

## Storms continue to delay harvest

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

*k.davis@nwkansas.com*

Rain and humidity have kept area farmers out of their wheat fields until late in the afternoon the last week. Some days there's been no harvesting at all.

While the harvest started at the end of June, now a week and a half into July some farmers haven't been on their combines but a handful of times.

Greg Grafel at D&S Grain in Traer said since Saturday, July 2, they have probably had four and a half to five inches of rain. It's been too muddy to get into the fields in that area, northwest of Oberlin.

Mr. Grafel said they started cutting wheat the last two days of June and are probably half done, but now haven't moved a combine in probably a week.

The wheat is all down and tangled up, he said. It's losing test weight and the field terraces are full of water.

The rain has a positive side, he added. The corn crop was starting to stress, as it was getting pretty dry. That's not the case anymore.

Prior to the rains, said Mr. Grafel, the test weights on wheat were 63 pounds, but those probably are down to 58 to 59 now. Elevators like to see wheat at 60 pounds and may dock farmers for a lower weight, paying less for each bushel.

With rain storms just about every night this last week, trucks have been coming in around 4 to 5 p.m. to the Decatur Co-op, said Dalene Horton. On Sunday afternoon, they came in a little earlier.

For the most part, she said, farmers start showing up in the late

### Area corn crop loving rainy, wet weather

The recent weather might have put a screeching halt to the wheat harvest, but the fall corn crops are loving it.

Brian Olson, area agronomist with Kansas State University Research and Extension, said unless the corn is standing in fields of water, the crop is enjoying this damp, humid weather. The corn has more than enough moisture to grow, he said.

The crop should have developed a good root system and is growing rapidly, he said. In the next three weeks most of the fields planted at the end of April or first part of May will be tasseling.

After the crop tassels, the silk will come out of the

ear. Each strand of silk, he said, is ready to catch pollen, and every silk tube pollinates one corn kernel.

The soil moisture is good, he said, and the corn plants are going to grow.

The weather and crops are different along U.S. 36 than they are in other parts of the state, he added. The line of counties along U.S. 36 is getting consistent rains, said Mr. Olson. If you drive south along U.S. 83, it's a different picture.

Every 30 miles further south you go, there is a dramatic difference, he said, as that area just isn't getting any moisture.

afternoon for a few hours.

Ms. Horton said she thinks harvest is about half done. The test weights have started to get a little lighter since it's started raining,

she added.

She said she thinks the co-op has taken in 2.2 million bushels of wheat so far this year.

Out on the highway at Hansen

Mueller grain, Janice O'Hare said they have taken in around 600,000 bushels. The Cedar Bluffs elevator got a start on harvest, she said, but that area is probably less than 10

percent done.

Mrs. O'Hare said they are getting trucks around 4:30 p.m. and run until about 10:30 p.m.

While the crops seem to start with moisture around 14.1 percent each day, near the maximum for storage, she said, later in the evening it drops to around 11 to 10.

Mrs. O'Hare said she's heard some talk of hail, but hasn't heard of any damage.

Brian Olson, multi-county agronomist with Kansas State University, said Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne and Norton Counties are in a unique situation, getting rain consistently.

Some guys have probably been able to cut some pretty good wheat, he said, but the concern now with the moisture, humidity and heat is the possibility of the wheat berries sprouting.



### Kids cool off at pool

AT THE OBERLIN city pool on Monday, Alyssa VanVleet (above) sat on the edge watching other kids play. Dawson Kempt (left) jumped into the shallow end and Lily Hendrickson (below) played.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



## City to search for clean water one more time

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

*k.davis@nwkansas.com*

The Oberlin City Council asked its engineers to look once again for better water sources for the city before moving with the current plans to spend \$4.5 million on a water treatment plant to take the uranium and arsenic out of the water.

At the regular council meeting Thursday night, engineer Chris Miller of Miller and Associates, said the plans and specifications for the plant have been approved by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

He said a hearing has been set for Thursday, Aug. 4, for a state permit to build the plant.

After looking at possible liability issues for the city to get rid of uranium from the water, said Mayor Bill Riedel, is it too late to look for better wells? That way the city wouldn't have to deal with getting rid of uranium every year.

The city paid the same firm to look for better water about a dozen years ago, but never found a desirable source.

Mayor Riedel said the way he understands the project, the city isn't just looking at the cost of the plant, but \$100,000 a year to haul off the uranium, plus the liability of a spill which would have to be cleaned up, and the manpower and training needed to run the plant.

Maybe the city needs to step back and look at some other ideas, he

### Council Roundup

At the regular meeting last Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Heard a report about how Sappa Park started and the construction of what is now a city park. Story to come.
- Asked its engineers to look once again for better water sources for the city before moving forward with current plans to spend \$4.5 million on a treatment plant. Story at left.
- Heard a request for help from an Oberlin man with a drainage problem behind his house. Story on Page 3.
- Approved selling the former school house at the youth ranch to the highest bidder for \$1,015. Story to come.

said. He said he knows the city has been working on this project since 1998, but he doesn't want to end up being the first town in Kansas to try this new technology and then get stuck with the potential problems.

