

# \*Pool starts debate

(Continued from Page 1)  
debt-valuation (ratio).  
"With the pool project," he said, "(the debt is) about \$3,000 per person, and then it goes to \$7,000 after the water project. Honestly, those are pretty high ratios. It will get to the point where either the city is dependent on federal agencies to lend it money, or you won't get as good of bids for projects down the road. I think you will still get bids, but the interest rate will be significantly higher."  
"A public building commission is separate from the City Council, but is created by it," he said. "The members of the commission are three to nine people, and can either be a totally independent board with no council members, can be made up of all of you, or a combination of the two. But the council will decide who sits on the board."

**Timelines**  
If the council started immediately, Mr. Haas said, a public building commission could have the money to start the project in six months. That is, as long as there isn't a protest against it.

To create a public building commission, he said, the council will need to pass a motion requesting the resolution be on the agenda for a future meeting. Next, it will need to appoint the people it wants to put in charge of it, and have them put together a presentation. The council will need to know how many members it wants on the board, who those members should be, if they want council members on the board, and how long the terms should last, he said.

"I think the public building commission is the only way to go," said Mr. Addleman, "and if we do it, we need to go ahead and go."

"But you need to think about it," said Mr. McFee. "Our debt number is 140 percent, and no matter what, we do we have to pay for it."

"We've had six months to think about it," countered Mr. Williby.

"The only thing that guarantees this is our property taxes, which are at 209 mills," said Mr. McFee.

"So you think we should wait 20 years?" asked council member Jim

Miesner.  
"Well it should have been done 20 years ago," said Mr. McFee, "but we have been getting by and getting by with things for so long that should have been done. When you were born, Jim, things were damn tight and you had to get by with what you had, so you got by and passed that on to your kids.... And now we're at the point where the stuff we have to get by with needs to be redone, and soon it's not going to get us by anymore."

"A new pool is a fine thing, but the paying for it and the water and the debt, even at 3 percent or 4 percent interest, is \$480,000 a year, and that's 80 mills. So think on that just a little bit. I don't know what to say, but that it scares the hell out of me that we're going to do this and get so much debt that we can't pay for."

"We've had an airport we've been working on for eight years," Mr. McFee said, "and we can't pay \$14 million dollars with 1,700 people. But I don't get to make the decision, you do. I just don't want to do it tonight; I want you to think on it. I think we're biting off a whole lot more than we can ever chew. We've chewed the gristle, and soon we'll be right down to the bone and start breaking teeth."

"We all thought about it for 6 months now," repeated Mr. Williby. "It was voted on, there's a way to pay for it with the tax, and I think it needs to be done. We can drag our feet all we want, but it needs to be done."

### The Debate

"I hate to drag our feet any more," said Mr. Addleman. "The interest rates are good, and if the projections are right, the tax (a 1-cent sales tax authorized by a 2-1 vote) will pay for the building and the maintenance of the pool, and it will save money from the loss of water and cost of power. I think now is the time to do it."

"We don't need the swimming pool," audience member Marilyn Black stood to say. "My taxes are going up; all of them are, and you need to go talk to people out in the community. I've listened to a lot of people, and they're not looking for-

ward to bigger taxes. I don't swim and I don't want to pay for it."

"We've been paying for years for this stuff, and this city still needs a lot more stuff done. We just found out our water bill is going up by \$30 right now. But if you're all so rich, then do it. There are a lot of people in this town telling me that no one asks them how they really feel. And Josh, you have a job, I know. I can see you don't know your taxes went up two days ago."

"I know," said Mr. Williby, "but I'm going to raise my kids here."

"But we still don't even have the (drinking) water in town yet," Mrs. Black said. "And aren't you worried about your electricity?"

"The people voted on it," said Mr. Addleman.

"And it was 2-to-1," added Mr. Williby.

"It's really sad when your town fights over things, about what really needs to be done," Mrs. Black said. "When we have another problem with the electric company, then what do you do? If you get another problem with the pool, then who's going to pay for it?"

Mr. Bowen asked Mr. Haas if all of the work that still needs to be done on the city's electric generators would require taking out more debt. Mr. Haas said no, that money will be taken from the electric fund, so electric rates could go up.

"Listen, inflation is happening and will continue to," cut in pool committee member Danielle Leitner. "But no one is giving any more money right now. No one has any faith that this will happen. And it's not for me; it's for my kids."

"I respect Rob (McFee), and if financially we don't feel we're in the position to do it, well, I think we're underestimating the town. If it's the money we need, then I think people will still support it...As soon as we give them the confidence that yes, we'll do this, people will start donating again."

"I understand it's a huge issue, but I'd hate to see people leaving the community because we turn something down that was voted for 2-to-1."

