

## Council authorizes negotiations

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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The Oberlin City Council has authorized the city administrator to negotiate with Sunflower Electric Power Co. for a new contract for power.

At a meeting Thursday, all members voted in favor of Administrator Karen Larson negotiating the agreement.

The city's current contract runs out at the end of this year, said Mayor Bill Riedel. He said he and City Foreman Dan Castle have attended several meetings and heard lots of proposals. It's confusing and quite complicated.

The city received proposals from the Kansas Municipal Energy Association and Sunflower Electric, he said.

Mayor Riedel said the city currently buys from the association and also has 1,500 kilowatts of "firm" power from Sunflower. The city also has a contract 900 kilowatts of federal hydro power from Colorado.

The proposed contract from the association would require the city to bring its power plant up to current environmental standards and declare what capacity it could generate from the plant. That would cost \$100,000 to \$200,000, said Mayor Riedel.

With the proposed Sunflower contract, said Mayor Riedel, the capacity of the plant doesn't have to be declared and it doesn't have to be in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency standards. If the city were to get one or two of the generators up to standards, said Mayor Riedel, it could sell power to Sunflower.

Mayor Riedel said the Sunflower contract would provide power for about 6.2 cents per kilowatt hour.

He said he, Mr. Castle and Mrs. Larson have talked a lot about the contracts. Mayor Riedel recommended going with the contract from Sunflower for 10 years. He

## Council to continue discussion

The Oberlin City Council plans to continue a discussion on the electric contract at the meeting on Thursday.

At the meeting on Thursday, Dec. 8 the council approved City Administrator Karen Larson negotiating for an adequate contract with Sunflower Electric before the end of the year.

The council will also hear about water rates after hiring a Kansas company to do a water rate analysis earlier in the year.

The council also will work on doing some year end clean-up.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. upstairs in The Gateway. It is open to the public.

added that the city has a good relationship with Sunflower.

"What does the city pay now?" asked City Attorney Steve Hirsch.

Seventeen cents for firm power, said Mayor Riedel, 5.3 cents for hydro power and then some off the open market. That can go for 5 to 10 cents a kilowatt, said Mr. Castle.

Mr. Hirsch asked what the average cost of a kilowatt hour is now? Around 5 to 6 cents, said Mr. Castle. With the new contract it will actually be a little cheaper, he said, but only about a tenth of a cent.

Mrs. Larson said after discussing the contracts she thinks Sunflower is the best deal.

The council asked Mrs. Larson to negotiate the terms before the end of the year.

## Santa Claus is coming



AT SANTA'S MAILBOX on Main Street, Tony Kuhlman kindergartners from Oberlin Elementary School walked downtown. — Herald staff photo by Pat Cozad

## Prize drawing to be Saturday

The grand prize of \$1,000 in scrip money will be given away on Saturday in the Oberlin Merchants' big annual "Christmas on Us" promotion.

It just takes one red ticket, collected from area merchants in the last five weeks, to win. But the winning shopper must be present Saturday with the ticket to claim the prize.

For the past four weeks, shoppers have had a chance to find ticket numbers in sponsors' ads to collect an instant \$50 in scrip money.

So far, seven prizes have been claimed, leaving three to be given away this week.

This week, four winners brought in winning tickets to The Oberlin Herald. Pam Simonsson brought in ticket No. 322142, which she

received at the Home Planning Center. Mrs. Simonsson said she plans to spend the money on Christmas presents.

Janice Cundiff brought in ticket No. 880194, which she received at R&M Service Center, and also plans to spend it on Christmas gifts.

Greg and Marie Miller brought in ticket No. 290454, which they got at the LandMark. Mr. Miller said they plan to spend the money "all over town."

Walter Meitl had ticket No. 217272, which he picked up at the Chamber office. Mr. Meitl said he plans to spend the money on groceries.

