

Consultant cautious about wind

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The Oberlin City Council received a report from the energy consultant it hired to advise it on the Sunflower Wind proposals at a meeting Thursday night which noted several reservations about the city signing an agreement with the wind company.

At a meeting on Thursday, Dec. 20, the council decided to stop negotiations with Sunflower, saying there were too many unanswered questions on the proposal, and noting that Joe Herz, the consultant from Burr Oak, had said he would not advise the city to sign an agree-

Council Countdown

At a meeting last Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Held a public hearing to close a \$400,000 state Community Development Block Grant through Northwest Kansas Planning and Development to build the new sewage treatment

lagoons. Story on Page 8A.

- Received the written report from an energy consultant the city hired to evaluate proposals from Sunflower Wind, which said the city would not benefit by entering into an agreement with the company. Story at left.

ment with Sunflower Wind right now.

The company approached the city in August about selling power from a wind farm it planned to build near town. The initial proposal would

have required the city to cancel its current electric contracts with Sunflower Electric Power Co. and the Western Area Power Administration. Since then, the firm has come back with several proposals,

including one with a first right of refusal for Sunflower Wind and the final one to sell power at 9.1 cents per kilowatt hour.

After the council decided to give up on negotiations with Sunflower Wind, the members said that Mr. Herz didn't have to come to the meeting, but he did come last week. City Administrator Gary Shike said Mr. Herz felt like he owed it to the council to be here.

Mr. Herz wrote that he came to four conclusions after researching the proposals for the city:

- Sunflower Wind's proposed pricing is higher than the city's current power supply costs.

• If the city replaces low-cost electric capacity from the Western Area Power Administration, which sells power made at federal dams, with higher-cost energy from Sunflower Wind, electric rates to the city's customers will have to go up.

• Little is known regarding Sunflower Wind's experience and capability, credit-worthiness and ability to be able to reliably perform the electric services and functions relied on by the city and its customers. The firm, founded by several Kansas investors, has no track record.

- Entering into an agreement with Sunflower Wind could risk the city's ability to achieve the lowest reason-

able electric power supply costs for its customers.

In the four-page report, Mr. Herz wrote that it looked like Sunflower Wind used a version of an agreement from another electric utility that has owned and operated generation and transmission facilities for years.

"Some of the provisions of the electric sales agreement conflict with one another, more concerning is that we have not spoken with any Sunflower Wind representative that appears to have a utility understanding of what the agreement is, or an offering of information from Sunflower Wind." (See REPORT on Page 8A)

Nurse starts new position at the clinic

After working as a nurse at the Oberlin medical clinic on and off for 15 years, Barb Whitney now sits at the helm of the office.

Mrs. Whitney started as administrator at Oberlin Medical Arts Clinic on Monday, Dec. 17, after the former administrator, Larry Ganje, retired.

She said she got to work with Mr. Ganje for two weeks before he left, learning the ropes.

Although she lives in Norton, she said she actually "doctored" in Oberlin way back when. She said she knew the clinic here had a good reputation and one of the doctors needed a nurse, so she applied for the job.

Mrs. Whitney said she always knew she wanted to be a nurse because she likes to work with people.

Although she is from Missouri, her husband Evan, who she married 1990, was from Norton, so the couple moved to northwest Kansas.

She received her nursing degree from Barton County Community College.



Barb Whitney

After 15 years on and off nursing at the clinic and working with different doctors, she said, she decided to make a career decision. Moving into the administrator's position, she said, seemed like the last stop in her career. She said she knows the clinic, knows the staff and doctors and how everything runs.

Mrs. Whitney said with the new job, she is learning something new, because she hadn't worked with the financial part of the business before.

The clinic employees are a family, she said. Their goal is to continue with their teamwork and make 2008 a great year, despite the departures of Mr. Ganje and long-time physician Richard May.

Mrs. Whitney and her husband have five grown children and two grandkids.

In her spare time, she said, she likes to travel.



