

## Treatment house for youth closes

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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The 180 House, a home for young men recovering from alcohol and drug addictions, was closed last week by its owners, King's Alcohol/Drug Treatment Center out of Wichita.

Heath Bechler, president of the company, said it's been hard for the operation to recover from the death of former administrator Cathy Rieken. Since her death, he said the house has had three

administrators.

The home opened in late 2006 after King's Treatment Center closed its operation at the former Sappa Valley Youth Ranch.

Kings Property Management purchased a house owned by Allen Shelton at 408 N. Elk, and after a few modifications, opened it up to young men.

People in Oberlin have been really supportive of the house, said Mr. Bechler, but it's difficult to go through that many

administrators and just as many counselors in a short time. One thing the constant change has done is make it harder to maintain discipline.

"The kids we take into our homes are not troublemakers," said Mr. Bechler, "but the kids at the 180 House have caused more trouble in the last two months than the others in the entire organization."

He said he didn't sign up to bring problems into town.

On Christmas Eve, the Oberlin Police

Department received a call that a handgun had been found in a vent at the 180 House. Just recently, a young man from the home was arrested for "temporary deprivation of a vehicle," or joy riding, which is a misdemeanor.

Last weekend, police got a call that kids in the house wouldn't settle down and were causing trouble for the staff.

The state Juvenile Justice Authority has expressed some concerns about supervision in the house, said Mr. Bechler, and

they had told him they would be suspending referrals.

He said he thought it was a good time to close, adding that he thinks the firm gave it their best shot.

All of the kids left last week, he said.

The 180 House employed 10 staff members.

If there are openings at other homes in the state, the staffers here will be given a chance to relocate if they want.

(See 180 HOUSE on Page 8A)

## City money erratic

### Spending up in 2009 budget

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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Revenues and expenditures for the City of Oberlin have been erratic over the past years, Administrator Austin Gilley told the City Council on Thursday.

Mr. Gilley said he looked at the numbers from past budgets before giving a report at the meeting on Thursday, Jan. 22, about the 2009 budget and prospects for the future. In the next three to five years, he said, the city will start seeing decreases in revenue in several areas.

In 2008, Mr. Gilley said, the city spent \$3.7 million, but the council projected \$4.9 million in spending for 2009. The city does have some cash reserves, he said.

The administrator said it looks like city fees haven't been kept up to date. For example, people are still paying the same rate at the swimming pool that they have been for the past several years.

Really, he said, he doesn't know where the city is, but he's been looking at the budget and past ones trying to figure out where the city

(See MONEY on Page 8A)

## City gives raises

The Oberlin City Council approved raises by position, not by person, after comparing the pay of city employees to other cities in the state.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said the council approved raises for each position, not by the person in the office or their ability to do the job. After looking at what other people in the state in the same jobs were getting paid, he said, they realized that some of the city employees might be underpaid, some by quite a bit.

For those positions that were more than 25 percent under the comparative analysis, said Mr. Gilley, the position got a raise. The money was actually put in the budget during meetings last year. The council budgeted a 4 percent raise based on jobs. The council didn't actually vote to give the raises then, it only voted to put the money in the budget.

With the vote at the meeting Thursday, Jan. 22, not all of the employees will get a raise this year.

The raises based on the positions, not the personnel included:

- \$2 an hour to City Clerk Karen Larson, Treasurer Patti Skubal and Police Officer Brad Burmaster.
- \$1.75 an hour to Officer Troy Haas.
- \$1.25 an hour to David Sporn, with the water department.
- \$1 an hour for Melvin Martin, with the street department and Rita Kinder, who does maintenance in The Gateway.
- 50 cents an hour to Utility Billing Clerk Judy Wenger, Ron Solko with the electric department, cemetery Sexton Nan Stanley and Chris Ward, operational manager at The



**WRAPPING SANDWICHES** in plastic, Nolan Wasson (above left) and Nolan Peters put the finishing touches to the almost 600 subs made and sold by the United Methodist Youth on Sunday. Ashli Samson (directly below) prepared finished sandwiches for sacking while Jori Diederich (bottom) put cheese on them. — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

## Youths help feed multitude

Teens and adults joined forces Sunday to make close to 600 submarine sandwiches for hungry Super Bowl fans.

