

Juvenile program requests money

A Juvenile Justice Authority representative asked Decatur County commissioners to reconsider their decision not to give \$1,000 to two programs designed to keep teenagers out of court.

Peggy Pratt, director of Northwest Kansas Juvenile Services, which manages regional programs for the authority, talked about three programs for teenagers, including diversion, first-time offenders and Thinking for a Change at the commissioner meeting Tuesday, June 22.

At the meeting last Tuesday, Mrs. Pratt said the diversion program puts teens on a curfew for 90 days. They don't get off the program unless they are passing all their subjects in school, she said.

One student who was supposed to be off the diversion program in May wasn't passing at the end of school, said Mrs. Pratt. That student is back on an 8 p.m. curfew for the summer and for the first three months of school, until report cards are out.

Commissioner Ralph Unger asked what happens to students on curfew who are in school activities that run past 8 p.m.

Those students who are participating, said Mrs. Pratt, can stay. Those who are watching have to either sit right next to their parents or be at home.

Teens on the diversion program also have to complete 20 hours of community service and take any required classes, including drug and alcohol classes.

Those who need additional help, said Mrs. Pratt, can be recommended to Thinking for a Change program. It meets for 22 weeks for an hour a week.

It's been a very successful program, she added.

Last year, she said, six kids in Decatur County were in the program,

which includes role playing. Sometimes, she said, the teens have been picked up and driven to Atwood to join others in the group.

That \$1,000 is mostly for transportation costs, she said.

Of the six teens who completed the course last year, two were from parent referrals, she said. The diversion program had six kids in addition to the "Thinking for a Change" group.

The third program, for first-time offenders, works before adjudication, or court action, she said. If a teenager is in detention, said Mrs. Pratt, and they return home, but the county attorney isn't sure if they are ready to be on their own, this one can work.

The program includes pre-probation monitoring while the teen waits for court. It allows them to be home, instead of in temporary placement, said Mrs. Pratt.

It's been awesome for the kids, she said. The program has immediate consequences but doesn't mean they are removed from the home.

Sometimes it takes months before the case gets to court, she noted.

On the first-time offender program, she said, the kids are tracked for a year. Of those 90 percent, they haven't had any contact with the law in that year except traffic tickets.

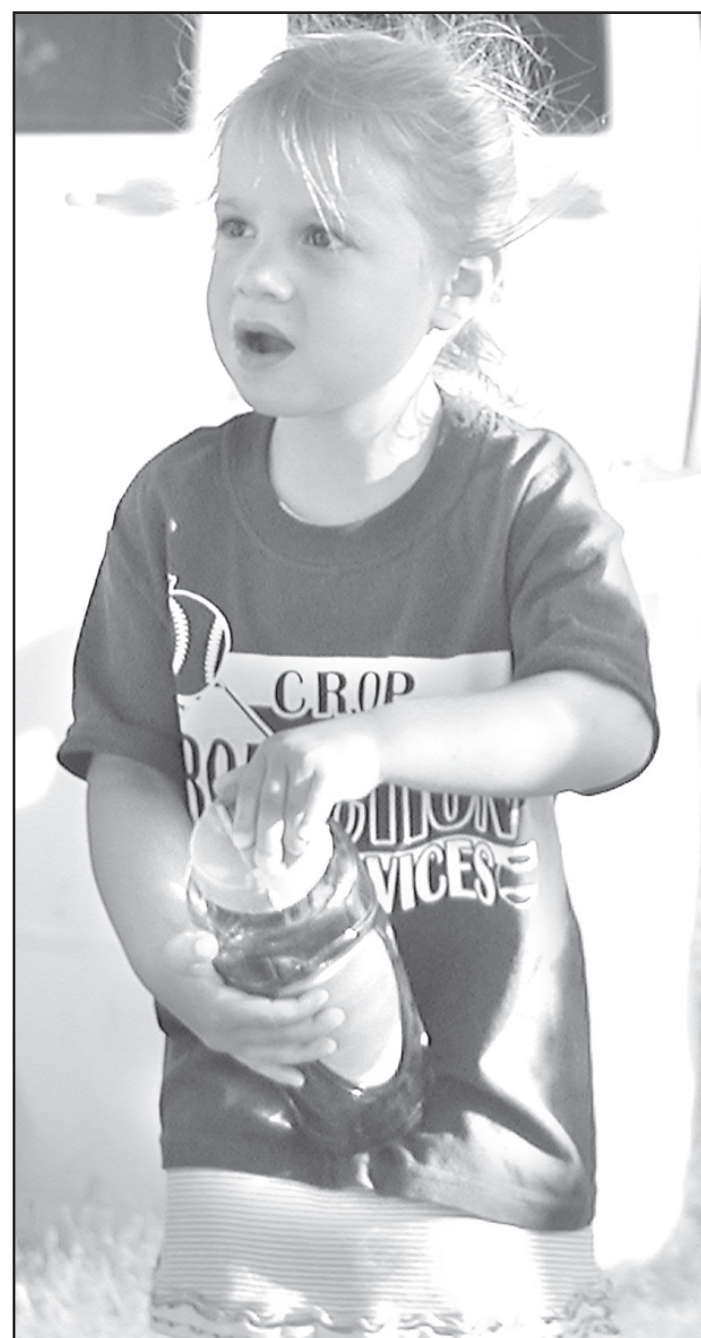
If a county-paid lawyer had to be appointed for all of those kids, it would eat up \$1,000 quickly, she said. Mrs. Pratt asked if the commissioners would reconsider their decision.

