

County endorses highway improvements will make road safer

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
sdecamp@nwkans.com

County commissioners signed an endorsement for a project to modernize highway K-23 between Hoxie and Grainfield, saying that since four Decatur County residents have been killed on one short stretch of that highway, the push to improve it must not be ignored.

"It may be somewhat unusual for the commissioners of Decatur County to be endorsing a proposal for modernization of a highway that is located entirely outside of the borders of our county," the letter read. "We also have had the unfortunate event of several years ago, where three individuals from our county were killed in a head-on collision with a semi in the southern part of Sheridan County, and then just about three years ago at Christmastime, a young lady from our county was killed in a head-on collision with a semi just south of the Saline River."

The road, built as a secondary route before World War II, is narrow, hilly and has no shoulders.

"It'll be 10 years before anything happens," said Commissioner Stan McEvoy at the meeting Oct. 9. "I talked to the supervisor in Norton, and he told me that they recently resurfaced the road, and feel it's in adequate condition, that it will be 10 years before we see anything happen to it. They can always change their mind, though."

Commissioner Ralph Unger was more hopeful.

"They might decide to do some shoulder work without changing the surface at this time," he suggested. "That would help, too, maybe give you a place to pull over without having to go down into the super ditch out there."

Commissioners sent the letter to Jeff Stewart, the district engineer for the Kansas Department of Transportation in Norton.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Passed a motion to increase the tax levy for the Decatur County Rural Fire Department back up to 6 mills in the county budget. That gives the department the original amount of money it requested for next year, \$177,000, instead of what Kansas law said was the maximum they could receive, at \$149,000.

Under that law, commissioners said, a county cannot increase the amount given to the fire department to more than 5 mills, but because Decatur County and Norton County work together with their fire departments, said County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, they are exempt from this rule. Ms. Geihlsler said the budget that was published in *The Oberlin Herald* for three weeks prior to the public hearing is still the correct one, and no amendments have been made.

- Heard that the free week at the county landfill took in 108 loads of trash and 242 tires. The total loss for the county was \$2,277.

- Heard that so far, it doesn't look like there will be an increase in the price of the county's health insurance this year. The county budgeted for a 10 percent increase, but probably won't need it, said insurance agent Randy Dick of Kaw Valley Insurance out of Rossville. The contract between the agency and the county is not up for renewal for another few months, said Ms. Geihlsler.

- Heard that a representative from Sen. Jerry Moran's office would be coming last Tuesday.



THIS ENORMOUS PIECE of oil refinery equipment spent the weekend on the corner of U.S. 83 and 36 before continuing its journey from its manufacturer in Emporia to Salt Lake City.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Oversize load takes up its lane and about half of yours

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
c.haynes@nwkans.com

Cars and trucks slowed down all weekend as drivers and passengers took a good look at the huge "thing" parked by the old police station at the corner of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83.

The "thing," is a desalter, a piece of oil refinery equipment, built by Sauder Custom Fabrication of Emporia, a company spokesman said. It was on its way to Salt Lake City.

The trailer carrying the desalter rolled on 48 tires on the back and 40 in the front. There was a truck in the front to pull it and one in the back to push when it got to the mountains.

Employees of Perkins Specialized Transportation out of Northfield, Minn., said that they needed a whole slew of permits to move the assemblage, which was 18 feet high, 18 feet wide and 220 feet long.

Since a lane of pavement is 12 feet wide, when the truck and trailer are coming at you, it's taking up all of its lane and half

of yours. Besides the pulling and pushing trucks, the machine required three escort vehicles in front to warn oncoming traffic and make sure bridges and wires were high enough. Another escort is needed behind to warn anyone wanting to pass that that might not be a real good idea.

The caravan came into town from the south on U.S. 83 about sundown on Friday and was planning to leave just after sun-up on Saturday, but problems finding the next

parking spot and some tire trouble kept the rig in Oberlin over the weekend. That added a little economic stimulus to the economy here as the various drivers spent extra time in the area restaurants, motels and shops.

On Monday morning, however, the whole assembly made the turn onto U.S. 36 and headed west. The crew planned to go into Colorado and then up into Wyoming to avoid Denver, and finally head into Utah, hopefully arriving by next Tuesday, Oct. 30.