## Picking the one you really want



**CHRISTMAS ON US** winner Cheri Kastens got to buy a lot with her \$1,000 winnings, and home improvement was definitely her theme. She went to R&M Service Center, Ward Drug, and Stanley Hardware, where Joe Stanley (left) showed her a Hoover vacuum and various ceiling fans.

- Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

## Meatloaf contest? You bet

The first events for the new year have the Oberlin Business Alliance and the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce busy working together.

The Alliance met last Wednesday to discuss upcoming events. The annual fish fry will be on Good Friday, March 29, said member Galen Olson. It will be at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Building, at Commercial Street and Penn Avenue, he said.

The Chamber's annual meeting, where all members come together for a banquet at the Old Bohemian Hall, is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 2, Mr. Olson said.

"And this year at the membership meeting, we'll feature the organizations' first meatloaf contest," he said. "I already have several con-

testants to start."  
The meatloaves may be decorated in any way the cook prefers, he added, but everything on them must be edible.

This will be the first year that members won't have to pay for their meal. Along with the meatloaves, the Chamber will be providing baked potatoes, corn and cake.

The members also discussed this year's Christmas promotions.

Member Gary Walter, president of The Bank, said that he had been a little let down by how the hidden turkey and Christmas Tree promotions turned out.

"As I was walking around, I was disappointed that there were bands of young people walking around the stores and only looking for and cashing in their turkeys," he said.

"It goes without saying that you're supposed to shop, too. It's one thing if it's a contest, but it wasn't, it was a promotion. Now I don't know, Joe (Stanley) or Kurt (Vollertsen) may have been just fine with it, but I was a little disappointed."

"On the ladies' night I saw a lot of people shopping and a lot of people with packages," said member Cynthia Haynes.

Mr. Walter then asked how everyone thought the Santa Bucks promotion went, since the hospital didn't buy any for holiday bonuses as they usually do.

"They're still a nice promotion though, because they keep people right here," said Mr. Olson.

"That's why we use them for all of our contests," said Mrs. Haynes. "It doesn't go straight to Walmart."

# Decatur Tomorrow gathers volunteers for new group projects

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

Since the community conversation held in October, Decatur Tomorrow and its Steering Committee have been pretty quiet, but that doesn't mean they haven't been busy.

"We are having a meeting Tuesday ... at Faith Lutheran Church," said Deanna Castle, a member and co-convenor of the steering committee. "It's to bring people and volunteers together to get started on some of our ideas from the conversation."

"Out of that community conversation, there were names recommended and volunteers listed that want to move forward on website and communication improvements," she said. "Another idea was medical services - how we can find ways to assist our community's medical services. And the third idea was new businesses and how to attract them."

Mrs. Castle said that Terry Woodbury, who has helped with projects and community meetings in the past through his nonprofit group Public Square Communities Inc., will also be at the meeting to help.

"We'll divide into three action teams," Mrs. Castle said, "and he'll go over the purpose of it for those who are new, and then we'll work together to build on our assets."

"That night will just be a gathering of volunteers that want to be involved and be in an action team. So it will be their first time together as a team, then each team will decide from there where they want to go, what they want to do, how they want to do it, and when they want to meet. It will be instructional for those unfamiliar with Public Square, too. We always want representatives from all four sectors of the community, so that any ideas that come forth are not just one of those group's ideas, but bringing everyone together."

Mr. Woodbury runs the nonprofit Public Square Communities Inc., and it's through this organization that he mediates the community conversations. The group works to foster partnership among 59 towns and 19 communities it serves to solve problems and transform them into thriving places once again.

"The public square," Mr. Woodbury explained before the October meeting, "which for generations brought people together to socialize, has all but disappeared in today's society. We don't interact the way we used to and we don't socialize as much."

"But with these conversations (that his group holds), ideas can be

presented before the whole community, and then they become community ideas. Everyone becomes involved, and that's the only way any project gets off the ground."

"I came to my first meeting here in Oberlin seven years ago," Mr. Woodbury said at the beginning of that community meeting. "There were 50 houses for sale and some real problems."

Mr. Woodbury said that while reviewing his notes from then and now, he realized that Decatur County and Oberlin had gone from a community losing ground to one having growing pains, which is a good thing. More young people are living here, he said, and a lot of those houses have filled up, but now the area is struggling to accommodate the new people and trying to revamp its appearance to draw still more.

"We're trying to bring in people from other communities, too," said Mrs. Castle. "Everything we're working on now, it's a countywide project. It's a wide range of input, so it's really what the whole community wants, not just one or two people."

Mrs. Castle said that the action teams forming now have been responsible for other projects in the past, including improvements to Sappa Park and the one that started and completed the Sunflower Cinema and Recreation Center.

"Also, another thing that people don't realize is that we wanted to integrate inter-generational activities," Mrs. Castle said, "so the first (high school) class going to the courthouse to learn about our local government, that was a project that was brought up by an action team. And that happened

several years ago. It's become something the school does every year."

