

Voters to determine recreation tax

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Voters in the Oberlin School District will decide if the Decatur Recreation Commission should be able to collect a property tax of up to 1 mill in a mail election starting this week.

Nora Urban, deputy county clerk, said the ballots were to be in the mail to voters by Tuesday. They must be returned to the clerk's office by noon on Tuesday, Dec. 13, to be counted by election judges.

However, if the ballot is postmarked by Tuesday, Dec. 13, said County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, who serves as the county

election officer, when the commissioners canvass later in the week, those votes can be added into the totals.

A "yes" vote means the person is in favor of the tax, she said, and a "no" vote means the person opposed the tax.

The Recreation Commission won't actually get the money until 2013, if the measure gets a majority in favor.

Currently, 1 mill for the Oberlin School District raises \$29,000, said Superintendent Duane Dorshorst.

Deanna Castle, a member of the commission, said the effort began in February 2010 when Decatur Tomorrow held a "com-

munity conversation" on recreation. The recreation director from Greeley County talked about how that county created and managed its program. From that meeting, she said, 22 people expressed an interest in going forward with a recreation commission here.

Since then, said Mrs. Castle, the group has been looking into the best options for Decatur County.

A group of nine supporters has been working to get the recreation commission going since that first meeting, she said. The group has representatives from the Golden Age Center, the school, city, county, hospi-

tal and businesses.

If the measure passes, said Mrs. Castle, the commission plans to take over existing sports programs, such as baseball and kid football, and start new ones for children and adults.

Supporters plan to use the tax money to buy new equipment for several sports and to pay a director. The commission needs equipment for baseball, football, volleyball, basketball and other sports.

The director's position will be part-time to start, she said. One thing the director would do is handle paperwork for volunteers now who coach and want to continue,

but don't want to do the extra paperwork that's required, organize and schedule the games, take phone calls or do any of that. The volunteers, she said, want to be able to just coach.

The director would be in charge of the paperwork and other items, said Mrs. Castle.

"We are very lucky to have the coaches in town that we have," she added.

Having a director, said Mrs. Castle, would give everyone a single person to go through and a central location.

She said the commission has been offered (See VOTERS on Page 10A)



AT THE CHAMBER CRAFT SHOW on Saturday at The Gateway, Kristin Johnson of Hoxie (above) worked on a piece of her gourd art. Dawn Louderback (below)

helped her mom sell crocheted kids' hats.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Court date set for Monday in murder case

A court appearance is set for 1:30 p.m. Monday in the murder case against Dylan Coryell Jr.

While a preliminary hearing had been set for November, it was continued until Monday. Jeff Wagaman, deputy chief of staff for Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt, said both parties agreed to the continuance.

Mr. Wagaman said Mr. Coryell, 24, is being held in the Decatur County jail with bond set at \$500,000, cash or surety.

The court appearance will include a review and status update, where lawyers for the state and defense will discuss the status of discovery and the court may schedule a pre-

liminary hearing.

Mr. Coryell faces three charges for allegedly shooting Airman Corey Cook, 22.

The first count is for premeditated murder in the first degree with an alternative charge of felony murder in the first degree. A felony murder charge applies when a death occurs during a planned felony crime, regardless of whether the death was planned.

The second count is aggravated battery for alleged injuries to Sarah Campbell, and the third is for aggravated burglary for entering the home where the shooting occurred. Both are felonies.

Shoppers needed to fill kids' wishes

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Time is running out for people who want to shop for one of the kids on the Christmas Angel Tree at Rocking R, and for those who'd like to get their kids involved in the program.

Britton and Amber Scott are organizing the tree for the Oberlin Jaycee's this year. Mrs. Scott said they have received 41 forms for kids for the tree. That's down quite a bit from last year when there were 80 forms, she said.

Last year, Mrs. Scott said, was the biggest year on record as far as the number of kids on the Angel Tree. She added that she's not sure why there are fewer kids this year. The very last day for parents and guardians to turn forms in is Friday, so there might be a few more.

Anyone who hasn't yet filed out a form and wants to can pick one up at the grade school or Raye's Grocery.

