

Firefighter's Ball tickets available

The women behind this weekend's Firefighter's Ball are rallying, raffling and readying The Gateway for what's likely to be one of the biggest social events of the year.

"There are 375 tickets sold out of 500," said organizer Teresa Diederich, who added that this number doesn't include members of the seven area fire departments or sales at the door. If you plan on attending and haven't gotten your ticket, she said, you better do so right away.

"Our numbers could go anywhere at this point," Mrs. Diederich said. "It's hard to say when this is our first year back. The most we can have is 500 people, and we really don't know how many will be available at the door."

Mrs. Diederich said that the featured prize for the evening will be a two-night stay at the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas, with a paid round trip flight from Denver. Raffle tickets for the trip will be \$1.

In addition to a dance, the ball will also

have a casino, with dealers, tables and play money for every kind of game. For every \$1,000 in "money" that a person wins, Mrs. Diederich said, they can either get a raffle ticket for a 32-inch high-definition television or a \$1,000 sponsorship table reserved for next year's ball.

The \$1,000 sponsorship includes eight tickets to the ball, eight collectible drink cups, a round table of your own featuring the name of your family or business, a full-page ad in the program, your logo in all of the

printed materials and your name displayed on the banner in the foyer.

The evening will begin at 5 p.m. sharp with a social hour, when those attending can get drinks and browse through the silent auction items. Mrs. Diederich said that some of the best items include a diamond tanzanite ring donated by Laurie Milnes, a \$500 gift certificate for APX Roofing & Construction, a coin collection and more. People can also have their pictures taken at a photo booth. At 6 p.m., a bagpiper will lead

a parade of uniformed firemen, and there will be a tribute to fallen firefighters.

"If there are this many people truly coming," said Mrs. Diederich, "then we really want to do everything on time, so it will be important to arrive early. The casino and dance will be going on at the same time, and most of the food and everything will be made that day. We'll be starting the decorations on Thursday, so hopefully when Saturday gets here, we can all just have fun."

Officials discuss how to attract businesses here

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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State officials discussed ways to attract people and businesses to Oberlin at a meeting last Wednesday night at The Gateway, where residents learned about what state departments can do for businesses, why Decatur County is a prime spot for agricultural industries, how to attract those industries and how to retain the ones we have.

Dr. Jay Anderson, who organized the meeting with EDC Director Connie Grafel and President Greg Lohofener, introduced the speakers to the crowd of about 50 that came to hear them despite the rain. The speakers were J.J. Jones, marketing and trade director at the Kansas Department of Agriculture; Judy McCarty of McCarty Family Farms, operators of dairies in Rexford, Scott City and Bird City; Dan Steffen and James Foster, regional project managers from the Department of Commerce; Scott Sproul, executive director of Norton City/County Economic Development; and lastly, Steve Anderson, state budget director, an Oberlin native and a key figure in the administration of Gov. Sam Brownback. He is Jay Anderson's son.

Mr. Jones, a native of Atwood, opened the evening with a brief

explanation of what he does, saying that the department's approach is threefold:

"We want to retain the farms that Kansas already has," he said. "There are a little over 80,000 farms and agricultural businesses, and we want to keep you and them here. We also want to help them expand. And third, we want to expand the agriculture industry in Kansas by bringing in new people. Rural communities play a huge part in that."

Mr. Jones acknowledged that the last part isn't easy — "We're several generations from the farm," he acknowledged — but it might not be as hard as we think.

He put a slide up on the projector that read "OPPORTUNITY IS NOWHERE."

"How many people read this as 'Opportunity is nowhere'?" he asked. Some hands raised. "How many read this as 'Opportunity is now here'?" Many more hands went up, and that set the tone for the evening.

After Mr. Jones, Mrs. McCarty spoke, choking up as she explained why her family came to love north-west Kansas upon moving here from Pennsylvania, and how many assets our region has to industrious people looking for newer pastures.

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Oberlin graduate talks about town

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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Oberlin native and Decatur Community High graduate Steve Anderson talked last Wednesday about what state government has done and is looking to do for rural towns like Oberlin.

As state budget director, Mr. Anderson said, he started his first day on the job with the Kansas budget having only \$876 in the bank. A fiscal conservative, he said, he has made many cuts to state programs and departments, all while focusing on lowering the income tax of all Kansans.

"You will see areas we will continue to cut (in the budget)," Mr. Anderson said. "There was a lot of alarm when we cut the arts completely. It was only \$750,000, but we had nothing in the bank. It was a leading edge."

"We only wanted to fund what

was essential. We even had agencies cutting the fat on their own programs, hoping they wouldn't be eliminated. The governor says we will continue to prune government, and we need to do so to kick out the income tax. But we won't cut essential programs."

Many people, he continued, have worried there will be a huge cut in education, especially teachers' pensions. But education is a top priority for him, he assured the crowd, and if anything, he's hoping to put more money into it.

"Seventy-six percent of unfunded liability is teachers (in the state retirement system)," he said, "and it's a ton of money that goes to retirees. We don't begrudge them that, but it's 30 years of fiscal mismanagement."

Mr. Anderson said if you look at Kansas as a business, and see its

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Council to discuss blighted properties

The Oberlin City Council will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway to approve payments, regulatory ordinances and discuss more ideas on how to handle blighted property.

City Administrator Karen Larson will be absent, said Treasurer Sandy Rush, as she is on vacation.

Newly appointed Councilman Tim Bowen has put the subject of the health nuisance ordinance (regarding blighted property) on the agenda, as he has some ideas that he told Mrs. Rush he would like to discuss with the council.

"I want to bring up several is-

ues within the ordinance that I think we need to change and have a discussion about," Mr. Bowen said Monday.

Mrs. Rush said that the council members will have to approve payments to the contractors working on the streets project.

Also needing approval are standard ordinances covering traffic regulations and criminal offenses. The ordinances, the Standard Traffic Ordinance and the Uniform Public Offense Code, must be updated by the council every year to keep up with state changes.



Kids explore at park

AT SAPP PARK during an Oberlin Play Date gathering Saturday morning, Gus Bryan (above right) played on the teeter totter with Mack Glaze. Giada Smith (right) walked down the stairs of an ambulance she got to check out while Cowen Anderson (below) looked at a fire truck with Chief Bill Cathcart. The moms who organize the event invited police, firemen and emergency medical technicians out to show off their vehicles.

— Photos by Jennie Anderson



Families will be allowed free load at the landfill

Decatur County commissioners decided last Tuesday to keep the rules for the upcoming free week at the county landfill, from Monday to Saturday, Oct. 1 to 6, the same as the annual one in the spring.

This means that each family will be allowed one free trip to the landfill, and that load will be limited

to only five passenger-car tires. Refrigerated appliances must have a certificate showing that the refrigerant has been removed by a qualified technician, or you will be charged a \$10 fee.

"(The certificate of evacuation) certifies that the Freon has been removed," Road Supervisor Tim

Stallman said. "You can either go to Robert Groneweg at R&M Service (who also charges \$10) and he'll remove the Freon for you before you take it to the dump, or you can just bring it straight to the landfill and we'll take care of it for you."

City Administrator Karen Larson mentioned at the Sept. 6 City Coun-

cil meeting that the city might be able to park a truck downtown for residents who cannot transport their refuse themselves, but no decision was made regarding that idea.

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