

Norcatur, Herndon offices on list

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The post offices in Herndon and Norcatur are among about 3,700 listed to be studied for closure in the near future, which is more than 10 percent off all post offices in the country.

Brian Sperry, regional spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service in Denver, said 134 post offices in Kansas are on the list for studies. For another 22 offices in the state, studies have already started.

The studies, he said, will take into ac-

count the effect on the communities served, the on the customers and employees, the possible savings, service alternatives and other factors.

For each office, a community meeting will be held to discuss the process. Mr. Sperry said those haven't been scheduled yet for Norcatur or Herndon.

He said he thought in the next few weeks, those post offices should receive a letter with the date, time and location of the meetings. Along with that will be a survey for customers to fill out and send in.

Customers, he said, will also receive a letter in the mail about the meeting.

Scott Hartzog of Norcatur has written a letter to the editor (printed on Page 4A of today's *Oberlin Herald*) encouraging people to write letters to elected officials.

The Decatur County commissioners approved and signed resolutions against closing the post offices in both Herndon and Norcatur during a recent meeting. The commissioners, too, encourage people to write letters to congressmen and senators opposing the plan.

The resolutions note that the Herndon Post Office opened Oct. 18, 1880, and the Norcatur office on Oct. 30, 1885, and both have served their towns from more than 125 years.

In the past five years, said Mr. Sperry, mail volume has declined by 25 percent, or by 43 billion pieces of mail, due to a poor economy and use of e-mail and online alternatives. Unfortunately, he said, the amount of first class mail is dwindling.

The service lost \$8.5 billion last year and projects to lose \$8 billion this year, he

said. The agency, he said, doesn't run on taxpayer dollars. It is operated by fees and revenue. The service is trying to reduce costs, save money and streamline the operations while maintaining a high level of service, he added.

Nationwide, there are 3,700 locations under study. These offices have less than two hours a day of workload, said Mr. Sperry, although the offices are open longer than that. There isn't a lot of foot traffic in the locations and under \$50 a day in sales.

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AT THE CARNIVAL last week, Kelly Wasson and her son Mitchell (above) rode the Ferris wheel while Andrea Spanier (below) took her daughter Evie on the merry-go-

round. The carnival was open every night Tuesday through Sunday.

— Herald staff photos by Kim Davis

Rides get to go all week

The Home-Owned Carnival opened every night of the Decatur County Fair without a hitch as kids, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents turned out to ride the rides and play the games.

The carnival kicked off on Tuesday with wrist-band night. The \$15 wrist band allowed the wearing to ride all rides an unlimited amount of times.

The rest of the evenings, rides were run by tickets, sold in the two booths at the fairground.

Judy Scott, president of the Decatur County Amusement Authority, said things had gone well.

Throughout the week, people stepped up and covered the games and rides that needed volunteers. It seemed like people wanted to help out.

The number of people attending the carnival might have been down a little this year, she said, because of the humidity and threat of storms a couple of nights.

Tuesday is normally the slowest night, said Ms. Scott, but Wednesday and Thursday also were slow this year. Friday and Saturday saw



good crowds, however.

A great crew showed up Sunday morning to help tear everything down. Ms. Scott said they got everything put away and had enough volunteers to help do some extra work.

It was just like the set-up day, she said, with things going smoothly.

"I am just amazed at the change in the past three years," said Ms. Scott, "with people stepping forward to help."

The volunteers put up the signs that the authority found with the names of the people who have helped with the rides over the years.

The authority asked for bids for

the old storage trailers and have received a few. Ms. Scott said they plan to bring in new storage units.

The authority board plans a wrap-up meeting at 6:30 p.m. tonight to go over everything, she said.

Harvest ends as farmers cut terrace channels

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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While a few farmers were finally cutting terrace channels last week, elevator operators say the summer's wheat harvest has pretty much been over for better than a week and a half.

At the Hansen Mueller elevator in Oberlin, Janice O'Hare said a few trucks came in last week and there might be one or two more from farmers cutting terraces that were just too wet earlier.

During harvest, she said, rain kept farmers and harvest crews out of the fields for days at a time, and the terraces were too wet to cut in some places.

Mrs. O'Hare said harvest had gone well. There were no accidents, and both the firm's elevators – in Oberlin and Cedar Bluffs – were pretty much full. She said they didn't have to put any wheat on the ground at either location.

She said Hansen Mueller has almost 1.1 million bushels of wheat in storage at the two elevators.

The quality of the crop went down a little as harvest went on because of the rain. Mrs. O'Hare added that she thought people were happy with the yields.

Quite a bit of the wheat has al-

ready been sold, she said, but that will probably slow down now that the market has been down for three or four days.

Mrs. O'Hare said they started taking in wheat on Tuesday, June 28.