"Is it too late to investigate other options?" the mayor asked.

If the city wants to do something (See COUNCIL on Page 12)

## Commissioners discuss employees

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

*k.davis@nwkansas.com*

Decatur County department heads and commissioners had a long talk about dissension among employees, improving morale and what might be perceived to be going on at the county.

During a session with department heads Tuesday, June 28, Commissioner Gene Gallentine said the commissioners wanted to get thoughts and ideas from the department heads. It seems like there is some dissension in the departments, he said. Even some citizens have said they feel like things aren't working well.

"It seems like we have lost the team attitude and spirit," he added.

It's important not to forget who they are all working for, said Mr. Gallentine. The money to run the county comes from the taxpayers. Maybe things have just gotten off track a little, he said.

We all work in the same place, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy. Sometimes it gets hard and there are hard issues to deal with, but no one can hold grudges.

Everyone needs to get on the same page and start working together, he said.

Any suggestions? asked Mr. McEvoy of the department heads.

It all goes back to communication, said Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman. Employees need to know if there is an issue, a change in policy, if money needs to be cut or hard decisions need to be made.

If these things come up, maybe a meeting needs to be held right away to let everyone know and have a chance to ask questions and get answers before the conversations start at the coffee shops and on the sidewalk.

This starts at the top, said Sheriff Ken Badsky. If there is a problem with an employee, he said, that person needs to be brought in before any decisions are made. It seems that sometimes problems don't get fixed and morale continues to go down the toilet.

There is a perception among the public, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, that the county family isn't getting along, whether it's justified or not. If it's a false perception it needs to be laid to rest, said Mr.

(See COUNTY on Page 12)

## Garden tour tickets for Sunday now on sale

Tickets are still available for the Decatur Professional Women's summer garden tour Sunday. The costs is \$10 a person, with tours in Norcatour and Oberlin.

Tickets are available at the Dresser, *The Oberlin Herald* or from any club member.

People should meet at the gazebo in Oberlin's Centennial Park at 5 p.m. Sunday for the Norcatour and at 6:30 p.m. for the Oberlin tour.

Refreshments will be served at the last garden.

## New physician assistant hired for hospital, clinic

Decatur Health Systems has hired a new physician assistant to work at both the hospital and in the Family Practice Clinic.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said they hired Sean Conroy, who's been working in Kansas

City. He will start full time on Monday.

She said they are still looking for doctors and other health-care providers to staff the hospital and clinic.



# \*Council OKs new search for clean water

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 else, said Mr. Miller, he wouldn't send anything on the proposed project out to bid or sign any contracts. If the city wants to look at other options, he added, it needs to be done right away.  
 Mr. Miller said he's not sure but wheat it wouldn't be a good idea to send a letter to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to explain what the city is doing, because the city signed a consent order promising to build a treatment plant. It might be smart to ask for an extension on the order, he said.  
 Councilman Rusty Addleman said he thinks the city needs to look at other options, other water sources. The possible liability for handling uranium is scary, he said.  
 The liability with the uranium, said Councilwoman Fonda Farr, scares her, too. The uranium first has to be accepted by a contractor and then hauled off. What if the place taking the uranium shuts down? she asked. What happens then? She

agreed the city needs to look at its options.  
 Councilman Jim Miesner asked how long it would take to look at some irrigation wells and do some testing. Not long, said Mr. Miller.  
 In 1998 and 1999, the engineer said, his firm looked at some wells and did some water quality and quantity tests. He said they could pull the information on irrigation wells from the state water office in Stockton. They could then pick some spots, get permission and do some testing.  
 The proposed water treatment plant, said Councilman Rob McFee, is going to cost \$4.5 million. What kind of pipeline would that build?  
 In Atwood, said Mr. Miller, it cost about the same amount to drill wells and pipe water from about 14 miles away. With the project here, it's important to remember that about \$1 million of the \$4.5 million total is for a new well and improvements to the city's aging distribution system.

# \*County workers discuss morale

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 Unger, and if true, it needs to be taken care of.  
 Mr. McEvoy said he can take some blame, too, for things not being clear. Some might think the commissioners are making decisions that are mean to the employees. He said he will try his best to communicate better.  
 It can feel like the departments are being micromanaged, said Sheriff Badsky.  
 It's a lack of communication, said Mr. McEvoy.  
 Sometimes, said Mr. Unger, the commissioners react before the reasoning has been explained.  
 Maybe there needs to be more information on the decisions in the minutes, said Mr. McEvoy.

Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said she had a question about the cell phone changes. She said she sent an e-mail to all three commissioners and never heard anything back.  
 The county has some of the best employees when everyone is working together, said Mr. McEvoy, but not when they're fighting.  
 Mr. Unger said he doesn't want to imply that there isn't any cooperation, because there is a lot.  
 Not everyone has a job in the public eye, said Mr. Gallentine, like the county employees.  
 He added that he knows they don't always say thanks to the workers, but "thanks for doing a good job."

