



## City talks rules

### Nuisance rule might change

The consensus of the Oberlin City Council during a work session last Thursday was to make complaints and letters on the city's nuisance property ordinance more specific so property owners can understand them and respond more easily.

Since the meeting was called as a work session and not a regular or special meeting, the council couldn't take any action on what members wanted to change or leave in the ordinance. While the members couldn't vote, they did come to a consensus on five points.

The council agreed to tighten or clarify the nuisance ordinance, starting with a requirement that each complaint has to be signed by two Oberlin residents who are 18 or older.

Mr. Hirsch said the only change would mean the revised ordinance would have to be published if the council decides that the complaints need two signatures from Oberlin residents 18 and older.

The ordinance was taken from an example sent from the League of Kansas Municipalities and adopted by the council in 1989, said Mayor Bill Riedel.

The ordinance, he said, especially the part pertaining to the health nuisances, is subjective. It's got so much room for judgment, he said, that everyone might interpret it differently.

When it says that people can have lumber in their yard, for example, how much can they have or not have? Does that include firewood? If it's not against the house, is that OK?

The ordinance leaves it so anyone can file a complaint even if they don't live in the same neighborhood, he said. They just need two signatures.

The council, he said, has nothing to say on the complaints until the code enforcement officer brings one in for a decision. There is no time for council members to look at the property or do any kind of research.

If the council could change the ordinance to make it less subjective, he said, that would be good.

The previous council, said Mayor Riedel, told Jan Ackerman, the city's contract code enforcement officer, that she has to have a written complaint before she does anything.

He said he doesn't want to get into (See CITY on Page 8A)

## Veterans honored at parade, program

ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, veterans Alan Marietta (above, from left), Sid Metcalf, Jim Miesner, Warren Bainter and John Bremer marched in the Veterans Day parade on Main Street. Bob Martin (below) carried the American Flag while Crystal Mahan had the Veterans of Foreign Wars flag. Caleb Hileman (left) talked briefly about his grandfather, Bernard Hileman, during a presentation at the grade school.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



## Recreation ballots to go out next week

Ballots to determine if a new recreation commission should receive property-tax money will be mailed out next Wednesday.

The mail ballots need to be returned to the county clerk's office by Tuesday, Dec. 13, said Greg Grafel, a member of the recreation commission.

All registered voters in the Oberlin School District will

receive the ballots. Anyone who isn't registered to vote but lives in the Oberlin School District can register until Tuesday at the county clerk's office.

If the vote passes, the recreation commission could collect a property tax levy of up to 1 mill. This year, that brought in around \$29,000, said Superintendent (See BALLOTS on Page 8A)

## County food pantry needs a few of the basics

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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While donations to the Decatur County Food Pantry have been steady, the agency still needs a few of the basics.

Melanie Anderson, who organizes the pantry in the basement of the United Church, said they always need basics like canned vegetables,

fruit and tuna, flour, sugar, toothpaste and toothbrushes.

Miss Anderson said she hasn't gone through the numbers yet and won't until the end of the year, but it seems like the pantry has been used about the same amount as last year.

With timely, steady donations, she said, they have been able to keep up with the demand, and the pantry continues to get both money and food donations.

(See PANTRY on Page 8A)

## Feed Yard celebrates 40 years of growth

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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Forty years ago, the Decatur County Feed Yard got its start with the help of area investors and bankers.

Today, the yard, north of Oberlin on U.S. 83, is known around the world as an innovator in the beef industry. Since opening its pens, the feed yard has grown from 18,000 head to 40,000.

Warren Weibert and his wife Carol, who started working at the yard in February 1977, now own the facility.

Mr. Weibert said the facility has 17 employees, full-time and seasonal. Several have worked there for a long time. Danny Eiler has been on the payroll since 1976, Mr. Weibert since 1977, Doug Horn since 1984 and Darren Agan since 1994.

Mr. Weibert said Kevin Unger, the present manager, has worked at the yard two or three times.

A community movement to build a feed yard here got started in 1971 when Fred Willard was hired as the manager.

Howard Benton, then head of the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, led the effort.

According to the Sept. 30, 1971, edition of *The Oberlin Herald*, Mr. Benton was elected the president of

Decatur County Community Yard Inc., formed to lease facilities from a separate development company and operate the feed lot.

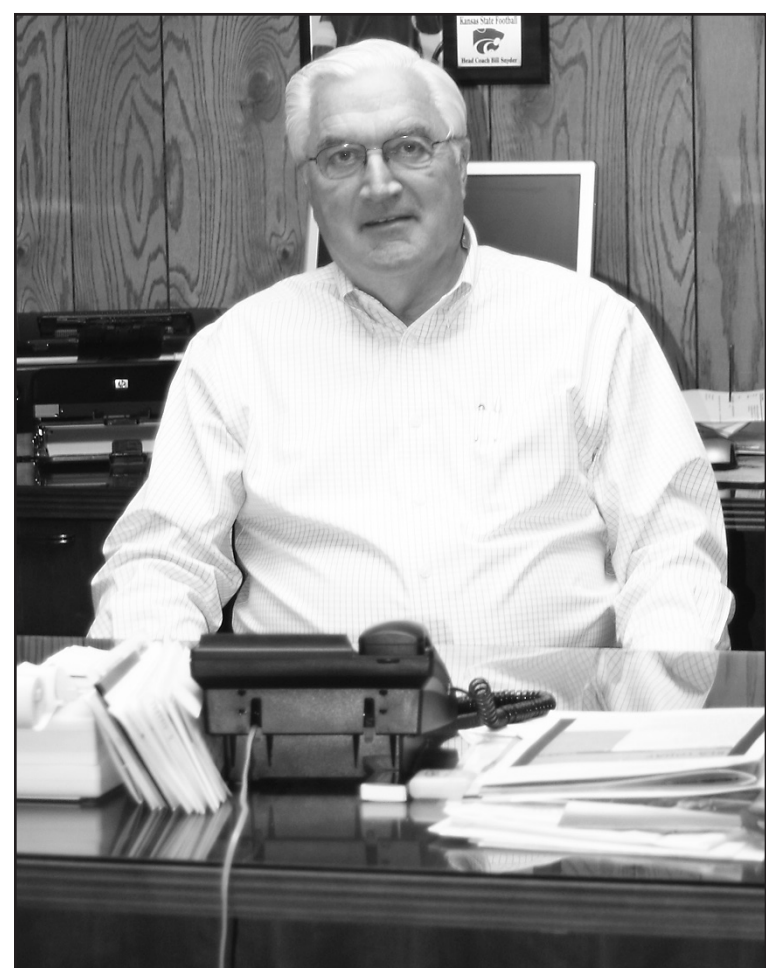
Don Kump was elected president of Decatur County Area Development Inc., organized to borrow money through the U.S. Small Business Administration and lease cattle-feeding facilities to the operating firm. The county's banks pitched in to make a loan.

The Herald reported that in October, George Hardy was hired as assistant manager. An article that same month said the federal agency would guarantee its limit of \$350,000 on a \$480,000 loan to be made by the five financial institutions in Decatur County.

Another \$270,000 was to be raised in the county, bringing the total to \$750,000.

The four in charge of raising the money to get the feed yard on its feet were Mr. Benton, Harold Lohoefer, Milton Nitsch and Bob Rapp. The goal of \$270,000 was met, the largest amount ever raised in a local effort here.

In November 1971, grading started at the site five miles north of town. Mr. Willard started taking bids for construction. In the same edition, he said he planned to run the (See INVESTORS on Page 8A)



AT THE DECATUR FEED YARD, owner Warren Weibert talked of changes over the past 40 years.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