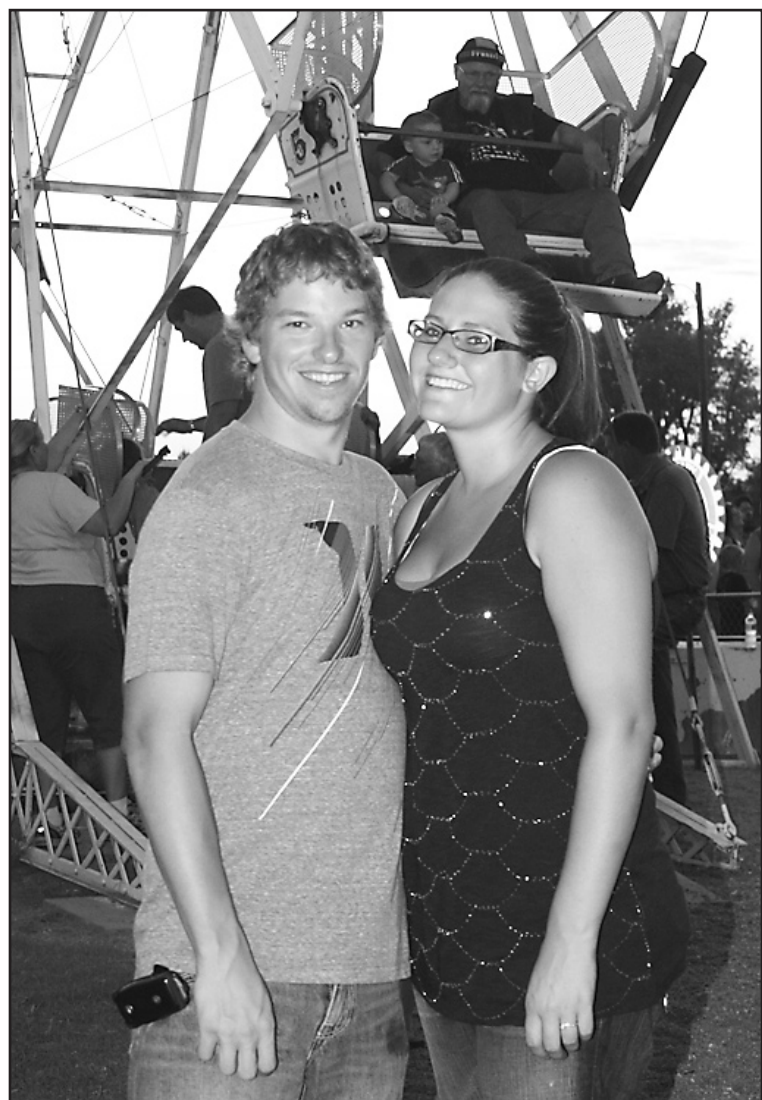
The Decatur Co-op, said grain manager Fred Brubaker, ended up with 3.7 million bushels wheat, down a little from last year. The previous two years had really good yields, he added.

While harvest started out in great, towards the end, elevators reported fairly light test weights. Mr. Brubaker said they took in as much wheat with test weights about 60 pounds per bushel as below. It evened out, he said.

He said they haven't seen as much selling as in years past. Lots of the grain is still in the 30-day storage window, he said.

Harvest started at the co-op on Saturday, June 25. There were a few trucks coming in last week, with some of the terraces dry enough to be cut, he said.

There is some ground south of town, said Mr. Brubaker, where the terraces might not ever get cut because of the amount of rain. Farmers might ask if it's worth the trouble to go back so long after harvest, he said.



LANE RIETCHECK and his fiancée, Allie Samson, in front of the Ferris wheel at the Home-Owned Carnival in Oberlin on Saturday night. The couple became engaged after he popped the question at the top of the ride at the beginning of the week.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Man proposes on ride

High above the Decatur County Fairground in Oberlin, an Oakley man popped the question last Wednesday night.

Lane Rietcheck proposed to Allie Samson while stopped at the top of the Ferris wheel during the second evening of the Home-Owned Carnival.

Miss Samson, a 2008 graduate of

Decatur Community High School, said "yes," and the couple has already chosen a wedding date for next summer.

Miss Samson said they have been

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Missionaries arrive in town in Jaguar

By MARY LOU OLSON
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When a beautiful green 1998 Jaguar pulled down Main Street in Oberlin last week, it captured the attention of many onlookers.

What they did not know was that the two women in the car, longtime friends who became Catholic sisters and missionaries, felt they had been drawn to Oberlin for a special reason.

Susan Rynearson and her friend, Kathleen Worlickey, said they were actually just passing through on U.S. 83, traveling from Lampasas, Texas, where they had been doing mission work. They were headed for Townsend, Mont., where they planned to check in at a motel for some rest needed due to health problems.

The women said they stopped for

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New principal learns about district

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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Saying he wants to get involved in the community and get the community involved in the school, Decatur Community High's new principal had jumped into the job with both feet.

Ben Jimenez started work for the Oberlin School District last week, on Monday, Aug. 1. Ev-

ery district, he said, does some things differently, so he's spent his first week learning about the district and meeting some of the people.

He said he worked in the concession stand at the Decatur County Fair and he and his wife and three kids have been getting out to events and getting to know

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