# New convenience store offers pizza by order

There's a new pizza place in town, at the corner of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83.  
 Godfather's Pizza opened in the new Eagle Convenience Store, in the former Ampride location. Manager Darren Zahnter said the pizza spot is open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. but doesn't deliver.  
 They use fresh toppings and the

Godfather's pizza dough for the crust, he said, adding that the food is made with good-quality products. Besides traditional pizza, he added, they also make breakfast pizza.  
 Mr. Zahnter said they plan on bringing Chester Fried Chicken to the store this month.  
 To order, call (785) 475-2609.

# Process set to handle claims

As part of efforts to eliminate any discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Secretary Tom Vilsack has established a process to resolve claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who claim they encountered discriminated when seeking government farm loans.  
 The process offers a streamlined alternative to a lawsuit, providing at least \$1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to \$160 million in farm

debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. This announcement follows the Obama Administration's settlement of long-standing litigation by African American and Native American farmers.  
 Anyone interested in joining the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or obtain information, by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at (888) 508-4429.



# Repairs continue

IN SIDE BY SIDE bucket trucks, Ron Solko and Dan Castle (above) worked on the power poles in the alley behind Farmers Bank and Trust on Monday morning. The limb pile south of town (right) has been burned almost daily since the storm a week and a half ago.  
 — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes and Kim Davis



# District finishes year strong

The Oberlin School Board approved end-of-the-year transfers for the school district at a special end-of-the-year meeting.  
 The board approved transferring \$26,385 left in the general fund at the end of the year to food service, \$70,000 to special education, \$7,000 to driver education and \$76,036 to at-risk from the supplemental general fund.  
 Meeting in the early morning on

June 30, the board also transferred \$4,300 in interest to capital outlay.  
 Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said he feels good about the transfers the district was able to make, especially with the cuts in state money sustained through the year. The district ended the year on a strong financial note, he said, and the district has a healthy balance in the funds that need cash on hand.  
 Mr. Dorshorst said he's happy

with the way the entire staff worked to hold the line on spending.

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# Group asks city for help

A representative with the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center asked the Oberlin City Council for financial help for the upcoming year Thursday night.  
 The council didn't make a decision, noting that it is starting to work on the budget for the coming year.  
 Kelly Robbins, with the center, said they help kids who may have been abused, working with social services, county attorneys and law enforcement as a team.  
 The center brings a mobile unit to town, said Miss Robbins. They try to get one good interview with each child, which is recorded. It can help in court, she said, and that way the clients don't have to travel or be interviewed several times.  
 Advocates who work with the kids travel with the bus, she said, adding that she was in Oberlin seeing clients before the meeting.  
 There were 16 cases in Oberlin last year, she said. The law enforcement agencies here are very proactive.  
 The center operates on grant money and donations. Regardless of what the council decides, she added, the center will be here to help the kids and families.  
 Police Chief Wade Lockhart said he's worked with the representatives from the center for several years, even before the mobile unit came into use. Then, he said, they traveled to Scott City for interviews. He said the mobile unit is a blessing for the kids. It cuts down on travel time for them and their families.  
 Chief Lockhart said he can't say enough good things about this service. If there is any way the city can find to support it, he would recommend that. The difference this means for the families and kids is phenomenal.  
 What's the average support level? asked Mayor Bill Riedel.  
 Miss Robbins said average is \$5,000 a year, but they have one that is \$14,000 and a few at \$500. She added that they would be thrilled with anything.

Do you love Jesus?  
 Do you love Motorcycles?  
 Are you looking for other Christians to ride with?

If you answered yes to any of these questions then we invite you to join our team.

**Christian Motorcyclists Association (CMA)** is a great group for Christians to ride, fellowship and serve God together.  
 If you are interested, come join us on:  
**Sunday, July 24 at 2 p.m.**  
 For an informal meeting to be held at  
**The Last Indian Raid Museum**  
 258 South Penn, Oberlin, KS

If you are unable to attend, you can call  
 Jeff & Libby Miller, NW Kansas Area Reps, at  
 (785) 434-2558 or (785) 737-7068 or contact us via e-mail  
 at millerj@ruraltel.net

# Valley Adventure Race

August 20, 2011  
 Cambridge, Nebraska

Adventure Racing consists of biking, running, water obstacles and mystery events.  
 Each team of 3 must remain together through the course.  
 The team to obtain all check points and complete the course in the fastest time **WINS!!**

Two courses will be offered:  
 A short course of approximately 15 miles biking, 3 miles running (or walking) and 8 check points.  
 A long course of approximately 30 miles biking, 5-6 miles running (or walking) and 15 check points.

**Entries Due August 10th**

Entry forms available at [agvalley.com](http://agvalley.com), [trivalleyhealth.com](http://trivalleyhealth.com), and various Tri Valley Health System or Ag Valley locations.

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