

Plans almost finished for airport

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The final plans to refurbish the current runway, taxiway and apron at Oberlin's city airport should be completed by March so that bid documents can be done in April.

The plans then go to Kansas City for federal review before the council can take bids, which should happen this spring.

Don Klappmeyer, vice president with Lochner-Bucher Willis and Ratliff engineering out of Kansas City, said he hopes to have the grant package to the city well before April 21. Standing in front of the plans for the existing runway, Mr. Klappmeyer said he thinks it's a good project. He said he thinks there will be lots of interest

from contractors.

The plan for the current runway will cut 615 feet off the south end and add 322 feet to the north, leaving the runway at 3,500 feet long and 60 feet wide. It is currently 3,793 by 50.

The apron will be done in concrete, he said, while the runway will be asphalt. There was some discussion that the project could be bid with the city keeping the asphalt millings if wanted. Jim Wesch, who serves on the airport advisory committee, said they had talked about using the millings on the road to the automated weather observation system.

After the council meeting in April, said Mr. Klappmeyer, everything will be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration. He said he's not sure when the city will receive a grant from the agency.

Councilwoman Rhonda May asked if that meant the city might not get the grant this year.

Mr. Klappmeyer said he thinks the city will get the grant. The last letter sent to the city said the grant would come from discretionary funds, which could be cut. Congress is working on programs, he said. There's a lot more activity than he thought there would be.

There's no assurance that the city will get a grant in 2011 or any time? asked Ms. May. Correct, said Mr. Klappmeyer, but he feels like the city will get one.

Mr. Wesch asked if there is something more the city and the people could do, like contacting their senators and congressman about the grant? Absolutely, said Mr. Klappmeyer.

This runway project, he said, is a high priority for the federal agency.

"I might eat my words," said Mr. Klappmeyer, "but you will get a grant this year."

The group talked about land acquisition, noting that the city has already bought the needed land for this project. Mr. Klappmeyer said the city should start buying the 345 acres needed for a proposed new runway.

City Administrator Karen Larson said she is meeting with someone from the agency

who is in charge of that part of the project.

While the city will be reimbursed for buying the land, said Mr. Klappmeyer, it has to be under contract or bought before that will happen. The city will also have to go through the administration's process to buy the land.

Mr. Klappmeyer said he feels pretty strongly that Oberlin will get the new runway in the next three years or so.

While construction is going on at the old runway, he added, the airport will need to be closed. He said his best guess is for four to five months, based on his experience and the size of the project.

The city's share of the project is 5 percent. (See RUNWAY on Page 12)



Girls pick up cookies

MONDAY NIGHT, parents and kids organized boxes and boxes of Girl Scout cookies for pickup. Keri Bryan (above) and her daughter Kelli (below) put orders together for parents at the United Church. Jacquelyn Marshall (right) helped carry an order to a car.



Doctors resign with letters to hospital, clinic

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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Both doctors at the Oberlin Medical Arts Clinic have turned in letters of resignation effective next month for both the clinic and staff privileges at the Decatur County Hospital.

Clinic Administrator Barb Whitney said she received the letters on Thursday from Dr. Stelian Andreca and Dr. Elizabeth Sliter. The last day both will work is Friday, March 11.

Mrs. Whitney said the clinic is now under a confidentiality agreement covering a possible sale of the practice to the hospital.

Dr. Andreca and Dr. Sliter have been the only ones seeing patients at the Oberlin Clinic since the middle of January, when Jennifer Taylor, a physician assistant, left.

While the building is owned by the county, the practice is owned by the doctors. The clinic rents the facility from the hospital.

The county Hospital Board had a special meeting on Thursday, and

received the letters of resignation from the doctors during the open meeting.

Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden said she received copies of those letters and also received a letter for resignation from the emergency room.

Dr. Sliter's letter addressed to Dr. Andreca and Mrs. Whitney thanked them for the opportunity for her to practice here, saying she was resigning effective March 11.

"As I see it, that will mean Oberlin Medical Arts is closing Friday, March 11, 2011," she wrote. "It has been a wonderful place to practice. I appreciate the opportunity practicing in this community."

