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State's lack of money a hot topic

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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State elected officials talked with a handful of people Saturday at the Decatur County Courthouse mainly about money or the state's lack of it.
Senator Ralph Ostmeier and Representative John Faber talked with 10 people Saturday morning. The men were here last month, but said they would return after finding out there was an event in town the same day.
Mr. Faber said while lots has been talked about on the budget in the appropriations committee nothing is going to be done on it until after the beginning of May.
"It's like we are going to go shopping with a credit card," he said, "and find out what we want to buy and then figure out how we

are going to pay for it."
Mr. Faber said he doesn't like it.
There has been talk about sales tax increases, getting rid of exemptions and other ideas about the budget.
By the time all is said and done, said Mr. Faber, there will probably be some kind of sales tax increase.
Mr. Faber talked about some other bills including one that passed where new businesses in Kansas won't pay any withholding taxes for three years. The state isn't paying businesses to come here. The businesses will still pay sales tax and property tax, he said. There was other criteria in the bill too. Mr. Faber said he thought the bill got 100 out of 125 votes in the house.
The senate is trying to work on another 10 year transportation plan, said Mr. Ostmeier.

He said he didn't think it was a good idea with the deficit the state already has.
"When you stop and think about it," said Mr. Ostmeier, "it isn't that we didn't balance the budget, it's that we didn't do the work right."
The whole country is in the same boat, he added.
The state started to spend future money back in 2005, said Mr. Ostmeier, and it's continuing from there.
A penny sales tax increase isn't going to go that far, he said. At this rate there could still be some allotments in 2010.
Next thing you know there will be a tax increase on sugar, pop and hamburgers. Anything that can be tied to something, said Mr. Ostmeier.
"Right now," he said, "I think we all need

to live inside our means."
Over the last couple years the schools have been able to build up some cash reserves, he said. Cuts as much as 6 percent have been discussed, which would mean \$180,000 to \$190,000 for Oberlin. That would burn through the money that was built up.
These are trying times, said Mr. Ostmeier. The budget won't be worked on until May 3 so that the officials can figure out where the state is at. If the state is still behind, he said, there will be more allotments.
The governor has the power to make those allotments, said Mr. Ostmeier. He doesn't need permission.
"It scares me the direction we are heading as a nation," he said, "and then you throw states into it."

Mr. Ostmeier touched on the health care plan, which he said also scares him. Even with the newest plan it still leaves 10 million people who can't afford insurance. Either way they are going to pay or be penalized.
When all is said and done though, he said, Kansas is a great state to live in and we will get through this.
The men opened the floor to questions: Treasurer Jean Hale asked about a senate bill in which the department of motor vehicles would lose \$4.8 million to the state's general fund. Mr. Faber said it was so late now in the session that if that bill doesn't come up on Monday or Tuesday it won't. The biggest threat now is the budget bill because other items will get thrown in and make it a mega bill.
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Bowling alley needs donations for completion

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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While the front section of the new bowling alley on Main Street is just about finished the back part, where the lanes will be located, is still under construction.
Greg Lohoefer, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Economic Development Corp., said the front section has been painted, the carpet is here and should be installed this week.
The front section, said Mr. Lohoefer, is for the added recreation to the center.

That's where the foos ball table, ping pong, pool table and possible other arcade games will be located. He said he hopes to have the front section open before school is out so that kids will have another place to go this summer.
When it's finished, said Mr. Lohoefer, the doors from the adjoining cinema can be opened and then kids can also use the air hockey table in the front of that section, the arcade games and video games. Then the snack bar can also be open.
The two restrooms are also located on the cinema side of the

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