

Area wheat crop looks good so far

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

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With timely rains and warm weather, the wheat crop in the area looks good so far.

Keith Van Skike, Twin Creeks Extension District agent in Norton, said the crop looks pretty good considering it's been an average year. He added that farmers never want to get too optimistic too early, because a lot can happen, but the crop looks promising.

It seems that things are ahead of schedule, he added. Looking across the state, the crop seems to be seven to 10 days earlier in its growing stage than normal.

Often the wheat is starting to joint during the first or second week in April, he said. In some fields this spring, the crop has already started the jointed process. That's when the joint moves up and the plant starts to get taller and straighten out.

As the wheat crop gets closer to

Temperatures beat records set 72 years ago

By **STEVE HAYNES**

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Yeah, it was hot. Record hot for March.

Monday, it was windy and cool.

And Tuesday, the weatherman expected rain.

And as they say, if you don't like the weather here, just wait a few minutes.

A heat wave which rode in with a high-pressure system broke records all over the area, most set in the warm spring of 1940.

Oberlin's high was 87 degrees. In Colby, the high of 92 Sunday broke a record of 87 set in 1940. Goodland reported 89, with a 1940 record of 86 for April Fool's Day. Yuma, Colo., had

88, which tied the record; Tribune reported 90, compared to 88; Hill City tied a mark of 92; and Burlington, Colo., had 87, compared to a record of 84. McCook, Neb., had 92, breaking a record of 86 set in 2003.

The warm weather had flowers popping out all over town: Lilacs were in full bloom, peony plants were a foot high and all the crabapple trees were in bloom. Garden expert Shirley Shields said crabapples usually bloom the last of April here, lilacs the first of May, irises in mid-May and peonies about Memorial Day.

A frost could threaten all the flowers, but the long-range forecast is for a warm, dry April. Farmers are more worried about their

fast-growing wheat, which could be ruined by a late freeze.

Meteorologist Jesse Lundquist said the wind Monday came because of an extreme pressure gradient as a closed surface low on the Mexican border started north. The storm system was expected to bring lower temperatures, with highs Monday in the 60s, a low overnight about 39 and a high Tuesday in the low 50s.

And that rain: The precipitation probability was 60 percent Monday night, 50 percent Tuesday and 70 to 80 percent Tuesday night. Chances of rain will trail off today as the low moves on east, Lundquist said.

8. There is still a chance of a frost after that, he said, but it's less than 50 percent.

There are lots of variables to consider, the agent added, but so far the wheat looks good for the conditions the area has had.

"It's still a long time until harvest, though," he said.

The one-month forecast shows above-normal temperatures for April and below-normal precipitation, said Fred Stasser, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Goodland.

Normal temperatures for this time of year are 59 to 60 degrees during the day and around 30 at night, he added.

From Jan. 1 to now, normal precipitation totals are around two inches. So far, Oberlin has received 2.06 inches.

Oberlin, said Mr. Stasser, is on the border line of normal precipitation to slightly below normal.

Files date back to early 1930s at police station

By **CYNTHIA HAYNES**

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Police Chief Wade Lockhart has a back room full of old files. He says he'd like to pitch some of them and have others taken off for preservation.

The police headquarters in Oberlin, on the first floor of the Masonic Building, right across the alley from Raye's Grocery, served as the city office for many years. In 1998, however, the city offices moved to The Gateway and the police department took over its present office.

Many of the stored files didn't move. Boxes of invoices, paid bills, receipts and ledgers sat on shelves along a back wall. And they're still there.

Some of the more important documents are in a vault, but most of the clutter is just that, old paperwork that no longer is required for anything but to catch dust.

And the chief would like someone to come clear it out.

However, he noted, it's not all junk. Amongst the years of accumulation are old records of City Council meetings, receipts for burial plots and letters from public officials to and from the state.

One such record is an old black loose leaf binder where the city clerk carefully placed typewritten pages of the minutes of the council meetings of 1939 and 1940.

A quick look at some of the entries from 1939 shows that the problems back then are pretty similar to some we're having now.