Mr. Unger said the county will look at it during the budget process this summer.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy thanked Mrs. Pratt for her work.

At the meeting last Tuesday the commissioners decided to deny the request for the upcoming budget year.

At the ball diamond



DURING HER SISTER'S T-ball game last week, Jenna Fortin tried to open a bottle of water.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Man fills vacancy on school board

The Oberlin School Board appointed a former member to fill a vacant position for the next year.

In May, the board asked for letters from anyone interested in finishing Barb Olson's term, which runs for another year.

At the meeting June 14, Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said the board received two letters: one was from Janet Rorick, a retired nurse and grandparent with special education experience, and one from Jerry Chambers, who is on his way back or just returned from Iraq, a father who has served on the board before.

Mr. Chambers, a National Guard member, resigned his seat when he was called back to Iraq.

Board member Dan Grafel said he was glad to see that they had

two good volunteers, but with the one-year term and big decisions to make with the budget coming up, he nominated Mr. Chambers. Mr. Grafel said his experience on the board would be valuable.

Board member Dan Nedland said he agreed and seconded the motion.

"When will he be back?" asked Board member Dan Wasson.

Mr. Dorshorst said he believed Mr. Chambers would be back this week.

Really the only reason Mr. Chambers got off the board was because he was called to serve in Iraq, said Mr. Grafel. It seems like a natural fit for him to just step back in.

The board approved the nomination.

Young man killed in elevator accident

Brett Spreser, a 2007 graduate of Golden Plains High School in Rexford, was killed early last Tuesday morning, June 29, 2010, when he fell 50 feet into an elevator tube partly filled with corn at a grain elevator where he worked in Weskan.

He was a great-nephew of John Juenemann and Eula Juenemann of Oberlin.

According to *The Western Times* newspaper in Sharon Springs, the elevator is owned by United Plains Ag, a division of CHS, formerly Cenex Harvest States.

Wallace County Sheriff Larry Townsend said "all units" were dispatched to the site at 8:35 a.m. Rescue workers didn't recover the body until around noon.

The sheriff said later that Mr. Spreser accidentally stepped into a hole at the top of the elevator used to fill the bins. He couldn't say why the hatch was open.

"Brett was a good man and our sympathies and prayers go to the family," he said.

Sheriff Townsend said that rescue teams from the elevator crew and from Greeley and Wichita counties assisted in the recovery, as well as Wallace County fire and ambulance crews and law enforcement

officers.

