

*Postal service changes

(Continued from Page 1A)
 The Postal Service is closing more than 100 processing facilities by July. The service had been looking at consolidating North Platte to Cheyenne, Wyo., but that study was halted last February when officials found there was no room at the Wyoming plant. The service instead decided to send mail from Alliance, Neb., and Colby to North Platte.
 The processing changes will save about \$1.2 billion a year, Sperry said, and the service has its eye on several other changes that may require action by Congress. The service announced earlier in February that it plans to stop delivering and collecting letters, including first-class mail, on Saturdays beginning Aug. 5. Packages will be delivered, however. Post offices that are currently open Saturdays will remain open, and mail to post office boxes will be delivered.
 That change is expected to save the service \$2 billion a year.
 The service has been asking for several years to get rid of Saturday delivery. Since 2006, it has been required by law to prepay retiree health benefits, which cost about \$5.5 billion a year. No other federal agency is required to do that.

Global prayer



PASTOR CHARLOTTE STRECKER-BASELER, while speaking at the World Day of Prayer service Friday at Faith Lutheran Church, introduced Mary Ann Amack (left), Joy Votapka (center) and Coleen Rippe (right). The ladies each spoke the part of a French nun in a sketch aimed at increasing cultural understanding the world over.

- Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

Ferrets continue to incite debate

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
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 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has extended the public comment period on a Safe Harbor Agreement which would govern reintroduction of the endangered black-footed ferret – and the prairie dogs that come with them – throughout the West.

The Decatur County commissioners adopted a resolution at their meeting Tuesday, Feb. 5, to tell the service, which is overseeing the process, it should reject the agreement. The pact, involving the service and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, would govern future reintroduction of the endangered critters in 12 western states that comprise their historic range.

Kansas is a member of the alliance, and would be covered by the agreement, if adopted. Neither the ferrets nor the controversy over reintroducing them would be new to the state, however.

A group of Logan County landowners agreed to accept the ferrets on their land several years ago. Neighbors have been complaining about the spread of prairie dogs ever since, and the Logan County commissioners sued some of the landowners.

Now, the service wants to create more sanctuaries in an attempt to bring their wild population up from

about 1,000 to 3,000, at which point they would no longer be considered an endangered species. Control of their management would be given back to the states. This has upset farmers, who fear an infestation of prairie dogs coming with the ferrets, since prairie dogs are their only food source.

The debate has attracted the attention of county commissioners across the state, who worry that the situation will set a precedent for how prairie dogs will be dealt with when they migrate to land owned by neighboring farmers around a sanctuary.

Decatur County commissioners have been doing what they can to voice their opposition to the ferret program, and are now pushing the federal agency to take no action on the application for the agreement, effectively stopping it.

Their concern, the commissioners said in their letter, is for the rights of landowners who live near a site where the ferrets would be released. The letter asked those crafting the proposal to consider making it so that if prairie dogs do encroach on neighboring land, that owner can then ask the county to take care of the problem, and the county, in turn, would then bill the landowner who is reintroducing the ferrets for "control" measures.

Postal changes delay newspapers

Changes in mail sorting last week apparently sent some subscribers' newspapers off on a long trip. As of Monday, at least two people in Dresden reported they still had not received the Feb. 28 issue of *The Oberlin Herald*.

Papers this week for subscribers in Dresden, Jennings, Norcatur and Norton will be delivered directly to post offices, said Publisher Steve Haynes.

"We hope that results in delivery on Wednesday again," he said.

He noted that papers for those towns have been delivered through Colby and Hays. Over the last 20 years, he said, he believed they had missed the connection only once.

"With all mail from the 677 area going to North Platte," he said, "there's no longer a truck going east to Hays. Those papers appar-

ently had to go through Kansas City and Wichita before they could come back."

Starting this week, a driver for the newspaper will drop the papers at each post office to eliminate the long trip for those papers, he said, adding, "Subscribers should let us know if their paper continues to be late."

Paper looking for local heroes

For the third year, *The Oberlin Herald* invites readers to nominate a "Hometown Hero" for an upcoming special section, where our staff will write short stories on each of the nominees.

Nominations are needed by Friday, March 8, to give time for the staff to interview everyone.

Anyone who wants to nominate someone can mail a letter to Assistant Publisher Kimberly Davis

at 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749 or e-mail the nomination to k.davis@nwkansas.com.