On the council were D.G. Addleman (grandfather of Rusty Addleman), A.J. Thomsen, Earl L. Sproul and C.E. Carper., Chas P. Stevenson, J.C. Nitsch was the mayor and R.S. Claar the city clerk.

Here are some samples of the (See CITY on Page 5A)

County to ask city for zoning change

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

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The Decatur County commissioners voted last Tuesday to ask for the zoning at the county fairground to be changed so people or groups could ask for a permit to sell beer at events.

Race promoter Rick Salem, who hopes to promote a few races at the fairground speedway this year, has talked to the commissioners several times about being able to sell beer at the track.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch handed out a zoning map at the last commissioner meeting that includes the fairground. The area is zoned for multifamily dwellings, he said, and that would need to be changed to general businesses district.

The county will have to provide the names and addresses for any property owners within 200 feet of the requested zoning change, said Mr. Hirsch. Those will be given to the city for a notification by mail.

The commissioners asked about asking for an exceptional use permit, but Mr. Hirsch said that would affect all areas zoned multifamily. Mr. Hirsch said they can't do just do spot zoning for one area.

Could the zoning just be changed?

asked Mr. Salem. Yes, said Mr. Hirsch.

What is the Gateway zoned? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger. Commercial general, said Mr. Hirsch.

Changing the zoning seems to be the simplest way to go, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, and that's what the commissioners decided to do.

Mr. Hirsch said the request will go to the city. A mailing will be sent out and the city administrator will set up a meeting with the planning commission.

The notice has to be published one time, 20 days before the meeting. That doesn't mean, said Mr. Hirsch, that the planning commission will meet 20 days later, because there are seven members and they have to figure out a time to meet that fits their schedules.

If the change is approved, he said, then the council would act on it. The notice is published again, and after another 20 days, the zoning board can meet to approve or not approve the request.

The commissioners talked with Appraiser Alan Hale about getting the addresses of adjacent property owners.



FLAMES LICKED UP from a burning windbreak at the Mick and Rhonda Barth farm southwest of Oberlin on Saturday. Mr. Barth (below) fought the blaze with a hose and then got help from the Oberlin Rural Fire Department. — Herald staff photos by Steve and Cynthia Haynes

Flames burn up 16 trees

A controlled burn got out of control at midmorning Saturday, eating up 16 trees in a family's windbreak southwest of town.

Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said Mick Barth was burning some grass around the windbreak before burning a pasture south of the trees on Saturday. The wind gusted up and the fire got into the trees.

Chief Cathcart said the rural fire department responded to the call. Mr. Barth and his wife Rhonda were spraying down the flames when the crew got there and had most of the fire out. The blaze was well away from the couple's house.

The firefighters were at the house off the Sappa Creek Road for about 20 minutes. Chief Cathcart said the fire burned 16 good-sized trees before it was put out, leaving charred trunks and branches.



Easter Egg Hunt set

The Oberlin Lions Club will hold its annual Easter Egg Hunt at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Lions Picnic Shelter in City Park.

There will be four age groups: age 1 to 2, 3 to 4, 5 to 6 and 7 to 9. Each group will get a chance to

pick up eggs and candy within a roped-off area. The Easter Bunny will be present to egg them on.

The Mountain Slope Masonic Lodge of Oberlin will provide the candy.

Planning starts with designer for a new pool

By **CYNTHIA HAYNES**

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The city's Pool Committee held its first planning meeting on Thursday with designer Kyle McCawley of Larkin Aquatics, a firm out of Kansas City, Mo., which has been supplying ideas for a new town pool.

Most of the committee members had already met unofficially with Mr. McCawley before approaching the Oberlin City Council last month and asking that the city set up a committee to look into getting a new swimming pool.

After the council gave its approval, the group started work in

earnest. On Thursday, Mr. McCawley asked the group what they wanted from a pool.

Program possibilities that came up included swim lessons, lifeguard training, water aerobics, aquatic therapy, arthritis exercises, swim team practice, triathlon training,

water walking and jogging, diving, water polo, diving certification and kayak and canoe training.

Depending on what the group and town want and need, he said, his (See POOL on Page 5A)