Seven instant ticket numbers are hidden in this week's ads. The first three people with a matching ticket can bring it into *The Herald* before

5 p.m. on Friday to collect their \$50 prize.

Any instant prize not claimed by the close of business on Friday will be given away prior to the grand prize drawing. The drawing is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at the gazebo in Centennial Park, unless the weather is bad. If the weather is bad, the drawing will be moved to west side of the Golden Age Center.

All winners must be present and must have the winning ticket. All winners agree to be photographed and interviewed by the newspaper.

This year's sponsors include the LandMark, Stanley Hardware, Raye's, Ward Drug Store, the Carpet Center, the Dresser, Home Planning Center, the Bank, R&M and Dale's Fish 'N' Fun.

For the past five weeks shoppers have picked up one ticket for every \$10 spent at sponsoring businesses. People also can get one ticket a week from the newspaper office or from the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce.

No purchase is required to win any prize. Tickets are limited to 250 for any single purchase.

All prizes are paid in scrip, which can be used at sponsoring businesses only. Merchants are not required to give change.

Employees of sponsoring businesses are not eligible to get tickets at the place of their employment. Employees of the newspaper and their immediate family aren't eligible to win any prize.

## Postal Service might send mail to Colorado for sorting

By **KEVIN BOTTRELL**  
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In what is becoming a familiar sight around northwest Kansas, U.S. Postal Service representatives were in Colby this week to talk about where they might be sending our mail to be sorted.

The service wants to move mail processing from Colby, where workers now collect and sort letters from most of northwest Kansas, to Denver. The Colby proposal is one of a slew of new studies looking at mail processing across the country which could result in mail being sorted in one or two plants in each state—and closing of more than 250, ranging from Hays to Topeka.

The service would consolidate work from Salina, Hutchinson, Hays and Dodge City into Wichita; Liberal into Amarillo, Texas; and Topeka into Kansas City, Mo. Wichita would be the only remaining mail

plant in Kansas.

Postal officials were to meet with the public at the student union at Colby Community College. The agency is required by federal law to hold public meetings like this to share study findings and record public comments.

The service announced this latest study in September, just days before moving most of the mail processing once done in Colby and Hays to Salina. If the Salina processing facility is closed, Colby's mail would need somewhere else to go. A public meeting was held earlier this month in Salina.

The service ended its fiscal year with a \$5.1 billion loss, officials say, citing a decline in mail volume of 3 billion pieces from 2010. Revenue from first-class mail, the service's most profitable product, fell by \$2 billion.

Postmaster General Patrick Do-

nahoe said if the service is to make a profit again, it has to reduce its costs by \$20 billion a year in the next four years.

Preliminary study results say moving processing to Denver would save \$28,426 per year, with another \$323 of maintenance savings. The transportation costs, however, would be \$14,337, making for a net savings of \$14,412. Colby would lose one job. Employee reassignments would be made according to the collective bargaining agreements with employee unions, which mostly bar layoffs.

If implemented, the consolidation would mean a change in service for letter mail from overnight within the Colby area to two to three days, the service says. In contrast, the Postal Service promoted the move to Salina as retaining overnight service, as long as the mail made it onto (See MAIL on Page 12A)

## Businesses to stay open late

Oberlin stores plan to stay open late Thursday for the third annual Ladies Shopping Night sponsored by the Oberlin Business Alliance.

Participating businesses will stay open from 9 to 11 p.m. Some plan to have snacks and drinks for shoppers and some might have in-store specials for that night.

Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug Store, said Ladies Shopping Night started three years ago to accommodate shoppers after they had maybe put the kids to bed or their husbands were home. The shopping evenings are an alternative to staying open late each night.

He added that the Ladies and Men's Shopping Nights are kind of a fun outing too.

people in the stores on Thursday. Just be the first to find a green paper Christmas tree hanging at participating Oberlin Business Alliance stores.