*Commission seat sought by pair

(Continued from Page 1A)

supports compromise. "The country is divided pretty evenly," he conceded, "and I don't like the way it's going, but it's a great country. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else."

"But people have to learn to work together, and I don't see that in Congress. Everything is polarized, and it turns you off to listen to the talk shows on either side. Everyone needs to listen to both sides and make an informed decision to do what's best for the country."

And though he's a Republican, Mr. Marcuson said, he tries to practice what he preaches.

"I'm not going to vote for someone just because they're Republi-

can," he said. "You have to look at the issues. Just make sure to get out and vote. In the primary, we had a 50 percent turnout, which is good, but if you don't get out Everyone's vote makes a difference."

"I'm for growth in the county, bringing in corporate dairies and anything to generate income for the county. Growth is so important. I don't just want it to be a retirement community; we need all ages to help grow. We have to be able to attract people into the community."

"I would look to whatever there is to find ways to bring stuff into the county. I'm for progress."

Mr. Long, a lifetime farmer and rancher from the Norcatur area, said that if elected, he will focus on

county roads and rural issues.

"Some of these townships, their roads are just horrendous," he said. "I don't know where the money goes, or if they need to do a little bit to every road or bridge, but it's awful."

"That's my opinion — you travel on them every day. I know everybody's tight on money, but these roads are horrendous. That's why I wanted to run, to know what it takes to keep the townships up."

Mr. Long said that he's aggressive when it comes to getting things done, sometimes maybe too aggressive.

"I always want to build on something," he said, "build my farm up, have something to be proud of."

"Democrats are for the poor, to help the poor. Republicans are the rich party, and Democrats are for the farmers."

Mr. Long, who raises cattle and grain, said he went to Colby Community College for two years, where he studied farm and ranch management. He said he's never been on any boards because he hasn't had time.

"It's all about having common sense," he said of the duties of a commissioner. "The local government has to have common sense for the people. And if you ain't got it, you ain't got it. You can go to school all you want, but it always comes down to common sense. I built my farm on it, and it's a tough business."

"I'm willing to listen to all of the comments and problems everybody's got and try to work through it. I'll do whatever it takes to make everybody happy."

"The fire department has been horrendous, too," he said, talking about what he would change if he were elected. "For a farmer and rancher it's huge. Where did all the money go? Do you know where it went the last 20 years? Because everything they have is 40 years old. It's hard to explain, though I don't know who you'd talk to about it."

Mr. Long said that if elected, he would like to have the county send road crews out to help ranchers get to their cattle during big snow storms. It's one of his pet peeves.

*Issues on ballot often clouded in legal jargon

(Continued from Page 1A)

worded in complicated legal jargon.

The first reads like this:

"Shall a corporation, trust, limited liability company, limited partnership or corporate partnership, other than a family farm corporation, authorized farm corporation, limited liability agricultural company, limited agricultural partnership, family trust, authorized trust or testamentary trust be allowed to, either directly or indirectly, own, acquire, or otherwise obtain or lease any agricultural land in Decatur County for the purpose of establishing a dairy production facility?"

This is known in common English as "the dairy question," which has been promoted by longtime civic leader Dr. Jay Anderson and Connie Grafel, marketing director of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. It basically asks if you, as a voter, wish to allow corporate dairies to set up shop in Deca-

tur County, as opposed to allowing strictly family-owned dairies.

Proponents have cited Rep. Ward Cassidy as saying that he knows of at least four dairies in California looking at northwestern Kansas, and the argument is that Decatur County should do everything it can to make it open to them. Dr. Anderson has pointed out that an industry such as this moving to town could bring much-needed money and population to the county.

However, city councilman Tim Bowen, who is not in favor of the question, said that it's not a dairy he is against, but having another feedlot.

"It's bad for the water," he said over the phone Wednesday, "We don't need any more bad water. There are a lot of industries that can come into this town, and a dairy is not one we need."

Other residents are concerned that a corporate dairy might pollute

the air, soil and water, or simply that there may not be enough water to sustain it, including City Councilwoman Fonda Farr.