Mr. Spreser was born May 22, 1989, at Colby, the son of Daniel Joseph and Annette Marie (Juenemann) Spreser. He grew up at Gem, had received an associate degree from Colby Community College, then attended Garden City Community College, where he played football.

He married Nikki Renae Welsh on July 25, 2009, in Sharon Springs. A daughter, Zuri Jae Spreser, was born to them in Tribune on June 9, 2010.

Survivors include his wife and daughter, Sharon Springs; his parents, Gem; two sisters, Niki and Brent Moss, Colby, and Hailee Spreser, Gem; two brothers, Riley Spreser and Grant Spreser, Gem; his father-in-law, Darrell Welsh, Weskan; and mother-in-law, Chris Welch, Sharon Springs.

Funeral services were Friday morning at the Wallace County School gym in Sharon Springs with Pastor Rick Dewees officiating. Burial was in the Sharon Springs Cemetery.

A memorial was established for his family. Contributions may be sent to the Koons Funeral Chapel, 211 N. Main, Goodland, Kan., 67735.

Three adults arrested on drug charges

Three adults are being held in the Decatur County Jail on \$100,000 bond each after being arrested Thursday in Jennings on drug charges by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

Ora Gillespie Jr., 52, and his daughter, Kaitlyn Gillespie, 20, of Jennings and Michael Reynolds, 32, Colorado, were still in jail Tuesday.

Mr. Gillespie is being held on five counts, including possession of methamphetamine with intent to sell, conspiracy to commit distribution of meth, possession of meth, possession of drug paraphernalia and possessing drugs with no drug tax stamp.

Miss Gillespie's charges include conspiracy to commit distribution of meth, possession of meth and possession of drug paraphernalia for distribution.

Mr. Reynolds' charges include possession of methamphetamine with intent, possession of meth, possession of drug paraphernalia for distribution, conspiracy to commit distribution of meth and no drug tax stamp.

All three were being held on a \$100,000 bond with a preliminary

hearing set for 1:30 p.m. next Tuesday in Decatur County District Court.

Undersheriff Allan Marcum said the Decatur County sheriff's office was called to bring the inmates to the jail from Jennings, but didn't work the case. He said he couldn't talk about it.

Recreation director asks about paycheck

The Decatur County commissioners talked with the summer recreation director about a job description and whether he should be paid extra to umpire games at their meeting last Tuesday.

Director Joe Dreher said at the meeting Tuesday, June 22, that he has been paid to umpire in the past, above and beyond his salary. He asked why everyone else gets paid for umpiring, but he doesn't.

He said he didn't know he wasn't going to get paid for umpiring until he came to the courthouse to pick up his check.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said the commissioners didn't know that he was getting paid for umpire duty in addition to his salary.

Mr. Dreher said his job for the ball program, as he was told, was to get the fields ready and organize the program. He was never told that he needed to fill in as an umpire.

He said he's been spraying the parking lot for weeds with his own sprayer, using his truck to drag the fields and mowed the T-ball field the other day because it hadn't been done. He added that he has also changed the lights on the scoreboard.

There was some discussion on whether Mr. Dreher ever received a job description in writing, which he said he hadn't. Mr. Dreher, the activities director at the high school, has been the summer-only director for the past five years.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine said the job requirements they dug

out were written in 1997.

Mr. Dreher said the written job requirements are basically what he does, but he also takes care of the grass when there's a drought. Sometimes it's hard to get umpires, he said. They seemed to get chewed out by both sides.

That seems to be part of working with the public, said Commissioner Ralph Unger.

Mr. Gallentine said he thought the umpiring was under the list of duties, but if not, then the county should pay.

The commissioners approved signing a check for the six umpiring jobs for this year, but might change the rules after that.

For next year, said Mr. McEvoy, there probably needs to be a written job description.

Mr. Dreher said the playground equipment next to the Lions Building blew over in the storm last Monday. Commissioner Ralph Unger said he would talk to the Oberlin Rotary Club about it and take a look.



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