Around 18 teenagers and 12 adults made 598 sandwiches in the basement of the United Methodist Church, said Deanna Castle, who helps with the church's youth group.

The crew then delivered the meals all over Oberlin, and to Jennings, Traer, the Danbury area and Norcatour.

Mrs. Castle said they've been holding the fund raiser on Super Bowl Sunday for the past 16 years.

This year, the teens plan to use the money to go on a mission trip over spring break to Colorado. While there, the group will serve a meal at the Denver Rescue Mission. Mrs. Castle said the group hasn't worked at the mission for more than 10 years.



## Norton prison spared the ax in budget cuts

By **TOM DREILING**  
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A state official's reaction to Republican budget-cut proposals had Norton abuzz last week with talk about the possible fate of its state prison and nearly 270 state jobs.

By Friday, though, a House committee had restored part of the cuts from a Senate bill, and officials said the prison and one in Winfield would stay open. Final action will depend on how the two houses settle their differences, however.

Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz threatened the closing in a letter to employees assessing the impact of proposed \$9.3 million cuts his department faced under the bill the Senate passed last week.

He concluded that closing some facilities, including prisons at former state hospitals in Norton and Winfield, might be in order.

Other cuts could include an end to supervision of parolees and to all rehabilitation programs, he said.

One area legislator said it would never happen, however.

"The Norton facility is not going to close!" said state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, a Grinnell Republican who represents the 40th District of northwest Kansas. The senator said he hoped he could say the same thing for the Stockton honor camp — already targeted for closing — but wasn't as sure as he was about the Norton facility.

(See PRISON on Page 8A)

## Primary election not needed here

Decatur County won't have a primary election to determine who will run in the April school and city general elections, since only 10 people filed to run in two cities and one school district.

Three newcomers filed for three seats on the Oberlin School Board, with all three incumbents bowing out. For the Oberlin City County, all three incumbents and one newcomer filed for the three seats.

County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, who serves as the county election officer, said up to three people could file for each position before a primary would have been needed

next month.

With only 10 people registering for the open spots, there won't be a primary, only the general on Tuesday, April 7.

None of the Oberlin School incumbents decided to file for reelection. Those seats are held by Chris Bailey, whose served for 10 years; Dwayne Jackson, whose served since 1997 years; and Jerry Chambers, who was appointed in March 2007.

People who did file for the three open seats were:

- Abby Hissong, an insurance

(See VOTING on Page 8A)

## Museum works to fix new building

Work on the newest addition to the Last Indian Raid Museum is well under way.

Since the museum is closed to tours in the winter, Curator Sharleen Wurm and workers have taken the time to work on a building the board purchased from Rich Shaw. The building is between the main building of the museum and the gift shop, sharing walls on either side.

The building was purchased with money that Lois Eckhart left the museum as well as money from an anonymous donor.

"Connecting doorways to the new building are in," said Mrs. Wurm. "They are starting on new paint and putting down new flooring in the addition."

The building will house the museum office, a genealogy room, storage in the back and an area for maintenance and cleaning items.

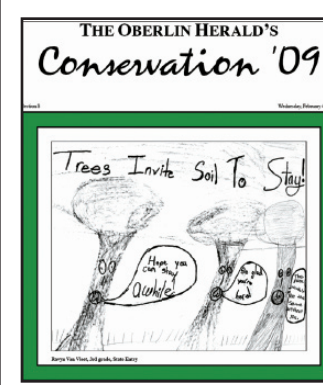
"The main building will include an enlarged parlor for groups. The exhibits in the room will stay, but some of the things on the north wall will be changed around a little so the china cabinets will look more professional," she said.

