Saturday as a fierce spring blizzard swept through the area.
 The forecast called for winds up to 60 miles an hour, blowing snow, drifting and the possibility of two to 10 inches on the ground, depending on which forecast you listened to.
 The snow started in the early afternoon as the wind kept blowing. That morning, roads in the area were still open, but as the day continued, several highways and I-70 closed.
 By the end of the day, roads all over the area had been closed, including: I-70 from Salina west to Denver, U.S. 36 east to Oberlin and west from Atwood to Denver, U.S. 83 from I-70 to the Selden intersection and U.S. 24 from Colby to Hoxie, to name a few.
 By Sunday morning, the sun came out and the roads started to open. Although a lot more snow was forecast, Decatur County got less than an inch.
 The only reported damage in the area was a radio tower holding an antenna at Countryside Veterinary Clinic, which fell. Dr. Travis Hissong said the only the damage was to tower.

Special Olympics to play on Saturday

The Northwest Wind Special Olympics team and the Oberlin Elementary School teachers and staff will take to the basketball court at 1 p.m. Saturday at The Gateway for a fun game.
 The Northwest Wind cheer squad will do its routines and some members will take part in an individual skills program.
 The game is free and open to the public.
 Tickets for a drawing to help support the Special Olympics team are available at the three Oberlin banks and at Decatur Co-op. The drawing will include one-half of a processed hog and a quilt.
 The regional tournament that was scheduled to be played in Scott City over the weekend was cancelled due to sickness and bad weather. The state tournament is scheduled from Thursday-Saturday, March 15-17.

Technical college gets full accreditation

By PAT SCHIEFEN
The Goodland Star-News
 The Northwest Kansas Technical College heard what it wanted to hear from a visiting team in the final step for its initial accreditation as a degree-granting college in a report earlier this month at the college student union.
 Dr. David H. Devier, dean of Cincinnati-Clermont College of Batavia, Ohio, said the team will recommend the college be accredited.
 "We are recommending this institution get its initial five-year accreditation," Dr. Devier said. "We were very, very pleased with the efforts and self study. Excellent work."
 He said the recommendation was based on research, the college's extensive self study report, interviews with students and staff and the two-day visit. The team will prepare a report, he said, and a review panel will go over the report with someone from the college and the team chair. The accreditation should be issued in about a month, he said.
 The team's recommendation has two parts, Dr. Devier said, assurance and advancement. The assurance makes sure the school has met five criteria. The first is that the core parts of the mission of the school is met.
 "The mission was well understood and accepted," he said. "The school has a wonderful board of control."
 The second involved preparing for the future by expanding its recruitment area and staff. The college reviews its strategic plan every six months, he said, expands programs and attempts to embrace diversity.
 The panel suggested the school think about providing inexpensive child care and increased part-time and night enrollment to increase diversity in its student population.
 The third area is to fulfill its educational mission. The panel felt that a follow up visit is needed in this area. The college's methods of assessments are new and need to mature, and the dean recommended the visit to see what progress in made in assessments.
 The fourth area is to enhance its student's educational experience. The college has a program to transfer hours to Fort Hays State University, he said, and has learning activities for staff and advisory councils.
 The fifth area is the college's commitment to learning.
 "The school gets a commendation for the relationship of the college to the community," Dr. Devier said.
 He said the panel thought the college could help to broaden economic development activities in the area.
 The panel will recommend that a focus group of two visit the campus in 2009-2010 for two days, he said. The group will look at the changes in methods of assessments, the refinement of general education courses and advances in faculty accreditation and hiring accredited faculty.
 Being accredited is important for students to be able to transfer credits from one school to another and receive federal financial aid, said Brenda Chatfield, college cosmetology instructor and chair of the self-study. The college has been working on the accreditation for 2 1/2 years, starting in 2004.
 "I am very pleased," said college president Ken Clouse. "I appreciate everyone's effort for the team's visit."
 The steering committee for the visit included diesel technology instructor Gary Barricklow, Director of Student Services Paul Chaffin, self-study editor/writer JoAnn Clouse, executive secretary Sherri Knitig and electronics and computer technology instructor Candee Cottam.
 "The school has done good work for 40-plus years," said Dr. Devier. "We appreciated the time, candor and openness of everyone involved."

* Barn stays busy

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 drawn an array of buyers in the last few weeks. The price has been good and people are thinking that with all the moisture this winter, there will be grass this spring and summer for the cattle, so they're buying.
 Mr. Fortin said most buyers take their cattle the day of sale, sometimes hauling them a long ways. He said they had a buyer recently from eastern Nebraska.
 The sale barn works with ranchers from all over, he said, including Decatur, Rawlins, Sheridan counties and sometimes those from Nebraska.
 They can sell 600 head and be done by 3:30 p.m., depending on whether the animals are sold one at a time or in lots.
 The cattle market took a dip recently, said Mr. Fortin, but it is coming back up. It would be good if the market stayed level.
 The barn has a sale every Monday.

* Board OK's dates

(Continued from Page 1A)
 from Monday, March 17, to Monday, March 24.
 There will be no school on Mondays, Oct. 8, Jan. 14 and Feb. 18. Parent-teacher conferences are planned for Thursday and Friday, Nov. 1 and 2, and Thursday and Friday, Feb. 28 and 29.
 Mr. Glodt said graduation and other dates aren't on the calendar but will be decided by administrators at the schools.

Body found at lake

Park workers found a body at Keith Sebelius Reservoir west of Norton on Monday night.
 Norton County Sheriff Troy Thomson said employees of the state Department of Wildlife and Parks reported finding the body. Officers from the sheriff's department and an ambulance, as well as other rescue workers, joined Wildlife and Parks at the water's edge in a refuge area at Prairie Dog State Park.
 Sheriff Thomson said they have not yet identified the body, but planned to have an autopsy done Monday night.
 "We'll know more after the autopsy," he said.

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