Anyone who finds a tree that night can turn it in at the Decatur County Area Chamber office to receive \$25

in Santa Bucks. While there will be a tree in each member business, said Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher of *The Oberlin Herald*, a person can win only once. The alliance will be doing the same promotion for the Men's Shopping Night on Thursday, Dec. 22.

## Food drive needs items

Food and personnel hygiene items and cleaning supplies are stacking up nicely in the south window of Stanley Hardware.

People have donated 309 items since last Monday, bringing the total up to 770 so far for the Decatur County Food Pantry.

With 2 1/2 weeks left to bring in 1,230 items, the store should meet

the goal 2,000 set each year by owners Joe and Regina Stanley.

All of the items will be taken to the pantry, in the basement of the United Church, after the first of the year.



AT ROCKING R, owner Karen Chambers looked at one of the cards from the Angel Tree. — Herald staff photo by Carolyn Plotts

## Angel Tree needs more shoppers

Families who need a little extra help to provide a good Christmas for their kids have submitted their needs and wants to the Oberlin Jaycees, and this information has been transferred to red cards hanging on the Angel Tree at Rocking R in downtown Oberlin.

Anyone may adopt one of these children for Christmas. Just go to the store, pick an "angel" and shop to your heart's content, said Karen Chambers, owner of the Rocking R.

Last year, the tree had 60 children who needed a little help. The number is down this year, said Amber Scott, who, along with her husband, Britton, are the Angel Tree project coordinators. She said there are still more than 25 cards left to choose from. They represent 25 children up to age 18 who

may not have much for Christmas unless someone "adopts" them.

It's easy. Just go into Rocking R and look over the red forms hanging on the tree. Choose a tag marked with all the information you will need to select gifts, including gender, age, sizes, needs and wants.

Then sign your name on a list kept by Ms. Chambers. She said this is the third year her store has hosted the Angel Tree.

When you return your wrapped presents, please indicate what you have. The Jaycees are also accepting cash donations to help buy items for children if needed.

For information, call Mr. or Mrs. Scott at 475-4800.



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# Business classes offered

The Small Business Development Center at Fort Hays State University and its satellite office in Bird City plan to offer more than a dozen free business-management seminars during the next couple of months.

Classes could be held in Oberlin if at least three people sign up for the same course topic, said Connie Grafel, Economic Development Marketing Director. Two different courses could be offered during the same day.

Classes include Business Start-up Basics; Business Planning; Loan Clinic; Why Small Businesses Don't Succeed; Social Media and Marketing Methods; Management Starts with Leadership; Understanding the Profit-and-Loss Statement; Improving Your Company's Profit; Increasing Profit Performance Using Cost Controls; Developing a Workable Marketing Plan and Customer Service.

For information on any of these, contact Ms. Grafel at the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. office, 104 S. Penn Ave., or call 475-2901. Advance registration is required.

Megan Horinek is the contact person in Bird City at (785) 734-2592. Classes are also available online at [www.fhsu.edu/ksbdc](http://www.fhsu.edu/ksbdc), and the center has scheduled nine webinars on Quickbooks topics at noon each Thursday from Jan. 5 to March 1.

Quickbooks topics include Fundamentals and Basic Accounting; Setting Up a New Quickbooks File; Basic Cash Business in Quickbooks; Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable; Customizing Reports and Forms; Inventory and Job Costing; Doing Payroll and Analyzing Financial Data

The one-hour classes cost \$15 each. Register online at [ksbdc.eccenterdirect.com](http://ksbdc.eccenterdirect.com) and then click on training events at the top left. The sequence will be repeated throughout the year. A computer is available at the economic development office if an enrollee needs one, Ms. Grafel said.

# \*Mail sorting could move to another state

(Continued from Page 1A) that day's truck. However, trucks were scheduled to leave two to three hours earlier than before.

Like the last consolidation, the service has said that retail services at area post offices will not change. However, it may again alter truck departure times for Colby and the outlying post offices that send mail there before it goes on to Salina.

