

## Mayor may veto pool motion

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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A motion to set up a public building commission to sell bonds to pay for a new swimming pool passed 4-to-1 at Thursday's City Council meeting, but Mayor Rob McFee asked to delay passing the motion until he has decided whether or not he will veto it. "There are two things that can happen now," said Mayor McFee after council members voted in favor of setting up the commission. "I can veto it, or I can sign it, or I can try and think what the hell I want

to do. Honestly, I'm in a hard position. It sucks."

Mr. McFee said that he would announce his decision at a special meeting the council set up to discuss the blighted property ordinance at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 31, at The Gateway.

Council members Tim Bowen, Jim Miesner, Josh Williby and Rusty Addleman voted for the motion, while Fonda Farr voted against it.

Oberlin is a Class 3 city, council member Josh Williby said afterward, which means

that the mayor retains veto power over a motion even if the council has approved it.

According to the League of Kansas Municipalities handbook, however, the mayor's veto may be overridden if 3/4 of the council vote for it. That would require 3.75 members of the council to do, so if Mr. McFee decides to veto the measure, it could be overridden.

"I would like to build a pool," said Mr. McFee at the council meeting, where he appeared to be upset. "I'd like to have the money to build one, and have a new airport

runway, and pay for the water project and build the electrical station. I don't have it, we don't have it, and you're correct - the people voted to do it.

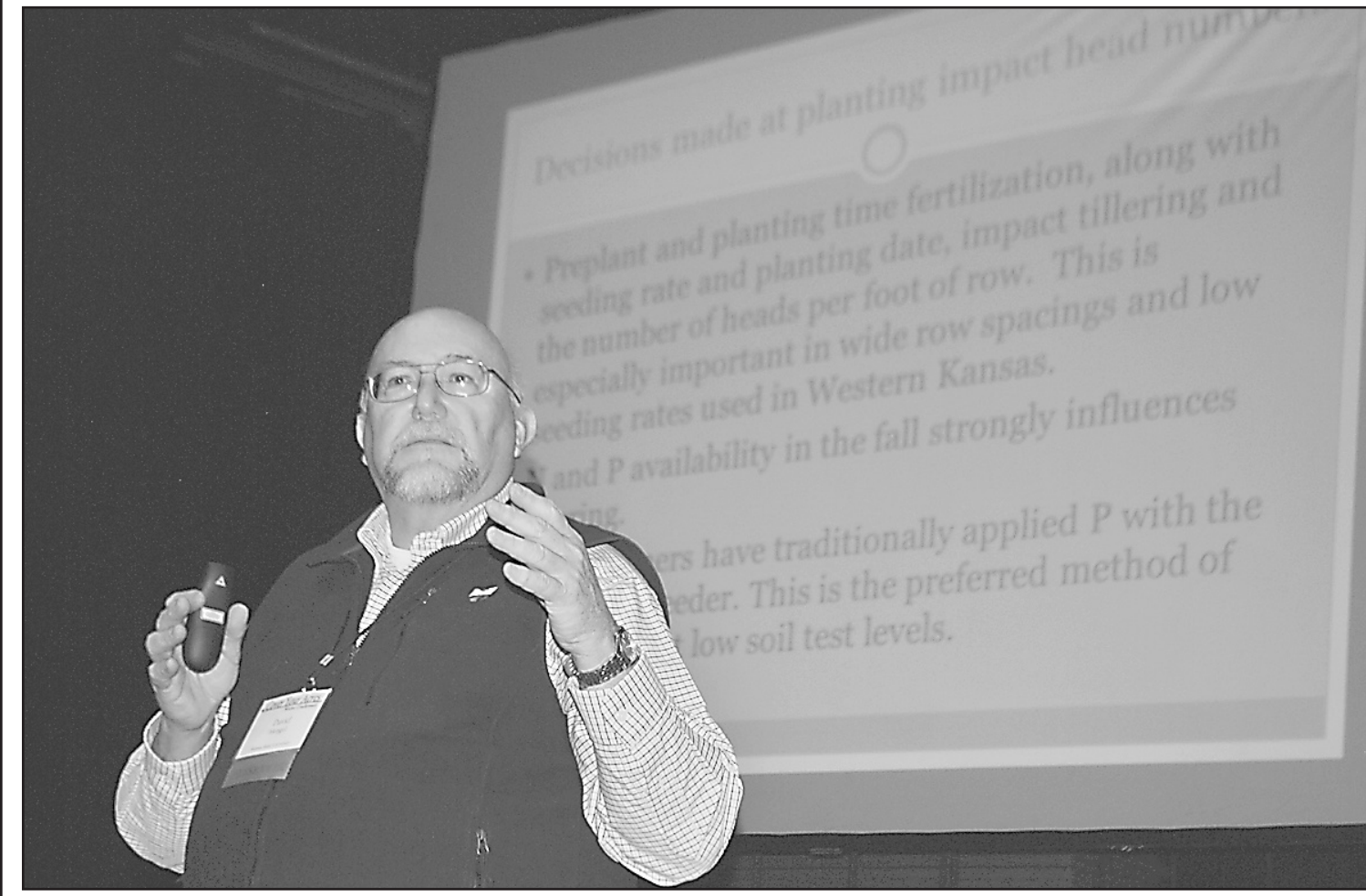
"They elected us to do what's best for the city, in our opinion. I don't think that this is best for the city. I have two weeks to decide. We have a meeting scheduled for the 31st of January, where I will either let it pass or veto it.