The second question on the ballot is known as the "pool question," but is also worded in complex language that is hard to understand. It reads:

"Shall the city of Oberlin, Kansas, be authorized to (1) construct and equip a new swimming pool and related appurtenances (the "Swimming Pool Project") and to issue the City's general obligation bonds pursuant to K.S.A. 12-1736 at seq., in an amount not to exceed \$2,150,000 (the "Bonds") to provide for payment of the costs of the Swimming Pool Project, including interest costs during construction and associated issuance costs; and (2) impose a one and one-half percent (1.50%) citywide retailers' general-purpose sales tax, the revenue from which will be applied to finance the costs of the Swimming

Pool Project, to pay the costs of operating and maintaining that swimming pool and to finance general operating and capital improvement expenses of the City, with collection of such sales tax to commence on April 1, 2013, or as soon thereafter as permitted by law, all pursuant to provisions of K.S.A. 12-187 et seq., as amended?"

This wordy proposal is asking if you favor a 1.5 percent sales tax increase to pay for a new pool. The city's pool committee says that the current pool is out of date, inefficient and dangerous. A new pool, members say, would be safer, accessible to the handicapped and bring money to city businesses. Many people, they say, go to neighboring towns for their pool facilities when they would rather be spending their money here. The new pool would have facilities for seniors and adults, and would be large enough to hold swim meets.

Mrs. Farr says she is against the pool because she does not want the city's debt to increase. The loan could max out the city's borrowing limit, she said, leaving no way to pay for an emergency project in the future. The pool committee says the city can solve this problem by creating a public building com-

mission, which is like a committee that can borrow money on behalf of the city, so the city won't reach its own limit.

Ms. Farr said that she doesn't favor the commission idea. "It's just a way to get around our debt limit," she said. "I know I'll get flack for this ... but I think we already have as much debt as we can handle, and until we can pay off the sewer and water projects, we shouldn't acquire anymore. I'm not against a pool, but we already have one."

The state ballot question is just as complicated. The proposed constitutional amendment would allow the Legislature to classify and tax watercraft, including boats and jet skis, separately from other "tangible personal property."

This is necessary, state officials say, because as many as 10,000 of about 95,000 Kansas boat owners have their craft registered in other states to avoid taxes. Of nearby states, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Missouri, Texas and Iowa do not tax watercraft at all.

A yes vote would allow the state to change the way it taxes boats, but there's no proposal yet as to how it would be done. The Legislature could make that decision later.

*Doctor comes back to Oberlin

(Continued from Page 1A)

to give them a positive experience.

Word of mouth is the best public relations in this business, after all."

Dr. Rosin said that modernization of the hospital and clinic will be a key goal, as well. Bringing in new technology will mean that they can keep patients at home and have to use the helicopter less.

"I think in three years we'll look back and see a completely different

look to the hospital, patients and services," he said.

Dr. Rosin said his family is still in Scott City while their house there is selling. They plan on buying a house here, where two of their four children will attend school. The family includes his wife Kami and children Dylan, 12, and Joshua, 8. Dr. Rosin also has two older children, Melissa, 26, Overland Park, and Aaron, 24, who lives in Manhattan.

"It's a very exciting time for me," he said. "I'm seeing people I haven't seen in 37 years, and a lot of them already know me. I've already seen a couple of classmates of mine, and I'm soon to see their parents."

"We don't look the same anymore," he said with a chuckle. "It's fun to see what they're up to when I've completely lost track of them."

ATTENTION GROWERS

We offer the following seeds:

Early Season Discounts Available

CHS

Call our nearest location

Colby • 785-462-6880 Quinter • 785-754-3318

Burlington • 719-346-5365 Brewster • 785-694-2420

Selden • 785-386-4546

UNITED PLAINS AG • TRIBUNE • 1-800-532-7626

308-345-1952

Come in for the final week of our

32nd Anniversary Sale

Sale runs until Saturday, October 27, 2012.

Throw a dart and bust a balloon for even greater savings, save 5-25% off each item.

"You'll Love This Store!"

1801 N HWY 83 McCook, NE 69001