IN THE NEW SPECIALITY CLINIC at the Decatur County Hospital on Monday, Donna Guinn (above) waited for patients at the receptionist's desk. Deb Klima, a respiratory therapist (below right), worked with Brooke

Ford, Dr. Daniel McGowan's nurse from Kearney, Neb., and Jean Ann Leitner in one of the new offices in the clinic.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Telethon needs talent, volunteers

With just a month to go, the Oberlin Seeds of Hope Telethon committee still needs some help for the big event on Saturday, Feb. 2.

With volunteer emcees, auction announcers, people to run the cameras, kitchen staff and talent penciled in on this year's schedule, said spokesman Kimberly Davis, the committee still needs some help.

Opening includes one to three people who would want to work on air as an emcee or auction announcer. The committee still needs two to three people to work in the kitchen and lots of talent, she said.

"There are so many ways to help with the Seeds of Hope Telethon," Davis said. "Besides volunteering on that Saturday or performing, people can donate items for the auction or make a cash donation."

Anyone who wants to donate an auction item can contact a committee member, she said. All of the money raised will be given to civic groups and agencies in Decatur County which applied for a share, including Oberlin Teens for Christ, the Decatur County Last Indian Raid Museum, the City of Jennings,

City of Norcatour, Kansans for Life, the Oberlin Area Concert Band, Oberlin Lions Club, Salvation Army, Relay for Life, the Decatur County Ministerial Association, Tripple Creek Riders, Decatur Professional Women, Oberlin Girl Scouts, Creative Movements Gymnastics, Awana Club, the Golden Age Center and the Decatur County Fair Board.

The Decatur County Summer Recreation Program and FROGS summer day camp will split one share, with each receiving half of what the other groups get.

Anyone who wants to perform or volunteer as an emcee or auction announcer can contact Mrs. Davis at 475-2006 during the day or she or Kristi Smith at 475-3510 in the evening. People wanting to run a camera should call Bill Duncan at 475-3259.

Anyone who wants to make a donation can contact any of the committee members, including Mr. Duncan, Jack Benton, Tim Davis, Brenda Ulery, Regina Stanley and Peg Smith.

Speciality clinic opens up

A new speciality clinic at the Decatur County Hospital is up an running, hosting four clinics with doctors who travel in from Denver, Kearney and Hays.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said the clinic addition, on the east side of the hospital near the entrance to the emergency room, has been in use since last month. Each month, she said, the hospital brings in specialists in cardiology, urology, oncology and ophthalmology to see patients.

Monday morning, the speciality clinic was in cardiology. A handful of patients were in the waiting room while both of the exam rooms were already full.

The new clinic has a waiting room with a check-in desk, a stress-test room with a bed and treadmill, a procedure room with a bed, a restroom and a storage area, two exam rooms with tables, storage areas and two offices.

For each of the speciality clinics, nurses from the hospital are scheduled to work with the doctor and patients. Mrs. Doeden said the nurses volunteer to work in the clinics and they try to have the same nurse work with the



same doctors each time.

The addition cost \$800,000, said Mrs. Doeden. The hospital got a \$650,000 loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Administration, but although it received a big cardboard check back in July, none of the money has actually made its way to the hospital. The other \$150,000 is being covered by the hospital board.

Although the clinic is in full use, there are still some things to be done, Mrs. Doeden said, including

putting signs on all of the doors. Now there is a blue piece of tape on each door with the name of the room handwritten on it. Mrs. Doeden said some decorating also needs to be finished.

The speciality clinics are important, she said. They save elderly patients and others from having to travel and help the hospital offer more services. Before the addition was built, she said, the patients had to wait in the main waiting room of the hospital, which everyone enters through. The doctors had to

use whatever room was available, but now there is a spot set aside for the clinics.

The patients, said Mrs. Doeden, really seem to like the new area and have said it is "a massive improvement." People seem comfortable in the new area and the doctors seem to love it, she said.

The hospital would like to expand the services provided in speciality clinics. Mrs. Doeden said the hospital is looking for a podiatrist, neurologist and plastic surgeon to come here.

