

Group votes to recommend bed tax rebate

The Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau board voted to request that the Oberlin City Council exempt a planned new motel from the 3 percent bed tax for the first three years of operation.

Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., and a bureau board member, said Fletcher Simmons, a consultant who is working on the motel feasibility study for the city, had contacted her for information.

A group here from South Dakota came here to look at a corner lot at U.S. 36 and U.S. 83 as a possible spot for a motel, said Ms. Grafel. The group made an offer to the city for the lot, she said.

The South Dakota group asked for the 3 percent bed tax to be rebated, she said. The group also asked about getting 1 percent of the sales tax back which the motel would collect back as well.

A Colby man who came to look at building a motel, also asked about getting some kind of tax break, said Ms. Grafel.

Connie Riedel, a bureau board member, asked about the small building at that corner lot where the former Oberlin Inn is located. The small building, which is the old state port of entry, could be used as a welcome center, said Ms. Riedel. The group said that's been tried in

the past, but it didn't work out.

The board members talked about the idea of rebating all or part of the bed tax money. The bureau receives the bed tax, collected on motel rooms and camper spaces, quarterly to help promote tourism to the area.

Museum Director Sharleen Wurm said the group has lived without bed tax money from that motel for this long, and if it can be used as an incentive to get a new operation to come, that would be good.

In other business, the bureau members:

- Approved sponsoring a trophy for the Last Indian Raid Museum car show the first weekend in June.

- Agreed to recommend to the City Council that Sarah (Ruf) Smith be appointed to a vacant seat on the board. Mrs. Smith works at Metcalf Real Estate. She and her husband just moved back here from Lawrence.

- Talked briefly about plans for the Kansas Sampler Festival the first weekend in May.

- Talked briefly about a proposal from City Administrator Austin Gilley to be sent out to find a consultant to do a marketing plan.

- Approved paying for one-third of an ad for the upcoming U.S. 36 special section through *The Oberlin Herald*.

Pheasants Forever looking for biologist

Pheasants Forever is still looking for a wildlife biologist to move to Oberlin and serve northwest Kansas. The job has been approved and the naturalist will be stationed here.

Rick Pauls, with the group's Sunflower Chapter, said they had 15 applicants for two jobs as advertised. Three people were interviewed, he said, and one person was hired, but he wanted to live in Ulysses, not Oberlin.

The group is going to reopen the application process to look for

someone with roots in northwest Kansas or eastern Colorado, he said. While one post has been filled, the one for this area hasn't.

The local chapter, said Mr. Pauls, has sent money to the national chapter to help with the salary of the biologist. Local groups, including the county and city, agreed to put money up to help with the salary. Mr. Pauls said he's received one check so far. County commissioners said they would wait until the biologist was hired.



AT THE RUMMAGE SALE at the Last Indian Raid Museum on Sunday, Judy Groneweg (above) looked at the items spread out on the tables while Dick Carman (below) counted money. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Museum makes money

People showed up with their arms empty and left with bags full of treasures from the Last Indian Raid Museum rummage sale on Saturday and Sunday.

Museum Director Sharleen Wurm said she thought they had more items than ever come in to be sold.

Every year, she said, she gets worried that there isn't going to be enough stuff for the sale, but every year people bring things in.

Often, said Mrs. Wurm, it's the same people who donate items yearly for the sale.

This year the museum board did things a little differently, asking for a donation for most items instead of putting a price on them.

Mrs. Wurm said the museum made over \$2,000. The money will go towards the general operating costs and maintenance at the museum.

There seemed to be a steady stream of shoppers on both Saturday and Sunday, said Mrs. Wurm, although she didn't count.

Items not sold were donated to the Bargain Box and some clothes



will be picked up by a couple from Hoxie for the second-hand store there. The museum plans to hold the sale again next year, Mrs. Wurm said.

Council asks for new bid for Gateway sign

A motion to buy a sign to be put on the north side of The Gateway died for lack of a second at an Oberlin City Council meeting Thursday, April 8, but might come back in a revised form at the next meeting.

The council looked at various options for signs for the civic center. The first was to remove the letters in the semi-circle on the front of the building, repaint and reinstall them over the entryway for \$3,005.

Another was to add Gateway Civic Center in the semicircle over the door for \$5,340 and the last was to add Gateway Center to the north

side for \$3,250.

With a \$650 transportation charge and \$375 art setup, the three options together would cost \$12,620. The proposal came from Commercial Sign of Colby.

The other two signs proposed were stand alone, one for \$7,000 that would be 8 feet by 10 feet and another for \$14,000 at 17 by 11 feet.

The letters in the semicircle, said Councilman Ray Ward, could be removed by the city crew in the winter when things are a little slower and then sent out to be refinished, then

the crew could put them back up.

Councilwoman Rhonda May said doing that wouldn't stop the birds from building nests on the letters. The proposal is for a flush-mounted sign, she noted.

Ms. May made a motion to move forward on the letters, including having Gateway Center be attached

to the north side of the building for \$3,250. Mr. Ward seconded it.

There was some question if the art and transportation fee would be the same for the one sign or less.

Mr. Ward asked if the council could get a price just for the sign on the north side and rescinded his second, so the motion died.

Mayor to suggest member

The Oberlin City Council plans to meet Thursday and the mayor plans to suggest a candidate to fill a vacant council seat.

Mayor Joe Stanley said he is going to recommend Richard Kimble to serve on the council. He and his wife, Carolyn, operate the Oberlin Livestock Auction Cafe. While the mayor makes the recommendation, the nomination has to be approved by the council.

At the March 18 meeting, the mayor nominated pharmacist Rusty Addleman. A motion to approve died on a tie vote.

City Administrator Austin Gilley said the council will have a new design for improvements to the existing runway to approve.

The council has a new bid for a sign on the north side of The Gateway.

Mr. Gilley said he also has some information on a sewer lagoon mixer contract.

The question of a tax abatement for a new motel at the corner where at the former Oberlin Inn site is also on the agenda for discussion.

The meeting, which starts at 7 p.m. at The Gateway, is open.

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