Dr. Andreca's letter, addressed to Dr. Sliter and Mrs. Whitney, set also his last day for that Friday.

Both doctors signed a letter giving the required 30-day notice of termination of coverage for the emergency room.

The clinic said Dr. Sliter couldn't be available for comment until Friday morning.

Drought predicted for area despite recent snowstorms

While Decatur County has received several snowstorms during the first part of the year, weathermen say it seems the area is still heading into a drought.

Fred Stasser, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, said the area is still under the effects of La Niña, a cooling trend in the Pacific Ocean which means the central and southern plains are left out of cross-country storm tracks. That weather pattern should continue into the summer, he said, which could create drought conditions here.

In the last two weeks, the county has had two winter storms which each dropped up to six inches of snow. The first storm equated to .03 of an inch of moisture and last week it was .70 of an inch, he said.

The storms, said Mr. Stasser, have been heading to the north and Nebraska has received a lot more snow than Kansas.

There is no hard-and-fast rule

when it comes to La Nina, the forecaster said. There are going to be some exceptions to the rule.

February and March are probably the best months for snowfall, said Mr. Stasser, but if this pattern holds, the area might not get the typical snowfall.

Normal moisture for Oberlin is 22.5 inches a year, according to the weather service. Since October, Oberlin has received 22.4 inches of snow. The moisture content depends, said Mr. Stasser, on how warm the weather is when the snow falls.

The snow, he said, hasn't been really rich with moisture so far this season. Hopefully that will change in the coming months. Hopefully, the area can get some good moisture in the spring as the La Niña pattern seems pretty strong.

Farmers and those worried about gardens and yards might want to keep an eye on the forecast for the summer, he said.

Candidate forum set for mayor's seat

Mark your calendars for the Decatur Professional Women's candidate forum at 7 p.m. next Wednesday upstairs at The Gateway.

The group has invited all four candidates running for mayor of Oberlin in the primary election Tuesday, March 1: Council members Bill Riedel and Rhonda

May, Bobbi Jo Johnson and Judy Scott.

The club will give each candidate a chance to answer every question, said Kimberly Davis, vice president.

All voting in the primary will



Bond lowered for five men in poaching case

The Decatur County magistrate judge lowered the bond for five Wisconsin men arrested in December for poaching during a hearing Tuesday morning.

Each of the five men, all members of the same family, had to post bond of \$16,700 cash. The bond for John Jacobs III, Mark Jacobs, John Jacobs IV, Paul Jacobs and Joseph

Jacobs was reduced to \$5,000 each at the hearing.

Each of the Wisconsin men has been charged with commercialization of wildlife, a felony. The men were arrested at the beginning of December in the Lyle area on charges of illegally killing trophy-size mule deer.

Outside the courthouse that chilly

December morning, 12 buck mule and white-tail deer laid on a trailer pulled by a Kansas Department of Wildlife truck.

The men's lawyer asked for separate preliminary hearings for each. As of Monday, those dates have been set for 2 p.m. Friday for Joseph, Mark and Paul; 10 a.m., Tuesday Feb. 22, for John III and 10 a.m.

Tuesday, April 5, for John IV.

Tuesday was also the first hearing for David Swisher and Jake Swisher of Long Island who pled not guilty to charges of unlawful possession of wildlife without a carcass tag and taking a big game animal without a valid permit in the case.

No preliminary hearing date had been set for either Kansas man.

*Runway plans underway for spring bid

(Continued from Page 1A)
cent, said Mr. Klappmeyer, which he thought would be just over \$500,000.

"With the current atmosphere in Washington," asked Council Bill Riedel, who also serves on the airport committee, "you are confident we will have the funding to see the project through to the end?"

Yes, said Mr. Klappmeyer, based on everything I've read.

Sid Metcalf, another airport committee members, said he's read several articles in flying magazines and other publications about more money going to rural airports.

Lee Franklin, with the airport committee, asked if a bequest from an estate could be used to pay for

the city's share. Sure, said Mr. Klappmeyer, although he hasn't seen that before. He said he has seen donated land go towards the matching portion.

Mr. Klappmeyer said a small hump in the middle of the existing runway will be milled down and lowered a little. It will help with the pilot's line of sight while landing.