First baby to win prizes

A week and half into 2008, there still hasn't been a New Year's baby born at the Decatur County Hospital.

The first baby will receive prizes through *The Oberlin Herald* and area merchants' First Baby giveaway. The baby must be born at or taken to the hospital. The parents have 60 days to pick up the gifts.

This year's first miss or mister will receive a \$10 gift certificate

from the Dresser, a case of baby food from Raye's Grocery, a \$10 gift card from Stanley Hardware, a \$20 gift certificate from Carol Morford with Mary Kay, a \$25 gift certificate to Addleman Drug Store, a \$10 gift certificate to Ward Drug Store, a pizza for two from Pizza Hut, a \$25 gift certificate from Rocking R, a gift from Fredrickson Insurance Agency and a year subscription to *The Oberlin Herald*.

Chamber plans banquet, vote for Jan. 24

The Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce plans to hold its annual banquet on Thursday, Jan. 24, at The Gateway.

The dinner, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., will feature prime rib, baked potatoes, green beans, a roll and dessert. The banquet costs \$20 per person with reservations needed at the Chamber office in the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center by Friday, Jan. 18. Call (785) 475-3441.

Entertainment for the evening will be Paul Siebert of McCook playing his hammer dulcimer.

At the banquet, people will elect new Chamber board members to take the place of Bryan Loker of KFNF Radio, Marilyn Horn, county clerk, and Pam Wilson. They will also elect six board members for the Decatur County Amusement Authority to replace Ward Votapka, president, Kristi Gallentine, secretary/treasurer, Lynn Groneweg, Jason Fortin, Ray Ward, Peggy Ream and Kelsey Gallentine, who resigned last August after the county fair. The group, founded by the Chamber, runs the home-owned carnival at the

fair. The resignation left only three members on the board. Those on the ballot for Chamber board seats include Amanda Grafel, Jim Merriott, Dr. Shannon Addleman and Megan Ketterl.

Names for candidates for the Amusement Authority are still being sought.

Mrs. Horn serves as the president, Jo Henderson as manager and Kari Ketterl, Kem Bryan, Tami Shaw, Kelly Wasson, Pam Wilson, Mr. Loker, Beth Harmon and Sid Metcalf as board members.

Commissioners OK holiday list for employees

The Decatur County commissioners approved 11 1/2 days off as holidays this year for county employees at their meeting last Tuesday.

The holidays for the new year, when county offices and the landfill will be closed, include:

- Tuesday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day.
- Monday, Feb. 18, for President's Day.
- Monday, May 26, for Memorial Day.
- Friday, July 4, for Independence Day.
- Monday, Sept. 1, for Labor Day.
- Tuesday, Nov. 11, for Veterans Day.
- Thursday, Nov. 27, and Friday, Nov. 28, for Thanksgiving.
- At 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24, and all day Thursday, Dec. 25, for Christmas.
- Thursday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day.

Employees will work all day on New Year's Eve. Commissioners noted that Friday, March 21, will be recognized as Good Friday and people can take a vacation day if they like.

Since the meeting was the first one of 2008, the commissioners approved year-end transfers, including \$8,500 from the courts to the special equipment reserve, \$70,000 from ambulance to the special equipment reserve, \$50,000 from county general to special equipment reserve and transfers in both the road and bridge department and noxious weed department to put those accounts at zero. The money would be transferred to each department's special equipment reserve. At the meeting, the commissioners didn't know how much was in either

County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Approved the purchase of a new heating and cooling for the jail on the fourth floor of the courthouse since the old one isn't working. Story below.
- Approved the holiday schedule for the new year. Story at left.
- Signed paperwork for two grants for the health department to receive just over \$10,000 passed from the federal government to the state for bio terrorism and the pandemic flu. Story to come.

of those accounts.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked to Ambulance Director Linda Manning who said the crew had been busy, with lots of calls and flights out of town.
- Talked with Tim Stallman, road and bridge supervisor, who said the county has received \$107,946 and done all the grader work needed using Federal Emergency Management Agency money from the blizzard last year, on county roads and in the townships he works in. Mr. Stallman said that the gravel hauling work still needs to be done.
- Were present as Norma Unger, events director with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, gave a check to the Golden Age Center for \$4,017 from a recent pancake supper the group had to raise money for a new center. Representing the center were Dorothy Moore, Helen Gee and Dewaine Stapp.

