

Council considers rebating bed tax

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Oberlin City Council discussed offering a rebate on the bed tax to prospective new owners of the former Oberlin Inn buildings, but decided to invite them to a future meeting before making a decision.

Mayor Joe Stanley said the motel has been sold or is under contract to a company from South Dakota. They would like help from the city to get going. One thing they asked about was an abatement on property taxes, he said, but that can't be done in Kansas unless industrial revenue bonds are involved.

The mayor said when he talked

Council Roundup

At the meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Approved unanimously the mayor's recommendation to fill the vacated seat on the council. Story to come.
- Decided to table the two-page document for a voluntary demolition program to tear down properties in town. Story on Page 3.
- Approved a new bid for dark burgundy letters spelling

out "Gateway Center" for the north side of the building and adding more repairs to the priority list. Story below.

- Discussed offering a rebate in the bed tax to the new owners or possible new owners of the former Oberlin Inn building, but decided to invite them to a future meeting. Story at left.

with Connie Grafel, marketing director for the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Economic Development Corp., it sounded like they

wanted to move quickly.

Mayor Stanley said he understood the new owners plan to refurbish the rooms and try to have some open by

Memorial Day weekend.

He said they found out about the former Oberlin Inn being for sale when someone talked with Robert

Groneweg of R&M Service Center at a show in Texas.

The mayor said City Attorney Steve Hirsch is looking into another option for refunding the bed tax to the firm. Members of the Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau, the group that receives that money, said they would be fine without it. The motel has been used to house utility workers for several years, producing no bed tax at all.

At a recent bureau meeting, the members voted to recommend that the council offer the South Dakota firm a rebate on the 3 percent tax for three years.

When the men were in Oberlin

looking at the motel, they mentioned three things, said Mayor Stanley. The first was a tax abatement, which won't work without the industrial revenue bonds. The second was control of the old port of entry property west of the motel, which doesn't do the city any good and could then be on the tax rolls. The third was help tearing down the old gas station, or liquor store, building.

Councilman Bill Riedel asked when Mr. Hirsch would know about the bed tax. Mayor Stanley said he thought he would know about the mechanics by the next meeting. (See COUNCIL on Page 12)

Gateway sign for north side gets approval

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Oberlin City Council approved a new bid for dark burgundy letters spelling out "Gateway Center" for the north side of the building and added more repairs to a priority list for the center at a meeting Thursday.

The council had received a signage bid from Commercial Sign of Colby at the first meeting in April. It included the sign on the north side along with others for The Gateway, so the council asked for a separate bid.

The new bid was for \$3,985 for the four-foot, flat aluminum letters in dark burgundy. The color, according to the bid specs, will match the original burgundy finish on the letters on the front of the civic center.

The letters would be attached near the top of the roof line to identify the center to people on the highways. At present, the building is basi-

cally unmarked except out front on U.S. 83.

Councilwoman Rhonda May made a motion to approve the purchase, saying she thinks the center needs a better presence on the north side. The sign and some landscaping will help to separate the building from the truck stop to the north, she said.

Councilman Ray Ward seconded the motion.

Councilman Bill Riedel said he was fine with the sign, agreeing that the building does need more exposure from U.S. 36. Before the council spends all of the Bremer bequest on improving The Gateway, he said, he would like to see some kind of master plan.

Mr. Riedel said he also would like a plan on how to make the center profitable, a future vision for the facility.

It would be nice to know that (See GATEWAY on Page 12)



AT THE GATEWAY on Thursday, Mary Henzel (above right) and Ella Betts of Oberlin Arts and Humanities helped get artwork ready to display. Anthony Marshall (below)

helped hang the pieces for the High Plains Artfest.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Senator campaigns for governor's job

By CAROLYN PLOTTS
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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, the leading candidate to become Kansas' next governor, stopped in Oberlin on Saturday to meet and greet voters at The LandMark Inn.

"I love Kansas and I love America," Sen. Brownback said. "This is the greatest country in the world."

County Commissioner Ralph Unger, a fellow Republican, introduced the senator to a small but inquisitive group of Decatur County voters. When asked what can be done to save our republic, he did not hesitate to reply, "We (Republicans) have to win the next two election cycles. If we lose, the United States will move to a European-style government."

Sen. Brownback added that he would like to see federal government spending go back to being about 18 percent of the economy instead of the 23 percent under the

Obama administration. He said Medicare is hugely out of control, but it can be dealt with.

Dr. Jay Anderson asked the senator to comment on U.S. relations with China. Mr. Brownback recommended putting tariffs on Chinese products coming into this country.

"The Chinese are very nationalistic," he said. "The only thing they understand is power."

