

Hoxie road to be closed next summer

By STEVE HAYNES

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The highway between Selden and Hoxie will be closed next summer while the state rebuilds the road with wider pavement and better sight distances, Department of Transportation officials told a couple of dozen citizens at a public meeting in Hoxie on Thursday.

The project is the department's answer to years of pleas from Sheridan County residents to do something about safety on K-23, a secondary route that runs from the Selden junction with U.S. 83 and K-383 to the Oklahoma line. The road north of Hoxie hasn't been updated since it was built in the 1940s, but repeated asphalt overlays have built up and narrowed the driving lanes, leaving a sharp drop off along the road in many places.

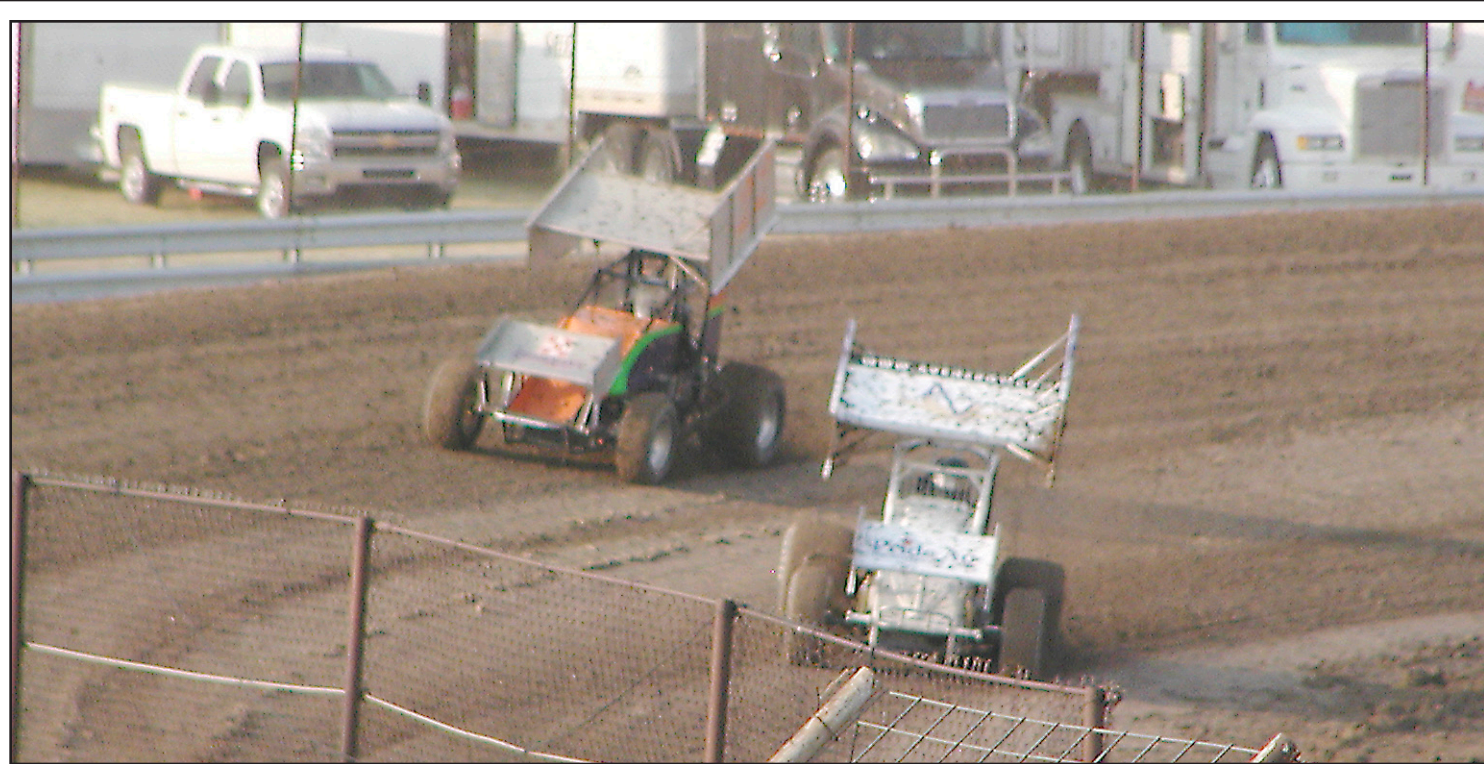
District Engineer Jeff Stewart and other officials explained that to save money and be sure the work is done safely, the road will be closed for

about six months, from mid-March until at least mid-September. An "official" detour will lead drivers 47 miles down U.S. 83 to the Nine Mile junction east of Colby, then back to Hoxie on U.S. 24.