The group talked some about whether other people want to build hangars and what they need to do. Mr. Klappmeyer said there is a terminal area plan. He said it would be best to try to follow that. If changes are made, they need to be sent to the administration immediately.

Before leaving town, the engineer went to take a look at the airport.

City wants detailed land proposals

The Oberlin City Council decided Thursday to ask for more specific lease proposals for two of three tracts the city put up for farming bids.

At a meeting on Thursday, Feb. 3, the council held a 15-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege with the council, mayor and attorney. After that, the council briefly talked about proposals the city received for three parcels of land.

The council accepted one proposal for \$490 a year from Greg Lohofener for 48 acres of tillable land at the city's airport. Mr. Lohofener also agreed to mow 78 acres three times a year. The lease is good for three years.

This was the only proposal received on the land at the airport.

On the other two parcels, 86.5 acres and 105.2 acres south of town, the council decided to ask for more specific bids.

For the first tract, the lease will specify that the tenant is responsible for the fence, water and weeds, the council decided. The council asked for the details by Monday.

Proposals for the 86.5 acres in-

cluded:

- \$17.50 an acre a year with \$7,350 for fencing and in-kind work over six years or \$31.66 an acre with a six-year contract.

- \$20.52 an acre with a one-year contract with an option for two more years. The city would be responsible for the fencing, weed control and watering.

- \$15.02 an acre with a total of \$1,300.

- \$16 an acre with 100 percent cash rent.

- \$14 an acre at \$1,211 a year.

- \$15 an acre.

Proposal for the 105.2 acres included:

- \$66 an acre.

- \$65 an acre with 100 percent cash rent.

- \$70 an acre at \$7,364.

- \$125 an acre or crop sharing with a three-to-five-year lease.

- \$151.50 an acre.

Names of the people giving the proposals were not given. The administrator had assigned each person a number, so not even the council knew the names of the people giving proposals.

Council plans to look at land bids

The Oberlin City Council plans to revisit proposals for leasing two tracts of city-owned farmland south of town at its regular meeting Thursday.

The council looked at proposals on Thursday, Feb. 3, but decided to ask for more details for the two parcels.

City Administrator Karen Larson said that a representative from Ransom Financial will be here to help the city sell general obligation bonds for the upcoming water project.

The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in the upstairs room. It is open to the public.

Cleaning up after the storm

AFTER THE STORM
last week, Marlin Marintzer (above) pushed snow off the lot at Ultimate Fertilizer. The Rev. Linda Willey (left) shoveled snow off the sidewalks at the United Methodist Church last Wednesday.

— Herald staff photos
by Kimberly Davis



Sappa Park Committee to reorganize as appointed city advisory board

The Sappa Park Committee asked to become an advisory committee appointed by the Oberlin City Council during a special meeting last Thursday.

The committee, including Gary Anderson, Connie Riedel and Kim Davis, has been an "action team" under Decatur Tomorrow. At a recent meeting, members decided to ask the council if they could be appointed as a city advisory committee. The Sappa Park Committee

will then no longer be a Decatur Tomorrow unit.

City Administrator Karen Larson said the council decided during the special meeting Thursday the Sappa Park Advisory Committee will have seven seats, five of which the current committee will pick, one will be a council representative and one from Pheasants Forever, which leases the farmland at the park. Each member will serve either three or six years, so that the terms stagger.

During the regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, Feb. 3, Kem Bryan, with DreamMakers, talked to the council about a possible grant for Sappa Park. She said it doesn't have a ceiling, but the floor is \$25,000.

Ideas for the grant included composting toilets, fire rings using native stones, tire swings attached

to used electric poles and a log amphitheater structure on the cement slab.

Even though the proposed items are fairly low maintenance, said Councilman Bill Riedel, there needs to be some discussion on who will be responsible for them. Also, he said, there needs to be some plan on where the items would be placed.

While it's great to get free money, he said, there needs to be a coordinated effort.

Mrs. Bryan said she needed permission from the city to apply for the grant. She asked if the council could draw up some more defined

guidelines on who is in charge of what at the park.

The park committee plans to meet again next week to discuss the grant and get a recommendation to the council about members.

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