Dr. Anderson followed up with a question regarding India as an ally. Mr. Brownback agreed and added that India is an open society.

Banker Bob Gaskill asked Sen. Brownback how long the treasury can continue to buy "toxic" securities.

"I asked (Federal Reserve Chairman Ben) Bernanke that very question," Mr. Brownback said, adding that he had voted against Mr. Bernanke's reappointment this year. (See SENATOR on Page 12)

Anniversary activities to kick off with concert

Plans are shaping up for Oberlin's 125th Anniversary celebration, with activities planned from May to October.

The celebration will kick off with a concert by the Oberlin Area Community Band at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, May 3, in the high school auditorium.

Music on the program for the Spring Concert, sponsored by the 125th Anniversary group, includes the "Peacemaker March" by K. King, "The Old Vaudeville Band" by D. Hartzell, "Choreography" by R. Shelton, "Joshua" arranged by P. Yoder, "Shivaree" by C. Strommen, "Alexander's Ragtime Band" by Berlin/Edmondson, "Knightsbridge Chronicles" by B. Kopetz and "The Darktown Strutter's Ball" arranged

by P. Yoder.

Band members include Christi Morris, Rhonda May and Charissa Huff on flute; Darbi Rouse on oboe; Pam May, Cheryl Metcalf, Brooke McCorkle and Donna Garretson on clarinet; Joan Glading and Lauri Hilker on alto sax; Nakita Bose on tenor sax; Robyn Rouse on bassoon; Lonnie Weyeneth, Chris Nelson and Joanne Wendelin on trumpet; Kathy Almquist and Donnie McCorkle on french horn; Ken Morris, Jim Garretson and Tim Larson on trombone; Mary Jo Lohoefer and Katie Glading on baritone; Robert Rouse and Paul Woon on tuba and Mike Ford, Gary Anderson, Joy Russell, Darrin Glading on percussion.

An ice cream social in City Park will start at 6:30 p.m. before the concert as a benefit for the Chamber of Commerce.

The Decatur Ministerial Association plans activities, including (See EVENTS on Page 12)



Artfest draws a crowd

Art works hung on moveable walls, brought in by volunteers, in The Gateway arena over the weekend.

Each piece, whether pencil drawing, acrylic or oil painting, mixed media, pastel, water color or other, was hung with care on Thursday and judged on Friday. The pieces had been brought to the Sixth Annual High Plains Artfest by area artists.

Seventy adult artists entered 260 pieces of art, said Mary Henzel with the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission, and 55 students brought 79 pieces.

Friday, about 200 patrons at the Artfest Gala got to see the art for the first time. The evening was filled with music by the Pride of the Prairie String Quartet from Colby, with hors d'oeuvres and wine served.

A pencil drawing by Victoria Robinson of Hill City entitled "We Call Him Dad" won the Best of Show award. Daniel Garringer, Kearney, won the People's Choice award for an acrylic painting called "Treat or Trick."

Mrs. Henzel said 361 people came to see the show over the weekend. Of the pieces on display, 28 sold for a total of \$3,705.

High schools that participated in the show included Colby, Hill City, Hitchcock County, Neb., McCook, Norton, Decatur Community, Phillipsburg, Southern Valley, St. Francis and Wheatland.

Mrs. Henzel said artists from Oberlin who entered included Elisha Jones, Peggy Light Carswell, Neil Marshall, Rhonda May, Elizabeth and Hunter Nedland, Theresa Reeves, Amanda Sowers, Jeanie Loudon Unger, Norma Unger, Lillian Koger, Gary Anderson, Bret Ashley, Laysha Medina, Kira Meitl and Gatlin Reichert.

*Council might give motel its bed tax back

(Continued from Page 1A)

ing, adding that he knows of other towns where the bed tax has been refunded.

He said the owners were interested in the old port of entry mainly so another motel couldn't be put in there.

The council has been willing to offer more to others to get a motel here, said Mayor Stanley, although that was for new construction.

He added that he didn't think this firm from South Dakota is asking any more than anyone else.

Mr. Riedel said he would like to invite the owners to a council meeting. He said he didn't feel the city should make a commitment until the council knows more about the plan.

On the port of entry, he said, he can understand. If the business is willing to pay reasonable market

value for the property, he said that would be OK, but if The Gateway takes off, the land could possibly be used for a restaurant.

Also, said Councilman Ray Ward, the council agreed to leave that area open for truck parking when the ordinance was passed to ban truck parking on the streets.

Since then truck parking has been developed at Crossroads and Ampride, noted Councilwoman Rhonda May.