"But we're not going to start this tomorrow, because I don't think it's right. I just can't do it. We're spending money that we

don't have on things that are a want and not a need. So with that, in two weeks, I'll make my decision on what to do with that motion. I'm sorry, but I can't do it right now."

The special meeting at The Gateway is open to the public.

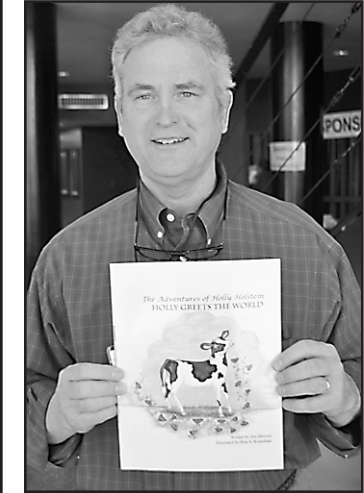
"If people are interested in really moving this forward, I would like to see the public show up to the special meeting," said pool committee member and council candidate Danielle Leitner afterward. "I'm worried about the authority of the mayor to veto." (See POOL on Page 12)



**TALKING ABOUT WHEAT FERTILITY**, David Mengel (above), a professor of agronomy at Kansas State University, was one of many speakers at this year's Cover Your Acres Expo at The Gateway last week. Speakers,

vendors and industry folks all milled about the main hall (below) while classes filled up from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday.

- Herald staff photos by Stephanie DeCAMP



**SPEAKER JIM SHROYER** talked mostly about conditions wheat can tolerate, but also made time for his new children's book, "Holly Greets the World."



## Cover Your Acres takes over The Gateway

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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The Cover Your Acres event at The Gateway last Tuesday and Wednesday boasted numbers similar to last year and a flurry of activity that could even be heard in the city offices down the hall.

"It was wonderful to have this building buzzing," said City Administrator Karen Larson, "and the crew here was amazing. You wouldn't believe, when there are 500 farmers in here.... They got it

all cleaned up, and it looks pretty great compared to last night."

The annual event, now in its 12th year, is billed as two days where farmers, vendors and academics from all over the region meet to swap the newest information and education on agriculture and particularly no-till farming.

It's also, however, a wonderful boon to the area. Mrs. Larson said that all told, about 850 people were at The Gateway over the two days, and that those who organized the

event - Kansas State University Research and Extension and the Northwest Kansas Crop Residue Alliance - have already scheduled the event for next year.

Gary Anderson, who owns the LandMark Inn in downtown Oberlin, said that he looks forward to the show every year.

"We had all the speakers stay here," he said, "and were full for two nights because of it. Anytime you bring people to the town, it adds to the business and helps with

occupancy."

Sharyn Bodfield, who runs the Frontier Motel, also was pleased with the turnout.

"I do good business when they're here," she said. "They book early with me and I do well. We don't always fill to capacity, but a lot of people just come in for one day. Some of the guys that put it on stay over to set it up, and all those customers have been repeats for three years. I take good care of my customers; most are repeat."

## Novice to run this year for City Council

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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A newcomer is seeking election to the Oberlin City Council.

Danielle Leitner, 29, of Oberlin, has been a leader of the city Pool Committee. She said that while that cause has led her to run for the council, it's not the only thing she wants to work for.

"I want to ensure that we're on the right track moving forward with the pool," Mrs. Leitner said, "since I've spent the last year trying to make it happen.

"But in running for the council, I want to be proactive about the community as opposed to reactive. It seems we only realize there's a problem when community members have let the problem go on too long and bring it to the council. I want to know what processes do we have in place to be proactive and maintain our existing facilities."

Three council positions will up for election this year in Oberlin, though only one of those holding the positions had filed to seek re-election as of Monday.

The deadline to file was noon on Tuesday. Council members whose terms are up are Tim Bowen, Josh Williby and Fonda Farr. Mr. Bowen and Mrs. Farr did not return calls

asking for comment.

"The younger people are wanting to have a voice on the council, and I think that's a good thing," said Mr. Williby. He was the only candidate whose position was open that had filed for re-election as of Monday night.

