

## Council ends water restrictions

The Oberlin City Council decided Thursday to end water restrictions that have been in place all summer, as water use is down to a normal level and the heat of summer has passed.

David Sporn, water specialist for the city, said that usage was down to 500,000 gallons a day, which he said is "pretty reasonable." He added that well levels appeared to be at

a standstill before he recommended the end of restrictions.

"It's almost wintertime," he said, "so I think we can safely do it."

The Council passed the motion unanimously.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help residents who can't fix up their

property alone will be made ready within the next couple of weeks.

Mayor Rob McFee said that once City Administrator Karen Larson returns from vacation, it should be done shortly thereafter.

- Approved two payments, of \$45,696 and \$114,147, to Bryant and Bryant Construction for work on the street project. The

payment was made from the city's Community Development Block Grant.

- Approved new versions of the Uniform Public Offense Code and the Standard Traffic Ordinance. These must be reviewed and approved every year, said Mr. McFee, to reflect changes in state law.

- Heard from City Foreman Dan Castle,

who heads the electricity department, that the city is still looking at the middle of October for getting the rebuilt transformer up and running.

The traffic lights at Hall Street and Penn Avenue are back up, he noted, but one of them is broken, so they're waiting on a replacement before they finish installing them.



## Annual parade draws home crowd

**HOMECOMING KING AND QUEEN** Cody Wurm and Cassidy Shields (above) rode a convertible down Main Street on Friday for the traditional homecoming parade. Makadyn Ketterl was the flower girl and Grady Lohofener the crown bearer. The parade featured floats hand-decorated by the high school classes, including a Red Devil shooting field goals (right) and the volleyball team under a sign reading Lady Devils (below).

— Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCamp



## Mini Sapa offers historical re-enactments

The Decatur County Museum's Mini Sapa Day open house and cemetery tour this year will spotlight historical re-enactments at the Oberlin Cemetery, billed as "Voices From the Silent City."

Events will start with an open house from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday at the Last Indian Raid Museum in Oberlin. Local talent will be performing in the parlor with coffee, tea and cookies being served.

After the open house, the audience will depart for the cemetery to meet some of Decatur's early pioneers. People portraying the pioneers will share the stories of their lives and deaths by their grave sites, and tell audience members what it was like for the first people who came here

from the East to brave the prairie and make this area their home.

Everything at the museum open house is free, but if you are not a museum member and want to go on the cemetery tour, a ticket is \$5. A year-long membership to the museum is \$10, so everyone will be encouraged to buy one. A year-long family membership is \$20.

"We will have the Oberlin American Legion and Auxiliary there to honor the veterans in that section of the cemetery," said museum Director Sharleen Wurm. "I've chosen just three sections of the cemetery to have the narratives, and we will be honoring the veterans there also."

"There are five Civil War soldiers, five World War I soldiers and three

World War II in this section. They'll announce their name and what company they served in, and then play "Taps," she said.

After this, there will be 12 graves people can visit to learn of the pioneers who rest within.

"It's fantastic," Mrs. Wurm said of the production. "It's really my thing — history. And this year's re-enactments will be wonderful, all in traditional dress and based around each individual's character as we know them."

Mrs. Wurm said this as she floated around the museum, showing off displays of the antique dresses, guns, furniture and just about everything else that anyone had ever needed to make it in those early

days.

The museum even features a room with nothing but pictures of nearly everyone who's ever grown up here, minus a few early school classes, and electronic picture frames that rotate photographs of those who as yet remain unnamed, because no one so far can say who they are. They show these photographs with numbers, Mrs. Wurm said, so that if someone recognizes a relative, they can identify them to the museum.

"I can see 100 more tours if this one goes well," she said. "That's the fun of history. It can always be revisited, and you can learn something new every time."

## City to review, may replace, property rules

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkansas.com

The Oberlin City Council decided Thursday to review the city's nuisance ordinance, which outlines procedures on how to handle blighted property, and might scrap it for a newer model.

Councilman Tim Bowen brought the subject up at Thursday's meeting, which was attended by about 30 people. He and City Attorney Steve Hirsch went through the ordinance with the council, and realized that it had been adopted in 1968 but never updated.

Mr. Hirsch offered to get copies of similar ordinances from other Kansas cities for the council to review, as everyone agreed that the current one is vague and outdated.

No one mentioned Code Enforcement Officer Jan Ackerman,

and no one could say how a newer ordinance might affect her duties.

The current ordinance requires appointing a particular officer for almost every article in the 24-page ordinance. That's up to 15 officers, said Mr. Hirsch. The city has, for the past few years, employed only one officer, Mrs. Ackerman, to handle ordinance violations. Being from out of town, she has drawn both criticism and praise for how she has handled the job.

Mr. Bowen, who has had issues with the ordinance since being appointed to the council a few weeks ago, opened the subject up by saying that property owners need some guidelines.

"When someone purchases a property in a community," he said, "the property owners have a respon-

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## County budget set for hearing

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkansas.com

The Decatur County commissioners will hold a public hearing on the proposed 2013 county budget at 9 a.m. Tuesday, in the commissioners' meeting room on the second floor of the courthouse.

The budget was published on Page 8A of last week's issue of *The Oberlin Herald*. Anyone who wants to contest, question or comment on the \$4.6 million budget before final approval may do so at the meeting.

The commissioners have already OK'd the budget, said County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, and usually go ahead and give it final approval in a vote after the hearing.

The biggest difference between the new budget and this year's is that the property tax levy is going down due to increased valuation of the county, largely from oil and gas

revenue. The valuation this year is \$33,201,174, and for next year, it is estimated at \$34,912,652, mostly due to higher oil production.

This means an 11.7 percent decrease in the property tax levy by 8.779 mills, from 75.036 this year to 66.257 next year.

To put that into perspective, say your home has a taxable value of \$5,000. (The taxable value is generally much less than its appraised sale, or market value. In this example, a home with a taxable value of \$5,000 would have a market value of \$43,478.) For every \$1,000 of value, you will be charged \$1, or \$5 in property tax every year, if the property tax were only 1 mill.

This year, the property tax rate was 75.036 mills, so your house valued at \$5,000 would have had a county tax bill of \$375. Next year, with the

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## Short film festival makes debut here

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
sdecamp@nwkansas.com

An international short film festival will be shown in Oberlin this week, where audience members can vote on their favorite and be a part of a six-continent winner selection process.

The 15th annual Manhattan Short Film Festival will begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday at the Sunflower Cinema. The collection of short films bills itself as the world's first global film festival, where "over 300 cities across six continents unite for one week, for one festival."

Tickets are \$12 each, said cinema board member Duane Dorshorst.

There will be 10 films from the U.S., Norway, The Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Peru, France, Romania and Spain. The length ranges from 8 minutes to 19 with the whole show lasting about two hours.

"This is the first time they're going global with it," said Mr. Dorshorst. "In this community, we don't get to see these types of

things, and I thought it would be a unique opportunity for people to see what a film festival looks like and to vote on it."

Those attending will get a voting card at the door, and after viewing the films, can vote for their favorite. The results will be e-mailed to New York, and the winner will be announced at 9 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 7, on the festival's website, www.manhattanshort.com.

Half of the proceeds will go to the theater, said Mr. Dorshorst, and the other half goes to the festival. Tickets are available at the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. office, at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement building or at the theater that evening.

"We're limiting the audience to 100 people," said Mr. Dorshorst, "so there may be availability that night, but you should probably just purchase them ahead of time."

