

County gives OK to its 2013 budget

Decatur County commissioners approved the 2013 budget last Tuesday with only one change to what had been published in *The Oberlin Herald*.

The commissioners had wanted to increase the amount available to the Decatur County Rural Fire Department by 6 mills, or \$177,000, but found out the day of the hearing that because of a state law, they are only allowed to increase that fund to 5 mills, or \$149,000. In 2012, the department got 2.412 mills, which produced \$71,877, so the department will still be seeing an increase of \$77,123.

The fire department needs to replace at least nine of its trucks in the next few years, says Chief Bill Cathcart.

The budget passed with no comment or opposition, though there were some questions from the three people who came to the public hearing: Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce President David Swank, Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman and Brad Marcuson, the Republican candidate for county commissioner in District 3.

The total budget is \$4,593,692, and its passing means that for 2013, property taxes should go down from 75.056 mills to 66.257 mills.

To put that into perspective, say your home has a taxable valuation 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 valuation, you will be charged \$1 in property tax every year for each mill of the tax levy. 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 proposed tax rate at 66.257 mills, your county tax bill would be only \$331.

While the tax rate will be down, however, the county's total spending is projected to increase \$242,045, from \$4,351,647 this year to \$4,593,692 next year. That's a spending increase of about 5.6 percent. The extra money comes from the increase of the county's

valuation – literally an increase in its overall value – mostly due to oil and gas.

Mr. McEvoy said that most of the budget money is carryover from this year, but the property tax was also going down because of the extra money coming from oil and gas. These commodities, however, are not dependable money-earners, he said, and so next year's budget could be different.

Before the budget was approved, Mr. Swank asked briefly if the county had any debt, to which the commissioners responded that the county currently had about \$280,000 in bonded debt left over from the Golden Age triplex project.

"Decatur, in the last 40 years, has operated on a pay-as-you-go basis except for major projects," said Mr. Unger.

Mr. Swank said he asked out of curiosity, since he had read about whole cities in California going bankrupt.

"Those places have maxed out their bonding," said Mr. McEvoy, "and other states outside of Kansas don't operate on the cash-basis law we have here. They can go borrow money from other sources outside of bonds, and that's how they end up bankrupt."

Teaching kids about God



SHOWING THE GIRLS what to look for while sorting through art projects, school nurse Johanna Mason (above) showed Melody Koerperich and Emma Anderson what

other kids had drawn for the after-school program, Faith Weaver Friends last Wednesday. The program is held at the Methodist Church. – Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

Pool committee to hold public meeting Sunday

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
sdecamp@nwkansan.com

Oberlin's pool committee, which is campaigning for a 1.5 percent sales-tax increase to pay for a new pool, will be having its final community meeting at 5 p.m. Sunday at the park next to the existing pool, hoping people will come see for themselves why a new pool is needed.

Two committee's representatives, Erica Fortin and Valisha Raile, addressed the issue at last Wednesday's meeting of the Oberlin Business Alliance at the LandMark, giving a presentation with pamphlets and a display board.

Most business owners there agreed with the committee's cause,

saying that they supported the increase and didn't expect it to affect their sales. Consumers here will see the increase as only .9 of 1 percent, they said, since the proposed increase will take place right before the state brings its sales tax rate down in July. The resulting increase will be less than a penny on the dollar, they noted.

Fifty dollars in paint at Stanley Hardware, Mrs. Raile said, would result in a tax of 75 cents additional tax, or 45 cent additional tax counting the state decrease.

"Anytime the future of Oberlin is brought up," said Kurt Vollertsen of Ward Drug, "people always say, 'How do we keep our young families here? How do we get more

young people to move here?' And I think this is how we do it; this is one of the tools we need to keep people here and get them to move back.

"Even with recruiting doctors, this would be a real boon to us. It would be regressive not to do it."

The current sales tax in Oberlin is 7.3 percent. If the pool tax proposal goes through, it would increase the sales tax to 8.8 percent in March or April. Then, come July 1, the state will be dropping the tax by .6 of 1 percent, which will bring our sales tax back down to 8.2 percent, the women said. For comparison, McCook's sales tax is a solid 7 percent.