The forms ask for the name, age, gender, parents' names, address, phone number and specifics of what the kids need, the Scotts said. That can include shirts, pants or jeans, shoes or snow boots, socks, coat, gloves and any special requests. Family information is kept confidential.

The forms can be turned in to the Scotts at 509 N. York Oberlin, Kan. 67749 or to the Decatur Health Systems Family Practice Clinic at 902 W. Columbia, Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Mrs. Scott said they have received forms on kids from newborns to age 17.

For those who chose an "angel" from the tree, wrapped gifts need to be turned in at Rocking R by Wednesday, Dec. 14. Parents and guardians can pick the gifts up between 4 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 21, at the store.

Mrs. Scott said if people can't pick up the gifts at that time, they need to make other arrangements by calling her at 475-4800.

Included with the gifts will be a bag of fruit for each family. Mrs. Scott said the fruit has already been ordered through the Decatur Community High FFA chapter. She said they also plan to give kids movie passes again this year.

If you want to pick a form for an Angel Tree kid, said Mrs. Scott, there are still some available on the tree at Rocking R on Main Street. The forms people get off the tree list the child's gender, age and needs, she noted, but not their name or any personal identification.

Annual food drive starts with 388 items

Just one week into the annual food drive at Stanley Hardware, people have already donated 388 items.

The drive officially started Friday, with food and other nonperishable items displayed in the window of the hardware store on Main Street.

The goal is for 2,000 items to be collected by the end of 2011 and then donated to the Food Pantry in the basement of the United Church. That leaves 4 1/2 weeks for people to donate 1,612 items.

Crafts draw buyers

Shoppers milled around The Gateway all day Saturday, walking among the booths and picking up Christmas gifts and items for themselves during the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce's annual Holiday Craft Show.

The show brought out booths with items including purses, plastic containers, jewelry, crocheted hats, fleece blankets, stained-glass windows and others.

Chamber Director Carolyn Hackney said they had 53 booths occupied. She said she thought the show went well and most of the vendors sold items.

It seemed like quite a few people came in, said Ms. Hackney, with a steady crowd all day.

There were several repeat vendors and a handful of new ones. Ms. Hackney said several said they would be back next year for another show.

One of the new vendors was Rae Walker with Crocheted Creations. Mrs. Walker had two tables full of crocheted hats for kids. Some of the hats had designs, while others looked like animals.

Mrs. Walker said she's never been to a craft show before. She (See CRAFT on Page 10A)



Family moves to Oberlin and opens custom knife and leather shop

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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A man's hobby has turned into a business for a Texas couple who recently relocated to Oberlin.

Jerry and Debbie Smith and their sons moved from just south of Waco, Texas, to Oberlin recently.

Mr. Smith makes custom knives from scratch. He also makes leather goods, including belts, Bible covers

and guitar straps. Mrs. Smith sells Scentsy and makes western jewelry and flip-flop sandals.

Mr. Smith said he's never had a store front before but wanted one for his knives and leather products. The couple found the shop at 111 S. Penn Avenue on the Internet and operate J.S. Custom Knives and Sappa Creek Leather Goods. They were looking for a town that was

centrally located and had potential, he said.

The couple bought the old bakery, the building to the north and the upstairs apartment from Eric Swiegel. Mr. Smith said he is putting a workshop in the back of the bakery.

The couple said they are looking into putting in a courtyard as well. Mrs. Smith said she brought with her lots and lots of plants, includ-

ing iris bulbs that date back to the 1950s.

In June of this year, said Mr. Smith, he was featured in Blade Magazine for his knife business. He said he has lots of knives in Afghanistan right now, as many of his customers serve in the military.

Mrs. Smith said her husband was in the automotive industry for 25 years. He had high blood pressure

and the doctor told him to get a hobby. His mom had given him a knife and he wanted the sister knife to it, but it was expensive.

Instead he bought some machinery to make knives with his Christmas bonus. He made two, she said, keeping one, and selling the other on eBay.

The business took off from there. A lot of customers, said Mr. Smith,

find him because of word of mouth. He said he's made knives for clientele ranging from people who have just gone into the military to those who have served for years, and many others.

(See COUPLE on Page 10A)