Realistically, Mr. Stewart said, the department expects most local drivers to use county roads to get around the work, especially the "Feed Lot" road, a gravel road running south from the west edge of Selden. The state has promised to give county commissioners money and asphalt millings to build up the road.

Mr. Stewart said the project is being done as a "practical improvement," making the road safer without meeting all current standards. That is expected to cost about \$500,000 a mile, compared to \$2 million a mile for a new, high-standard road.

The state has little money for rebuilding secondary routes like (See HOXIE on Page 12)



Winds put off race start

OFF TO THE RACES

(top) were two sprint cars during the first day of Summer Shootout at the Decatur County Speedway on Friday. The wind caused a slight delay, leaving fans to wait (right). Doug Brown (from left, below), Mollie Tate, TyLaynn Peterson and Josh Fortin of the Oberlin Swim Club served burgers. Firemen Royal Fisher (bottom, right) and Garret McDougal were on duty to attend to any problems. —Herald photos by Ramell Taylor



Rec group finds it can't spend its gifts

By RAMELL TAYLOR

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Members of the Decatur County Summer Recreation Board were shocked when the commissioners told them last Tuesday that donations and fees they collected could not be used in their budget without some changes.

The commissioners agreed to find a way to make sure the board gets to spend the money this year, noting that as it stands, the board can't overspend its budget allotment even though it has the money.

Recreation Director Dakota Soderlund and board member Gary Juenemann met with the commissioners to see why the budget was being spent at such a fast rate.

The commissioners said the board has already spent \$3,100, including payroll for employees, umpires and scorekeepers for ball games, as well as supplies.

Mr. Juenemann said that the recreation board was allocated \$6,500 in the county budget, but received

\$1,500 from the city and \$2,400 in softball team fees.

Commissioner Chairman Stan McEvoy, said that under state law, the board can't spend anything over the \$6,500 in the budget unless the budget is amended.

Mr. Juenemann said he was told that donations and fees could be used for the recreation board's budget when the board formed earlier this year.

County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler said the board had been told wrong, as she was also under the impression that donations and fees collected could be used past the budget limit.

"You can't tell me that now," Mr. Juenemann said. "If we bring in \$12,000, we're still only allowed \$6,500?"

Mr. McEvoy said donations were not included in the budget estimate because this is the first year the agency has had donations for repairs and projects.

(See BUDGET on Page 12)



City Council decides to purchase new boiler to heat old swimming facility

By RAMELL TAYLOR

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The Oberlin City Council approved purchase of a new boiler for the city pool Thursday after complaints of the water being too cold for swimmers, especially kids.

Council members said the current

boiler sprang a leak, extinguishing the flame that heats the water.

Swim Coach Stephanie Blau said the water has been so cold that she would have to pull kids out the pool because their mouths were turning blue.

"We can't practice for an hour,"

Mrs. Blau said. "We can't even keep the kids in for 15 minutes at 6 a.m."

The council discussed the option of rebuilding the boiler. Water Department Supervisor Willard Perrin said that might cost \$20,641. He quoted \$30,226 for the cost of

installing a new boiler, which could also be used for the new pool.

Mr. Perrin said the boiler would take two weeks to deliver and a week to install, leaving five weeks of swim season to go.

With the end of swim season being so close, council members

discussed the idea of holding off on the repairs.

After Mr. Perrin assured them the new boiler would be compatible with the new pool, Councilman Rusty Adleman moved to buy the boiler.

"It would be silly to spend \$20,000

on repairs," he said, "then turn around and spend another \$30,000 on a new boiler."

Councilwomen Rachel Johnson seconded the motion. The council unanimously voted in favor.

The money for the new boiler will come from the city's general fund.

Roof gets reshingled

Inmates from the Norton Correctional Facility replaced the shingles on the shelter house at the roadside park in Jennings.