As far as the service station goes, said Mr. Riedel, it could be a good test of the city's voluntary demolition plan.

It's a great opportunity to get a motel, said Mr. Ward, at a lot less than others have asked of the city.

Mayor Stanley said he would contact the firm and see if they would come to a meeting.

*Gateway sign purchased for north side

(Continued from Page 1A)

before spending too much more of the \$1,231,464 gift, he said.

The council packet included a list of repairs needed at the center, including items like a new ballast for the light over the east stairs, fixing 16 of the emergency lights and replacing door locks and exhaust fans in two bathrooms.

Mayor Joe Stanley said when he saw the list, he wanted to know if the 16 emergency lights all went out this week. Why weren't those fixed as they stopped working? he

asked. If the building has to have those emergency lights, he added, then they need to be done.

It seems, said Mr. Riedel, that this list is mainly maintenance items.

The question is whether the city should use Bremer money to make the repairs, said Mayor Stanley.

The city allocated \$50,000 for repairs to the building, said Ms. May. These items could just be added to that list and prioritized. Ms. May turned the comment into a motion, which Mr. Ward seconded and the council approved.

*Events planned for anniversary

(Continued from Page 1A)

a community church service, on Sunday, July 4.

During the week of the Decatur County Fair in August, the City of Oberlin and Hansen Mueller Grain will team up to put on a free barbecue.

That Saturday, Aug. 7, the county-sponsored Last Indian Raid Museum will be open for 125 free minutes. The board plans to cook 125 hot dogs that day.

Sunday, Sept. 12, will feature a vintage baseball game with a team

from Jetmore.

Saturday, Oct. 2, will be Mini Sapa Day at the museum. The schedule will be full of 125th Anniversary activities, including a parade.

The museum quilters, said Director Sharleen Wurm, have made a quilt and donated it for the 125th Anniversary. She said the quilt will be on display at anniversary events. People can buy chances to win it, and a drawing will be held during Mini Sapa Day.



ON SATURDAY, Sen. Sam Brownback talked with Dr. Jay Anderson during a "listening tour" stop in Oberlin. He is running for governor as a Republican.

— Herald staff photo by Carolyn Plotts

*Senator campaigns here

(Continued from Page 1A)

"This is the last time I will be seeing you as your senator," he said. "I made a pledge to limit myself to two (full) terms. When a man breaks his word, it breaks the man."

Highlights of Sen. Brownback's campaign talk included:

- Focusing on growth. He said he would like to see Kansas look more like Texas, growing and prosperous, and a lot less like California, overregulated, overtaxed and shrinking in population.

- He would recommend special economic zones for Kansas counties that have big population losses.
- He is opposed to a proposed \$1,500 tax on each bed in the state's nursing homes.
- He would encourage technical training in high schools. He credited FFA with getting him involved in politics.
- He would promote animal agriculture as well as wind and coal energy.
- He would promote rural tourism.

ism. He said he favors a big-scale celebrity pheasant hunt for western Kansas.

• He believes it is important for the state of Kansas to protect its citizens from the federal government's abuse of its constitutional authority. If approved by Kansas voters, he said, a constitutional amendment would establish a foundation for legal challenges to any health care requirements passed by Congress.

For more about Sen. Brownback go to www.brownback.com.

Ball program on the agenda

The Decatur County commissioners decided to invite members of the recreation board and the man who applied to be in charge of the summer ball program to a future meeting.

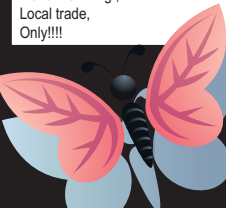
The commissioners discussed transferring \$5,000 to the recreation program to pay someone, but decided to wait. The county has received one application, from high school coach Joe Dreher, for the spot. Mr. Dreher has served in the position for the last six years.

The commissioners decided it would be a good idea to discuss the program with the director.



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Dr. Rubinowitz Oncology	4	5	6 Lighter Side Weight Loss Program 5:30 p.m. Brandi Ihrig Dietician	7 MRI's Cardiac Rehab	8
9	10 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	11	12 Dr. Frankum Surgery Bone Density Mammograms Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	13	14 MRI's Cardiac Rehab	15
16	17 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	18 Dr. Miller Cardiology	19 Dr. Curtis Cardiology	20 Dr. Saba Orthopedics Dr. Reeves Podiatry	21 Dr. Reeves Podiatry	22
23	24 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	25	26 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	27	28 MRI's Cardiac Rehab	29
30	31 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A VISITING PHYSICIAN, PLEASE CALL (785) 626-3211 Cheryl Banister, RN Specialty Clinic Director				