The last change moved up truck departure times from Colby to 3:30 p.m. and those of outlying post offices even earlier. Some businesses, including the *Colby Free Press* and other area newspapers, have had to adjust their schedules to meet the new deadline. If the Postal Service makes this change, the trucks will have to go 230 miles instead of 200 to get to the processing facility, which may necessitate moving truck departure times up even more.

Trucks from towns that previously went to Hays had their truck departure times moved up by a half an hour or more when processing was moved to Salina. The Norton post office moved its departure time up from 4 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. If Salina processing is moved to Wichita, however, the trucks would have to go about 86 miles farther to get to Wichita. A public meeting was held in Hays last Tuesday.

These moves have concerned businesses that send out large quantities of mail.

"I fear the Postal Service has embarked on a course that will drive the remaining first-class mail out of its system," said Steve Haynes, president of Haynes Publishing Co. "I know that our customers are not going to be pleased if their papers are delayed by two to three days.

We may have to look elsewhere for answers."

Haynes Publishing, which owns the *The Oberlin Herald* and five other area publications, sends out 20,363 newspapers a week in addition to other mail.

Mail processing isn't the only area where cuts are being made. In what it calls an "Expanded Access Study," the service is looking at closing 3,700 post offices nationwide, including many in Kansas. On the chopping block in north-west Kansas are offices in Edson, Kanorado, Long Island, Herndon and Norcatour. Public meetings have been held in each of these towns, but no announcements have been made.

Kansas Sen. Jerry Moran introduced an amendment to a bill called the 21st Century Postal Service Act, which would halt the closure of offices until the Postal Service can develop "standards of service." These would require the service to look at the time customers have to travel to get to a post office, population density, age of customers and distance to other post offices. It would require the service to serve remote or difficult-to-reach areas.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee announced Nov. 2 that it was supporting the bill. Among other things, the bill requires the Postal Service to keep six-day delivery for at least two years, refunds a \$7 billion overpayment to the Federal Employee Retirement Health System and reforms worker compensation benefits. Sen. Moran's amendment was adopted in committee on Nov. 9, but the bill has not yet made it to the Senate floor.



PABLO SANCHEZ, owner of APX roofing, held up some of the shingles in his inventory. — Herald staff photo by Carolyn Plotts

# Man opens roofing company

Pablo Sanchez, owner of APX Roofing, said he wasn't planning on making a career out of roofing, but that he kind of "fell" into it.

Mr. Sanchez said he grew up in Rolla, located in the southwest part of the state. He graduated from high school there and attended Kansas State University. He also served four years in the Marine Corps.

He was friends with the owners of Aqua Shield, another roofing company, and helped them for about four years. That, he said, is

where he learned about the roofing business.

Mr. Sanchez is married to the former Ashley Stragey. They have a 14-month old son, Xavier. The name of his business is an anagram of their names, Ashley, Pabelo and Xavier — APX. The Sanchezes are expecting another child before the end of the year.

The business opened in April and, Mr. Sanchez said, has been busy ever since. He operates the business, contracting the jobs, and subcontracts the work out to crews

of four to eight workers.

Mr. Sanchez said his company is still trying to catch up on the backlog left by a hail storm this past summer. He said, even in cold weather his crews can install a shingle roof. He said he uses an asphalt shingle called "Duration", made by Owen/Corning, that will seal even if only a small amount of sun hits it.

APX also installs metal roofs, siding and windows, he said. For information, call Mr. Sanchez at 475-7365.

# College campus is fairly safe

By KAYLA CORNETT  
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The Colby Community College board heard from the Violence Prevention Committee that students, faculty and staff think the college campus is fairly safe.

Committee members Crystal Pounds, Danielle Silsbee, Doug Johnson and Sean Lydon said they were recruited by Dr. Keegan Nichols, vice president of student affairs and marketing, to look at ways to prevent violence and crime on campus. The committee sent out a survey and gave the board the results and some suggestions at its monthly meeting in Thomas Hall on Nov. 21.