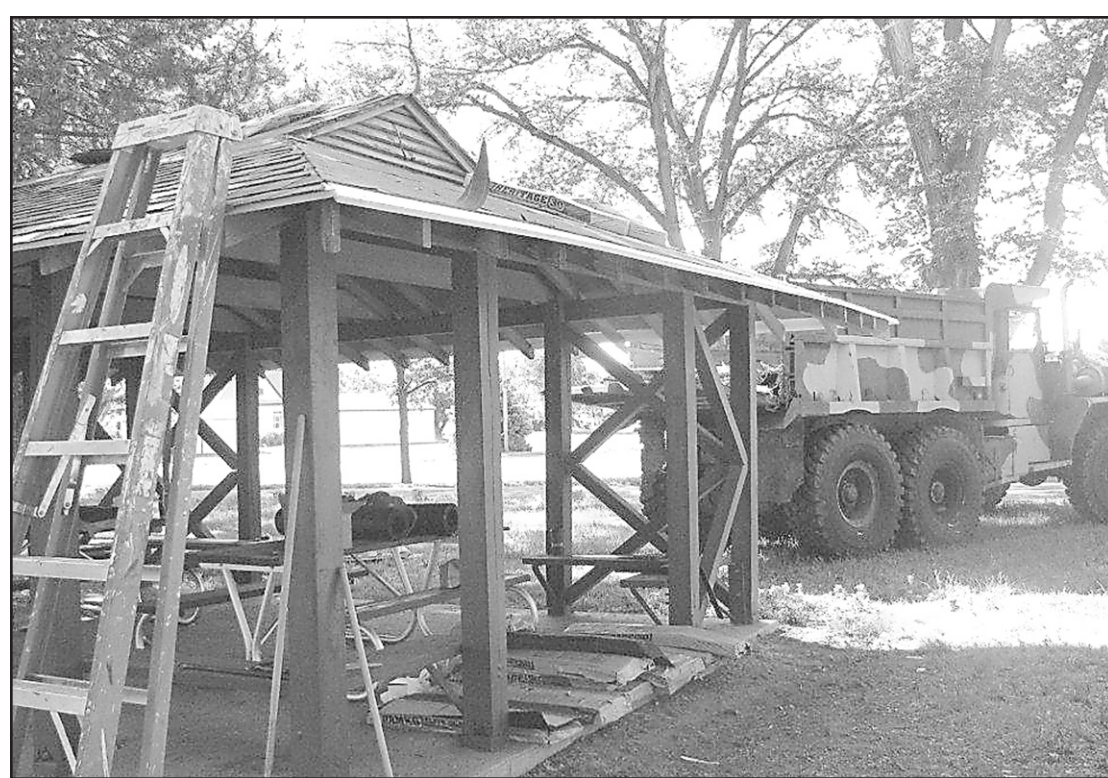
Former Mayor Marge Hartzog said this is part of a plan to make the town more presentable.

Mrs. Hartzog said the city received a gift of \$25,000 from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation to use for city renovations. The shingle project cost around \$4,000.

Some of the Hansen money has already been used on improvements at the library and senior center entrance, she said.

Last year, the Norton inmates painted the tables and chairs at the park, Mrs. Hartzog said. They will be helping to remove dead timber from the drainage ditch between the park and the railroad.

"We appreciate the inmates volunteering," she said.



A NORTON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY truck was ready to haul away the mess left after inmate volunteers replaced the shingles from the roof on the shelter house at the roadside park in Jennings. —Photo by Marge Hartzog

Fireworks show set for Saturday

By RAMELL TAYLOR

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After missing last year due to the dry weather and the county's burn ban, Jonathan Fick plans to bring his popular free fireworks show back to the Oberlin Softball Field on Saturday.

Mr. Fick said the show will be a "pyro musical," with fireworks choreographed to music. This year, he said the theme will be "Beach Blast," shooting fireworks to the sounds of 1950s beach music.

He said he'll be electronically shooting 200 mortars for this year's show, costing about \$5,000, and the display will be 80 feet-wide.

"Not a piece of sky won't be lit up," Mr. Fick said. "For the finale, we're shooting 20 shots per second."

The 24-minute show will start at 9:30 p.m., he said, adding that it takes him six months to plan. He

said it takes three months to prewire the fireworks and it will probably take 12 hours for his crew of six to set up the equipment.

Even with all the work that goes into putting together the show, he said, the most challenging part is cleaning up the field afterwards.

"Some of the debris from the cardboard and inserts gets in the field," he said. "I'm usually cleaning it up by myself, so any volunteers would be greatly appreciated."

Mr. Fick said his grandfather started a tradition of ordering fireworks from a catalog in Ohio and his neighborhood would pool together to put on big firework displays.

"I have kids," he said. "I wanted to pass the tradition on to them."