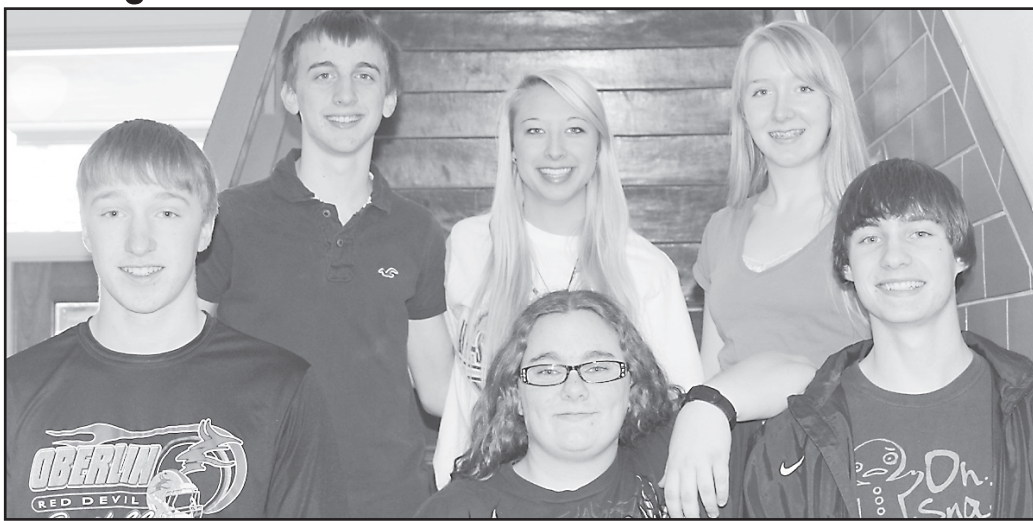
Nominations, said Mrs. Davis, need to include the person's name, the nominator's name and phone number, and the reason for the nomination. If a picture is available, that can be sent or e-mailed to Mrs. Davis.

The staff will try to write about each of the nominated "Heroes,"

Mrs. Davis said. A hero can be anyone, she said, maybe someone who has worked hard to raise money for a community project, someone who volunteers to shovel their neighbor's sidewalk off each winter or maybe just that person who always has a smile on their face and constantly cheers people up.

Mrs. Davis asks that people not nominate the same "heroes" as in previous years.

Congratulations to KMEA Honor Band and Choir



The Oberlin Boosters Club extends congratulations to Matt Helm, Darbi Rouse, and Elizabeth Nedland (back) for their selection to the KMEA Honor Band, and Baron Green, Cassandra Canto and Caleb Koerperich (front) for their selection to the KMEA Honor Choir. It was Darbi's and Elizabeth's 3rd selection and Caleb's 2nd selection.

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELL DONE!



Come Home to Decatur Health Systems Family Practice Clinic



Allen Hooper M.D.
 Family Practice



Robert Rosin M.D.
 Internal Medicine
Medical Director

Lynnetta Ward
 APRN-BC



Tricia Carney
 APRN-C



Decatur Health Systems also offers:

- Cedar Living Center
- Wheat Ridge Terrace
- Cottonwood Home Care

We've added a letter to our CT scanner and more information for our patients and providers.

We've upgraded our CT scanner to a QCT scanner, which can do all the things a CT scanner can do PLUS Bone density scanning.

902 W. Columbia Oberlin, KS 67749 clinic (785) 475-2015 hospital (785) 475-2208

CORRECTION

Due to printing errors in our Rural Health section, the following information was incorrect. We hope that this did not inconvenience anyone.



The Road to Wellness in Northwest Kansas
 SHERIDAN COUNTY HEALTH COMPLEX

"The Road to Wellness in Northwest Kansas"

- Number of Beds - 25 as Critical Access Hospital.
- Revenue 2012 - \$38,425,000.
- Net Income 2012 - \$530,387.
- Tax Support - None; operated as a private, nonprofit hospital.
- Doctors - three active physicians, four nurse practitioners, three physician assistants, one certified registered nurse anesthetist, 29 consulting physicians.
- Administrator - Kevan Trenkle.
- Phone - (785) 462-7511.

- Beds - 18 as Critical Access Hospital, 35 long-term nursing, eight assisted living apartments.
- Revenue 2012 - \$6.5+ million. Fiscal report not available until March 1.
- Profit 2012 - Expected 6.1 percent profit margin. Have had positive profit margins since 2005.
- County money - \$936,312.
- Doctors - Cooperative agreement with Bluestem Medical in Quinter, Dr. Brewster Kellogg of Colby as chief of staff, one nurse practitioner and one physician assistant.
- Administrator - Steve Granzow.
- Phone - (785) 675-3281.