Besides the new building, the staff plans to rearrange some things in the second annex. The church items are being stored in the church now, so they plan to rework some of the other items.

Mrs. Wurm said they are also trying to organize some of the genealogy files so those can be moved.

In the winter, museum hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The museum closes from Dec. 1 to April 1 for the winter. On Wednesday, April 1, the museum will host a coffee hour.



## Special section in this edition

Each year, families in the county are honored for their work with the land. In today's *Oberlin Herald* is the annual Conservation Section, which has stories about the families that received the awards this year.

Four families received Kansas Bankers Awards from the Decatur County Conservation District.

# \* 180 House closes

(Continued from Page 1A)  
The company didn't really have a problem hiring direct-care staff, he said. Actually the home didn't need that many people at any given time. The struggle was finding a good administrator and clinician that would be a fit to the home. Before selling or auctioning off the house, he said he would like to talk to people with Youthville or the St. Francis Academy about buying

it and using the home for kids. Staff members are still clearing items out of the home, said Mr. Bechler. Besides the loss of 10 jobs in Decatur County, it also means two kids fewer in the Oberlin School District. Although the 180 House in Oberlin is closed, he said, homes in other areas are going to stay open. It's also important to know that the

home wasn't shut down by the state, but by the company. "We sincerely appreciate Oberlin's support of the project," he said. "We regret making the decision, but as many times as we have considered this since Kathy's death, there was always someone or something that came along that gave us a new hope for the house to be successful. None of the scenarios worked out."

# \* Money up, down for city

(Continued from Page 1A)  
is going. One thing the city can't continue forever, he said, is using the revenue from the electrical department to help pay for other areas. Some day, equipment in the electric department will need to be replaced and the revenue will have to go towards that.

and in 2007 it was \$99,587. There's been an erratic nature to revenues and expenditures, said Mr. Gilley, which is either because of a lack of budget control or accounting. In 2008, he said, most of the city funds, or budget accounts, came in under budget, but the council voted to increase property taxes for 2009. There's no explanation for the erratic expenses over the last five years and the city has lots of challenges coming up with the budget. Mr. Gilley said the city will have to focus its resources and come

up with some budget ideas. The council will have to get a handle on erratic spending, he said, adding that he doesn't have any answers right now. The council responded well to the report, said Mr. Gilley. The council agreed it will need to find out where the city is at before the next budget cycle this summer. "Basically," he said, "expenditures for the city are up and the revenue is going down. In the next three to five years, the city may continue seeing decreases in revenue."

# \* Prison gets reprieve

(Continued from Page 1A)  
"Where are we going to put all those inmates if Norton was to close?" he asked. The Norton prison houses in the neighborhood of 730 convicts. The state Senate initially passed the budget-cutting bill on Wednesday, with the final vote sometime Thursday. The effect on Norton and the surrounding area could be devastating should the prison close. At least

267 state employees could lose their jobs. Secretary Werholtz, in his letter, told employees that the Senate proposal provided for a 3.4 percent across-the-board cut for all state agencies. He said for the Department of Corrections, this would be in addition to reductions previously submitted by the department. He said a 3.4 percent cut would add up to about \$9.3 million. The House cuts, at 1 percent, amounted to only \$2.7 million, however. "Since we are now completing the seventh month of the fiscal year," Mr. Werholtz said, "it would be very difficult to realize reductions of \$9.3 million in the remain-

ing five months.... To accomplish this, reductions would have to be made in major budget areas. "The possible areas of budget reductions include suspension of operations at Winfield and Norton Correctional Facilities, effective April 1, advance the suspension of operations at Stockton Correctional Facility (from June earlier reported) to April 1, abolish parole and post release supervision ... and terminate all offender treatment and intervention programs...." He said decisions would have to be made about what do do with the inmates from the three facilities, since they would exceed the capacity of the remaining state prisons.

