

# Key institutions hooked to fiber, not rest of town

Fiber-optic cable serving 13 public offices and buildings in Oberlin is ready to go, the City Council learned Thursday, with the school district buildings already hooked up.

Jeff Wick, with Nex-Tech and Rural Telephone Service Co. of Lenora, told the council Thursday that the 13 "anchor institutions," as the company is calling them, include The Gateway, city offices, the Decatur County courthouse and sheriff's department, the city library, the school district buildings, the hospital, county health department, police department, Golden Age Center, the Hospitality House next to the hospital, the Last Indian Raid Museum, and the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce and Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development Corp., both in the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center downtown.

Nex-Tech, a for-profit subsidiary of Rural Telephone, planned to bring fiber-based broadband Internet and telephone service to every home in Oberlin, Mr. Wick said, but found there is no room for the fiber cable on the city's power poles. City Administrator Karen Larson then challenged the company to bring fiber to some public institutions.

The company, said Mr. Wick, is hooking up the public buildings and offering free wireless Internet, or "wi-fi," hot spots at three places in town, including the library, The Gateway and the museum. However, it has dropped plans to serve homes and businesses here.

Nex-Tech is still on schedule for

the fall launch of its Wimax wireless broadband service, which will cover the entire town, he said.

It's good to ask questions, said Mr. Wick, and to give the company a challenge, just like Mrs. Larson did. He said he came to the meeting to give an update on what's going on.

Councilman Rusty Addleman asked if it's true that the entire town couldn't be covered for fiber because of the power poles. He asked if the firm looked at all the poles.

"That's a great question," said Mr. Wick. "We had some very serious discussions with our engineering firm, because that is something that they were supposed to look at."

He said Nex-Tech takes the blame, because ultimately they could have looked at the town a little closer, but they had confidence in the engineering firm.

"Was this a government-funded project?" asked Mr. Addleman.

Nex-Tech got a broadband grant for areas of rural Kansas, Mr. Wick said. It was 51 percent loan and 49 percent grant that covered everything outside the City of Oberlin. The company already had a government loan for the job inside Oberlin, he said.

Nex-Tech has already brought quite a bit of fiber to the community, said Mr. Wick, and the Wi-max will be ready to go this fall.

He said he would like to continue working with the city, but it doesn't work to bury the cable because of the cost. The money is still available if Nex-Tech decides to offer fiber to the premise, he added.

## Get the point



ON THE FIRST DAY of school Friday, Josh Juenemann, 6, points to something in the front of Kimberly Witt's first-grade room.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

# Sappa Park set to go 'Up in Smoke'

Teams of four are needed to try their hands at cooking in the fourth annual Up in Smoke Barbecue Cookoff at Sappa Park next month.

The barbecue on Saturday, Sept. 10, is open to the public — both to eat the delicious entries and to come cook.

It costs \$50 for the team to enter the competition, said committee member Cindy Lincoln. For that, the committee provides a pork butt, beef brisket and two racks of ribs for each team. The teams can bring their own beans to cook.

For the first time this year, the committee has added a dessert category and "mystery meat" competition. The mystery meat will also be provided by the committee and the public will judge it. The contest also has an open category.

All the entries have to be cooked on a grill. While teams don't have to enter in all the categories, Mrs. Lincoln said, it's to their advantage since the overall competition runs on a point system.

The committee, said Mrs. Lincoln, is expecting 20 teams for the barbecue this year.

Each category will have a first and second place award. The winners will get trophies and bragging rights.

Starting around 3:30 p.m., live music will be provided at the park. Mrs. Lincoln said three blue grass groups will perform into the evening, including Tom and Patsy Jones, Last Gasp and Highway 385.

People can come to the park early to enjoy the music, she said.

Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. The committee will provide table service and refreshments. Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

The committee is already sell-

ing tickets for a chance to win a Traeger grill at one ticket for \$1 or six for \$5.

Profits from the barbecue go to Sappa Park development, said Mrs. Lincoln. After last year's event, the committee donated \$2,000 to update electric service at the park.

Entry forms are available at www.oberlinks.com, she said. The last day to sign up is Friday, Sept. 2.

Besides Mrs. Lincoln, the committee includes Patti Uehlin, Connie Riedel, Jill Reichert, Judy Groneweg and Sherry Bergling. Anyone interested in helping with the barbecue may call any of the members.

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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The Oberlin City Council tabled a discussion Thursday on a request to close an alley so the members could talk to the city attorney during their next meeting.

A hearing to close the alley between Roger and Nancy Robinson's house and Stan and Tami McEvoy's house on East Ash Street was scheduled for Thursday after the request had been published in *The Oberlin Herald*.

Mr. McEvoy said he and his wife have no objections to the alley being closed. He said they hardly use it.

City Administrator Karen Larson said both Foreman Dan Castle and Willard Perrin, with the city water department, want to talk about the alley because the city crews need access to utility lines behind homes.

There are several places in town, said Mr. Castle, where there are no

open alleys. The alleys were either never built or have been closed, he said.

"We dread ever having a problem in one of those alleys," the foreman added.

There are sewer lines, water and electric that run through the alleys, he said, adding that he objects to closing any alleys in the city because the crews need access.

Mr. Perrin agreed.

Mrs. Robinson said she and her husband want the little-used alley closed to through traffic because it is too close (within 10 feet) of their home. At night, she said, people drive through the alley "playing games." Of course, she said, the city would still have access to the utilities.