As for himself, Mr. Williby, a supporter of the pool, said his biggest concerns looking forward are the water project, code enforcement for blighted property, and of course, the pool.

"People know I've been on the council the last two years, and hopefully know that I'm forward-thinking and more progressive than what we've had traditionally in the past. I want to see our little town still here in 40 years."

Mrs. Leitner worked hard on the pool committee - which saw its measure to pass a sales tax for building a pool approved of 2 to 1 by the voters.

"Obviously we know where I stand on the pool," she said in an interview Monday, "but that's not my only point of concern. There are other issues I'd like to help iron out, like where are we spending money, and is there reforming that may need to happen?" (See NEW on Page 12)

## Who's running in your area?

Positions up for election in the April elections so far include:

- Oberlin City Council: Positions held by Fonda Farr, Josh Williby and Tim Bowen are up. Mr. Williby and newcomer Danielle Leitner have filed to run.

- Oberlin School District: Positions held by Abby Hissong, Douglas Brown and Dan Wasson are up. Mrs. Hissong and Mr. Brown are the only ones who have filed to run.

- Dresden City Council: Donald Ritter, Jackie Douglas and Keith Muirhead's City Council positions are up. All have signed up to seek

re-election.

- Twin Creek Extension District: The extension offices have a total of six positions open, two in Norton County, two in Sheridan and two in Decatur. Sharleen Wurm's and Sheryl Unger's terms here are up. Mrs. Unger has filed to run again.

- Norcatour City Council: Seats held by Carl Lyon, Doug Dempewolf and Jeff Roe positions are open. No one has filed to run.

- Jennings City Council: Seats of Robert Papp, Louise Cressler and Mayor Marjorie Hartzog are up. No one had filed as of Monday.

## School board elections in April

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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As of Monday, two current members had signed up to run again for three open seats on the Oberlin School Board and one was on the fence.

Members Abby Hissong, an insurance agent at Fredrickson Insurance, and Doug Brown, vice-president of The Bank, both with students in school, are running, while member Dan Wasson, a farmer, said that he wasn't sure.

Mrs. Hissong, who has two children in school, Gatlin, 13, and Alexis, 16, is seeking her second term. She said that being on the school board isn't always the easiest job, but it is rewarding.

"You have to have the desire to work with the educational system and administrators," she said, "and try to look for a positive approach.

"I have the desire to see Oberlin grow with the school and educate our children. I really enjoy it; I've learned a lot... There are just so

many new challenges and new things to learn. It's an ever-changing educational world, and it's really interesting to help it evolve."

Mr. Wasson, whose kids are all grown, said he has served for about 14 years in two terms on the board. He said he's still not sure he's going to take the plunge again.

"I've enjoyed it," he said, "and I guess if no one else wants to take a chance on it, I'll run again. But if someone else can't live without it, I'll let them have it.

"I'm not a big one for a race, and it's not that important to me, but if no one steps up, I'll consider it again.

Mr. Wasson said his favorite things about serving on the board are the people you get to meet and going to graduation. But it's hard work.

"The budget is going to be a big

(See ONE on Page 12)

## Nursing study group to hold public meeting

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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Grace Team, the Topeka consulting firm hired by the county to do a study on how its services for seniors could be improved, will hold a community meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 30, at the Golden Age Senior Center.

"The purpose of the meeting," said John Grace, who is leading the study, "is to explain my work and ask for input from the citizens regarding the current needs of the elderly, (as well as) future services that might be needed."

Mr. Grace stressed that if any one who wants to talk to him about the study cannot make it to the meeting, they should contact him either by e-mail at jr1grace@email.com or by phone at (785) 506-6003. The study will continue for the

next 30 to 45 days, he said, so there should be time to hear from everyone.

"I'm going to probably put together a kind of questionnaire," Mr. Grace said about the meeting. "What you want to do is get good feedback and input. Some people are comfortable standing and speaking, and others aren't... I'd like to hear from a broad spectrum of people.

"In this case, I'm going to really focus in on senior health issues. I'm sure folks will say, 'We don't have this service available, and it would be nice if we did.' A lot of times it centers around transportation or home services. Then you'll get opinions on current services here, some will like them and some won't. And then all of these ideas come down to what resources are available to help people in the community, so it's a balance

between needs and resources."

Mr. Grace said he met with many of the groups for the study last Wednesday and Thursday, including the staff at the Golden Age Senior Center, the boards, residents and families at the Cedar Living Center and the Good Samaritan Center, the hospital home health director, the marketing director of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., the county commissioners, City Administrator Karen Larson, and area ministers.

Mr. Grace said he is a licensed administrator and used to run a retirement community. He spent 20 years as the head of a trade group for all nonprofit nursing homes in Kansas, and has been a consultant for the last 10 years.