# \* Voting set for April 7

(Continued from Page 1A)  
agent, had thrown her name into the hat when the board needed to appoint a new member in March 2007 after the resignation of Delayne May. • Doug Brown, manager of Frenchman Valley Co-op in McCook, who asked to be appointed and lost the job in a coin toss. • Dan Wasson, who served on the board for 12 years and lost his seat to member Monte Moore in 2005. For the Oberlin council, with three open seats, William Riedel, who retired from Coors Brewing Co. in Golden, Colo., after 33 years of service, as well as all three of the incumbents, Rob McFee, who was elected in 2005; Jay Anderson, elected in 2001; and Marcia Lohofener, who was appointed in April 2007 to finish the term of Mayor Joe Stanley. Mr. Riedel moved here three years ago, but he and his wife bought their home here 14 years ago. In Jennings, incumbent council member Louise Cressler filed. No one filed for the mayor's spot held by Bob Jones or for the council spot held by Don Bolt. In Norcat, Von Johnson filed for the mayor's spot, held now by Mike Helm. Jerry Wescott filed for a council seat. Seats that are up in Norcat include those held by Carl Lyon and Linda Hunt. No one filed for the Dresden City Council, although spots held by Keith Muirhead, Jackie Douglas and Don Ritter are up. It's rare for anyone to file for office in Dresden.

The last day for people to register to vote in the upcoming election is Monday, March 23.

# Banquet spaces available

It's time to make reservations for the annual Farmer/Rancher Appreciation banquet, sponsored by the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 13, at the Gateway. Anyone wanting to attend the dinner should make a reservation by Monday by calling the Chamber office at 475-3441 or stopping by the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center.



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# WAGNER'S

## Winter

# SPECIALS!

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 <b>2007 CHEVY SUBURBAN LT</b> V8, AT, Leather heated, 4x4, TV DVD Entertainment, 3rd Row seating, 1-Owner, 25,000 miles <small>#8168A</small>	 <b>2007 CHEVY COLORADO</b> 4 cyl. AT, A/C, T/C, 4x2 Cloth seat, 1-Owner, 7,000 miles <b>\$11,950</b> <b>\$203.74/Mo.*</b> <small>#16068A SD Down 7% APR For 72 mos. WAC</small>	 <b>2005 CHEVY COLORADO LT</b> 5 cylinder, AT, Loaded, 4x4 <b>SPECIAL PRICE \$9,950</b> <small>#8202A</small>	 <b>2006 NISSAN FRONTIER</b> Crew Cab, V6, Buckets, Aluminum Wheels, 4x4, Clean, 1-Owner, Only 32,000 miles <small>#8188A</small>	 <b>2008 PONTIAC TORRENT GXP</b> V6, FWD, Rear DVD TV, Heated Seats, Like New! Chrome Aluminum Wheels, 1,900 Low miles, Fun For You & The Family! <small>#697</small>
 <b>2008 CHEVY COLORADO LS</b> 4 cylinder, AT 1-Owner, Fiber Glass Bed Cover, 4x2, Extra Clean, Only 4,000 miles <small>#8147A</small>	 <b>1993 GMC 1500</b> V8, 5 spd, 4x4, A/C, Regular Cab <b>\$2,950</b> <small>#8217B</small>	 <b>2001 CHEVY 2500 HD LS</b> Diesel, AT, Loaded, 4x4, Ready For Work! <small>#8162A</small>	 <b>2004 CHEVY 3500 HD LT</b> Diesel, Crew Cab, DRW, 4x4, AT, 1-Owner, Leather & Clean, Let This Truck Work For You! 125,000 Highway miles <small>#702</small>	 <b>2003 CHEVY 2500 HD LS</b> Diesel, Crew Cab, 4x4 AT, Cloth Seats, Rubber Floor, 96,000 miles <small>#15002A</small>



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