County buys jail new heater/air unit

Decatur County commissioners approved the purchase of a new heating/cooling unit for the jail on the fourth floor of the courthouse last Tuesday since the old one isn't working.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said the heat exchanger on the old unit is rusted out and almost caught the building on fire. Right now, he said, the heater is off and they aren't using that side of the jail. That means they haven't been taking any prisoners from Red Willow County, he said, so the county is losing revenue.

The sheriff said he received bids from Hansen's Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning of Oberlin and Garret Plumbing, Heating and Electric from Norton.

The Oberlin bids included a 12-ton capacity Lennox unit for \$13,458, a 12.5-ton Carrier for \$12,837, a 10-ton AcroAire for \$11,686 and a 12.5-ton AcroAire for \$13,005 from Hansen's. Garret bid a 12.5-ton Carrier for \$19,327 and a 10-ton Carrier for \$14,521.

The heating unit, said Sheriff Badsky, goes on the roof of the courthouse, so they'll have to rent a crane. He said he thought the bids, which are for an installed heating unit, include the crane rental. The last furnace for the jail was bought in 1990, he said.

He said the jail has a 10-ton heater and it just can't keep up. This furnace only takes care of the jail, he

Oberlin man recovering after a fall

Dave Bergling, advertising manager for *The Oberlin Herald*, continues to recuperate this week at Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney, Neb., where he was taken after hitting his head in a fall at his home.

Emergency workers said relatives found Mr. Bergling unconscious at the base of a stairway at his home about 2 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 30. He was taken by ambulance to the Decatur County Hospital, then flown to Kearney.

He had surgery that afternoon, and relatives say his doctors are pleased with his recovery so far. He faces several weeks of rehabilitation after he leaves the Nebraska hospital.

Mail will reach him at 10 E. 31st Street, Kearney, Neb., 68848.

Dancing the night away



AT THE BOHEMIAN HALL Saturday night, Elijah Jones and Sarah Grafel kept busy on the dance floor during the Tripple Creek Riders' end-of-the-year get together. The two won in the duet karaoke division, while Britta Noren won in the individual category.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

*Report given to city

(Continued from Page 1A)

flower Wind as to what equipment, staffing, systems, etc., will be put in place to safely and reliably serve the city's electric energy requirements."

The document said that Mr. Herz has asked questions about reliability and safety, credit worthiness, experience and the firm's ability to perform the services and pricing, but the questions haven't been answered.

"Absent this due diligence effort," he wrote, "we do not have a basis to conclude, or develop a comfort level, that there's a reasonable expectation Sunflower Wind will in fact be able to provide the services contemplated under the proposed electric service agreement."

Mayor Joe Stanley said he thought the written report confirmed what the council had thought. It just never felt like the agreement with Sunflower Wind was a good deal for the city, he said.

The mayor said in four years, the city's contract with Sunflower Electric will be up, and before that the city will be gathering bids to provide power. If Sunflower Wind has a viable product at that time, he said, the company will be able to bid.

Council closes grant out

The Oberlin City Council closed a \$400,000 "block" grant used to build a new waste-water treatment plant south of town at its meeting last Thursday.

City Administrator Gary Shike said construction of the facility is done and it has been used since May. The council, he said, had to have a public hearing to close the Community Development Block Grant, obtained from the state through Northwest Kansas Planning and Development. Both Chris Miller and Dave Blau, with Miller and Associates, the engineering firm on the project, were at the meeting.

Mr. Shike said there was no public comment.

The council approved a resolution waiving generally accepted accounting principles for the year. Mr. Shike said the council does this every year because municipalities don't use business accounting principles.

The council appointed Tom Mullen, who works in the county appraiser's office, to the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Economic Development Corp. board for two years.