Mrs. McEvoy asked if there could be an easement so the city can have access to the utilities, but people wouldn't be driving in the alley.

"We maintain the alley," said Mrs. Robinson, adding that the work includes mowing it and trying to keep the weeds down.

Mayor Bill Riedel said he understands the city's point. If the alley is closed, then theoretically it isn't accessible and people can grow lawns or gardens on it.

"Just because we as a council close it, can't people still drive down it?" asked Councilman Rusty Addleman.

Councilwoman Fonda Farr said if the alley is open now, it needs to be kept open for access to the utilities. She added that she understands the homeowners not wanting people driving up and down it close to their house.

Councilman Rob McFee said since he's been on the council, the city has closed two alleys. Both had sewer and power lines in them. He said he didn't think it was a good

idea at the time, and he still doesn't think it's a good idea, but the council set a precedent.

"Is there a way to close the alley to people driving down it," Mrs. McEvoy asked, "but leave it open for utilities?"

An open alley, said Police Chief Wade Lockhart, is technically considered a public street. If it's open, he said, people can't be denied access.

One of the alleys closed in the past, said Mr. Castle, was the one behind his house. He said he fought that, but a third of the alley was closed because a house and shed had already been built on it.

The council decided to wait to talk with City Attorney Steve Hirsch about the alley before making any decisions. He wasn't at the meeting, so the discussion was tabled.

## JENNINGS 20th ANNUAL FIREMEN'S FUN DAY Saturday, August 27, 2011

(ALWAYS THE 4TH SATURDAY OF AUGUST)

Parade Theme: "Happy Birthday Kansas - Celebrating 150 years of Statehood"

**8:00-10:00 Health Fair** - Sr. Center (sponsored by Decatur Health Systems, Family Practice Clinic and Decatur Co. EMS) Health Fair Profile-\$35 (must be fasting) includes thyroid, lipid (cholesterol) profile, CBC, ChemProfile, Uric Acid, C-reactive Protein and Hemoglobin A1C. **New This Year Vitamin D Level - \$25**, Prostate Cancer Screening-\$20; free BP, blood sugar, diabetic education

**8:00-10:00 Kolache Coffee** - Sr. Center. Welcome Sean Conroy PA.-C (sponsored by United Methodist Church) Sean will evaluate skin lesions and answer health questions. *Kolaches sold all day at fire station (as long as they last) - \$1 each*

**8:00-3:00 Community Garage Sale and Bake Sale** - American Legion Hall (1/2 block east of City Hall)

**10:00 Children's Games Begin/Dunk Tank. Coin Search** - Main St., Giant Slide - Heritage Park

**10:00 Pony Rides** - Peggy Westmorland, Oakley

**10:00 Train Rides for Kids** - Main Street, Courtesy of Greg Otter, Lenora

**10:00 Cake Walk** - City Hall sponsored By Mary Wahlmeier

**10:00-Wii Games** Main St (courtesy of Nex-Tech)

**10:00-5:00 Wobble-Trap Shoot** - 1/2 mile north of Jennings on County RD #385, Kenny Wildeman farm. Bring your own shotgun and plenty of shells! Follow the signs

**10:30-1:00-Saftey Demo**-Midwest Energy in front of Fire Station

**11:00-1:00-3:00-Honor Flight Presentation**-George Launchbaugh, Gayle Bainter, Cindy Schnelle (city hall)

**11:00-5:00 Czech Museum Open** - Free admission, donations appreciated

**11:00-5:00 Bingo** - Sr. Center, closed at noon until after the parade. Tickets 3\$/1 or 50¢ each

**11:30 Lunch Counter Opens** - Fire Station

**12:30-1:00 Line-up for Parade** - South end of Penn Ave., aka School Street. Please be prompt, all entries appreciated, no pre-registration, no entry fee

Parade will be led by the American Legion Post #63 motorcycle group

**12:30 All females competing for title of "Jennings Firemen's Fun Day Queen"**, must register at parade site, no age limit

All children's games close at 1:00 for parade

**1:30 Parade** - Main Street. Queen candidates will be introduced at conclusion of parade. Ashley Vacura, reigning queen

**Vote for Queen** - At speakers stand. 1 vote per person. Voting concludes at 5 p.m.

**2:30 Children's Games Resume** - Funnel cakes, sno-cones

**2:30 Registration for Children's Tractor Pull** - Heritage Park, ages 4-12

**3:00 Children's Tractor Pull** - Heritage Park, sponsored by Great Northwest Insurance Agency. Sanctioned for State Fair

**4:00 Free Bike Give Away** - With helmet, 1 boy's, 1 girl's, courtesy of Jennings Fire Department/EMS. Must be 12 years old or under, must be present to win. Sign up at speaker's stand or kolache stand

**4:00 Firemen's Team Barrel Competition**

**6:00 Hog Roast** - Fire station (Barbecued pulled pork, beans, chips)

**7:00 Crowning of Fun Day Queen**

**7:00 Auction** - Donated items from area businesses and individuals

**Firemen's Raffle** - TV, Surround Sound System, Portable DVD Player. Winners announced at auction. Need not be present to win

**Street Dance with Mobile Music Express DJs, Oberlin, to follow the auction**

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:  
KERRY GREEN, 678-2647, STANN HARTZOG, 678-3020, OR  
MARGE HARTZOG, 678-3010 OR ANY MEMBER OF THE JENNINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT



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