Pounds said they found that nearly all the students think the campus is safe, but they found several areas where faculty, staff and students agree that the college could improve. The committee, she said, wants to address three things during its first year.

The first is a lack of lighting in parking lots and several other areas on campus. The second is needing to trim bushes because there were comments made that people could hide in them. The third is increasing opportunities for physical activity or exercise.

The committee said the best way to increase physical activity is by improving the fitness center. The members also said they think having an on-campus counselor would be a good idea, but decided they should focus on the three ideas that are attainable for this year.

Pounds said they also looked into lock problems in the residence halls, but their solution was turned down because it was a fire hazard. However, Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs and facilities management, said he received an e-mail from the state fire marshal saying that they could install the locks the committee wanted after all.

"We realize that we can't just make this happen," Pounds said. "We have to have some money to make it happen, so we have some suggestions to raise money or find the money."

The committee suggested that faculty and staff, who do not currently pay for a parking permit, begin paying \$10 a year to park on campus; that students pay \$25, a \$10 increase from what they pay now; and residence hall students pay for a permit as well, since they currently

do not pay.

"Those parking fees have not gone up since I think 1995," Johnson said. "The slight increase is still very, very below what other institutions are charging, especially at the university level."

Pounds said they realize that these changes would require a different method for parking permits, so that is something they would have to look into.

"But after the lighting was changed and we had reached our goals, then the money could go towards improving the parking lots, snow removal, things like that," Pounds said.

Another idea the committee has is increasing laundry fees. Right now, it costs 50 cents to wash a load and 50 cents to dry, and Pounds said they recommend increasing each by a quarter.

To end the presentation, Pounds talked about other things the committee has done to help prevent violence on campus. She and Silsbee attended a violence-prevention conference in Lawrence to get ideas, and they held a self-defense workshop taught by Kenton Russell, a Fort Hays State University professor and instructor for the Defensive Tactics Club.

Board Chairman Kenton Krehbiel told the committee it should contact MidWest Energy because the electric co-operative offers grants dealing with electricity, and one of the committee's goals is to improve lighting.

Arlen Leiker, board vice chair and treasurer, asked Pounds if the committee's survey looked at the college farm at all. She said they did not. The committee didn't have a lot of direction, she said, and they weren't sure where to start, so they just started with the main campus.

"But the intention was start here and once some issues were identified, then do follow-up surveys as we progress through this," Johnson said.

Mr. Krehbiel said similar concerns had been brought up several years ago and were taken care of, but he doesn't think they have been addressed since.

"It's a legitimate concern and a problem and we need to address it as much as we can," he said.

In other business, the board: • Heard Leiker ask Dean Kaaz about the college's use of solar energy. Mr. Kaaz said he has pro-

jections from the Green Energy report and a couple other studies that say there will be an increased usage of solar energy and it's creating jobs, even though they may not necessarily be in Kansas, so they are pursuing that.

• Heard Trustee Dale Herschberger asked if either dean had received a report on how the maintenance staff was doing, and they both said they had not.

• Heard from Debbie Schwanke, public information director, who wanted to mention that Cindy Black bought some radio spots and donated them to the college during Homecoming/Family Weekend and wanted to thank her for that.

• Heard from member Nick Wells about the college foundation's mailathon, which he said is going pretty well. They have a little over \$15,000 now, he said, and he thinks giving will pick up after Thanksgiving and continue until June.

• Approved a policy manual change, which added a paragraph that says "the president may sign renewals and agreements, (and) memorandi of understanding, provided that 1) documents have not fundamentally changed since the prior approval of the board of trustees and 2) the documents are subsequently (presented to) the board of trustees at a ... monthly meeting. All new agreements and memorandi will have the consent of the board prior to any formal approval on behalf of the college."



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