Laurie Wasson, owner of Prairie Petals, said that between that com-

parison and what it costs to drive to McCook, she wasn't worried about any potential backlash over the tax.

In addition to the tax, Mrs. Raile and Mrs. Fortin discussed the idea of creating a Public Building Commission to keep the city from reaching its debt limit by borrowing for the pool.

"A PBC," said Mrs. Raile, "is basically a way that the city can borrow money without maxing out its credit. A lot of people are worried about the city hitting its debt limit if the vote passes, but with a PBC, that money would be working out of a separate account, so it wouldn't affect the debt limit at all.

"We talked to over 50 communi-

ties in Kansas that have PBCs" she said, "and not one had anything negative to say. And they've all used them for projects just like this."

The committee's meeting, they said, is open to the public. It will include all members of the committee, who will be serving hot dogs, chips and s'mores. They will be conducting a tour of the current 60-year-old pool to explain what they want to change or add, and why.



GREAT SELECTION OF NEW & USED VEHICLES IN STOCK



2004 CORVETTE CONVERTIBLE
Only 15,000 miles

8532A \$32,900



2000 CORVETTE CONVERTIBLE

\$22,900



1981 CORVETTE COUPE
Only 58,000 miles

8080C \$11,950



2004 BUICK LESABRE LIMITED

8420A \$12,900



2004 BUICK LESABRE LIMITED
Super Clean, Sharp

8274B \$8,900



2002 BUICK LESABRE LIMITED

8464A \$7,950



2002 FORD TAURUS SES
Good Solid Car

8629A \$4,950



1997 CHEVY LUMINA LS

8488A \$4,500



2002 CHEVY CAVALIER

\$2,500



1988 MERCURY COUGAR
Clean

8619B \$2,500



2008 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500
Crewcab, LT-Z71, 4x4

1106A \$26,250



2007 CHEVY SILVERADO HD2500
Crewcab, LT, 4x4, Duramax

8565A \$26,900



2003 CHEVY SILVERADO HD2500
Crewcab, LT, 4x4, Duramax

8393A \$16,995



2004 CHEVY SILVERADO 2500
X-Cab, LS, 4x4

8394B \$12,950



2002 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500
X-Cab, LS-Z71, 4x4

8363B \$8,995



2001 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500
X-Cab, LS, 4x4

8457B \$8,000



1995 CHEVY SILVERADO 1500
X-Cab, Clean, Solid Truck

8408D \$4,600



1994 DODGE RAM 1500
STL, Laramie

8582B \$2,995



2005 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN
LS, 4x4

1104 \$6,950



2002 FORD WINDSTAR

8000D \$4,995



2012 CHEVY EQUINOX LTZ
FWD, Navigation-Sunroof, Only 10,000 miles

8574A \$29,900



2010 GMC TERRAIN SLT
AWD, DVD-Sunroof

8314A \$28,550



2005 CHEVY SUBURBAN
3LT-Z71, 4x4, DVD-Sunroof

8601B \$14,250



2007 CHRYSLER PACIFICA TOURING
AWD

8301B \$12,950



2004 CHEVY SUBURBAN
Z71, 4x4, DVD-Sunroof

8596A \$12,900



KINZE 1040 GRAIN CART

\$34,900



GREAT PLAINS 2S-2600HD-26' DRILL

\$34,900



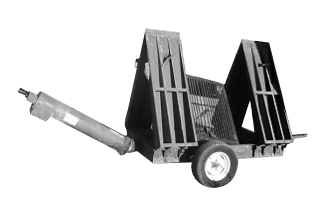
J & M 875 GRAIN CART

\$18,900



SUNFLOWER 1232-27' DISC

\$3,500



BAASCH & SONS DRIVE OVER PIT
10" Auger, HYD Drive, Tow Hitch

\$895

Harchelroad Motors Inc.

WAUNETA, NE

308-394-5555 • Toll Free 1-877-86-CHEVY

www.harchelroadmotors.com

OPEN ALL DAY SATURDAY

COME MEET OUR FRIENDLY STAFF

GREAT SELECTION OF OVER 210 NEW & USED VEHICLES!

GREAT SELECTION OF OVER 60 NEW & USED KRAUSE, SUNFLOWER, KINZE TILLAGE EQUIPMENT