Mrs. Castle said that joining an action team is a short-term commitment.

"You get together as a group and find whatever everyone feels is the most important thing to move forward on. When you're successful you're no longer a team, because you did what you planned to do. If it's ongoing, then another entity eventually takes over. It's about implementing ideas and getting them started so that they can become a routine thing for entities. Just like how Sappa Park became part of a city committee, and the Economic Development Corp. got involved with the theater."

"It's a real good way to brainstorm. A lot of people have good ideas, but they don't have ways of implementing them, and this

is a tool to do that."

Mrs. Castle said that she's no longer on the board of Decatur Tomorrow, but is still the co-convenor of the steering committee with Ruth Miesner.

"The steering committee's purpose is to be the resource for action teams," she said. "We're there to help them in any way they can to facilitate their goal. The steering committee is a three-year commitment."

"If there's anyone interested in one of our action teams, we need to know as soon as possible. People can call Ruth or myself, or any of the other Decatur Tomorrow members: Carolyn Platt and Norma McCallister in Norcat, Jeff Leitner, Christina Gizzarelli, Mike Gawith, C.J. Peters or Mary Long."

## Cover Your Acres

January 15 and 16, 2013  
The Gateway in Oberlin, KS

Presented by Kansas State University and Northwest Kansas Crop Residue Alliance

Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4
7:45 8:15 Registration			
8:15 8:20 Welcome			
8:30 9:20 Fungicide Applications in Wheat <sup>1,2</sup> (DeWolf)	Cover & Forage Crops <sup>1</sup> (Holman)	Preseason Irrigation <sup>1</sup> (Schlegel)	Sunflower Prod Update (Nat'l Sunflower Assoc) (I)
9:30 10:20 Cropping Intensity & Fallow Efficiency <sup>1</sup> (Haag)	Controlling Kochia <sup>1,2</sup> (Thompson)	Use of Corn Residue in Cattle <sup>1</sup> (Klopfenstein)	Strategies for Weed Control (Sims Fertilizer) (I)
10:20 10:50 View Exhibits			
10:50 11:40 Wheat Conditions <sup>1</sup> (Shroyer)	Use of Corn Residue in Cattle <sup>1</sup> (Klopfenstein)	Cover & Forage Crops <sup>1</sup> (Holman)	Chloride - the Missing Link (Evans Enterprises) (I)
11:50 12:40 Grain Market Outlook <sup>1</sup> (O'Brien)	Cropping Intensity & Fallow Efficiency <sup>1</sup> (Haag)	Lunch	
12:50 1:40 Controlling Kochia <sup>1,2</sup> (Thompson)	Wheat Conditions <sup>1</sup> (Shroyer)		
1:50 2:40 Fertilizers and Sensors <sup>1</sup> (Mengel)	Preseason Irrigation <sup>1</sup> (Schlegel)	Fungicide Applications in Wheat <sup>1,2</sup> (DeWolf)	Weed Mgmt Solutions (Monsanto) (I)
2:40 3:10 View Exhibits			
3:10 4:00 Producer Panel	Grain Market Outlook <sup>1</sup> (O'Brien)	Farm Management Assoc Update <sup>1</sup>	Ag Estate Tax Planning (KS Community Foundations) (I)
4:10 5:00 Farm Management Assoc Update <sup>1</sup>	Fertilizers and Sensors <sup>1</sup> (Mengel)	Kochia Control Solutions (Bayer CropScience) (I)	SoilBuilder Cover Crops (Arrow Seed Co) (I)

**Diamond Sponsors**

Bayer Crop Sciences

Monsanto

Brothers Equipment

National Sunflower Assoc.

Hoxie Implement

Simpson Farm Enterprises

Lang Diesel

Surefire Ag Systems

Tuesday: Bull session begins at 5:00.

(I) indicate industry sessions.  
<sup>1</sup> Indicate Certified Crop Advisor CEUs applied for.  
<sup>2</sup> Indicate Commercial Applicator CEUs applied for.

**Like to Attend?**

**Early-Bird Registrations**

**Due January 9.**

**Online:**  
www.northwest.ksu.edu/CoverYourAcres

**Mail in:**  
Circle when you would like to attend.

**Tuesday, Jan 15**

Cost \$35.00

**Wednesday, Jan 16**

Cost \$30.00

**Both days - Jan 15 & 16**  
Cost \$50.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please include information for all attending.*

**After January 9**

\$50.00 per day

**Mail registrations to:**  
Kansas State University  
NW Area Extension Office  
Attn: Jeanne Falk  
PO Box 786  
Colby, KS 67701

For questions, call (785) 462-6281.

Program will be held regardless of weather. No refunds will be given.

Kansas State University is an equal opportunity employer and provider.