Paper to feature students weekly

Decatur Community High School students will have the chance to be chosen as Student of the Week and featured in *The Oberlin Herald* starting this month.

The newspaper, business sponsors and the school will team up once again to provide the Student of the Week, with part of the money from sponsors going toward scholarships for seniors.

A different staff member will

nominate a student each week at the school. The student will fill out a questionnaire about their interests and what they would like to do after high school, then take it to the newspaper office and have their picture taken. The picture and information from the questionnaire will run in the newspaper the next week.

For seniors, the questionnaire will serve as their scholarship application. Only seniors can be chosen to

receive scholarships, while students in ninth through 12th grades can be selected as Student of the Week.

The Herald has featured students of the week in the past and been able to give away two to three awards of \$200 to \$250 at graduation, said Managing Editor Kimberly Davis. She said she's not sure how many scholarships there'll be this year since the program did not start in the fall.



Cover Your Acres Winter Conference

January 22 and 23, 2008 at the Gateway in Oberlin, KS

Kansas State University and the Northwest Kansas Crop Residue Alliance

Discussing the latest technology, methods, and conservation practices to improve crop production on the High Plains

Time	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5	Exhibit Hall
7:45 - 8:15	Registration					
8:15 - 8:35	Welcome					
	University Sessions			Industry Sessions		
8:45 - 9:33	New Corn Seed Traits for No-till	Improving Your Success in No-till	N recommendations for Wheat	Outlook for Sorghum, Bioenergy, Food & Export		
9:40 - 10:28	Grain Marketing & Revenue Protection	No-till Wheat 101	P Placement and Rate in No-till and Strip-till	Benefits of Chloride on wheat and row crops	Wheat precision Ag Can Do For You	Sponsor
10:35 - 11:23	Improving Your Success in No-till	Managing pH in No-till	Comparing Corn and Grain Sorghum	The State of Fertilizer in 2008		Displays
11:30 - 12:30	Farmer Panel: Crop Rotations	Spray Application Technology*				
12:40 - 1:40	P-Placement and Rate in No-till and Strip-till	Soil Quality Change in No-till				Noon Meal
1:50 - 2:38	Ten Crop Sequences Transition to No-till	Effect of Residue on Crop Water Budget	Managing pH in No-till	Plant Stand Management		
2:45 - 3:33	N Recommendations for Wheat	New Corn Seed Traits for No-till	Improving Capture and Use of Water	John Deere Technology Improvements and Growth	National Sunflower Association	Sponsor
3:40 - 4:28	Comparing Corn and Grain Sorghum Performance	Water Rights and Depleting Water	Effect of Residue on Crop Water budget	Importance of Long Term Care in Estate Planning for Family Farms	Corn Amylase-An output trait that pays a premium	Displays
4:35 - 5:23	Improving Capture and Use of Water	Spray Application Technology*	Water Rights and Depleting Water	Cellulosic Ethanol	Avoiding Strip-till Mistakes	
5:30 - 7:30	Industry Sponsored Bull Session (refreshments and heavy hors d'oeuvres provided) in the commercial display area will be held on both nights of the conference.					

CEU credits for CCAs have been applied for all university sessions except farmer panels. *CEU credits for 1A for Commercial Pesticide Applicators have been approved.

Diamond Sponsors: Hoxie Implement, Southwest Implement, and the National Sunflower Association

Registration - The conference will be held for two days with the same program each day. Early registration must be postmarked by January 16. Please register early. **\$20 Tues 22 Wed 23 Early Registration - Attend all the sessions for one day. Please mark which day. \$38 Early Registration to attend both days which will have the same program each day. \$40 Registration per day after January 16 or at the door.** All registrations include proceedings for conference along with refreshments and meals. For questions, please call 785-462-6281. Mail registration and check, payable to KSU to the following address: Northwest Area Office, Attn: Brian Olson, PO Box 786, Colby KS 67701. Program will be held regardless of weather.

Please include the following information:
 Name: _____ Address: _____ City, State, Zip _____ Phone: _____