



We salute farmers, ranchers

Special pages for ag businesses inside. See Pages 4B-7B.

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Gov. Kelly

Governor issues new measures

Gov. Laura Kelly announced new measures Monday to protect Kansas families from the spread of the Covid-19 virus, including an executive order making mandatory the rule that public gatherings and meetings include no more than 10 people.

The governor said she was to issue the order further limiting mass gatherings on Tuesday. Her decision

was based on updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and modeling from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment that projected cases of Covid-19 in Kansas will jump from 82 Monday to a range of 300 to 900 by the end of the month.

"This is an escalating crisis, and we must make sacrifices and adjustments

to ensure the safety of our neighbors," Kelly said. "We all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of Covid-19."

The order also includes a framework counties will be required to use if officials determine it is necessary to issue stay-at-home orders. The guidance will provide information on how to include provision in these orders for essential infrastructure and businesses.

With 89 of 105 Kansas counties without a confirmed case as of Monday, the governor said she would not issue a statewide stay-at-home order at this time.

"The crisis continues to evolve by the hour, and a statewide stay-at-home order may indeed become necessary at some point soon," Kelly said. "For now, the actions we are taking will ensure as

much consistency as possible for local communities.

"The most effective way we can slow down the virus is to stay home, continue practicing good hygiene and take all of these orders seriously. These actions will help mitigate the spread of Covid-19, save lives and help us all transition back to our normal routines."

Schools to close thru May

Since Gov. Laura Kelly's announcement that all school buildings were to close for the rest of the semester last week, the Oberlin School District has been working with the state Department of Education to develop an alternative learning plan for all students.

Superintendent Sandra K. Short said the best way for keeping up on this is to head to the school website at www.usd294.org. As it stands now, she said, students should resume learning about Monday.

High school students were being allowed into the building to clean out their lockers Monday or Tuesday. Detailed instructions went out by email.

If your time slot didn't work, call the school at (785) 475-2231, and they will figure out a different time.

"We understand the hardship a school closure places on our families," Mrs. Short said, "as well as the social and emotional impact it may have on our students."

"Our district leadership team and Board of Education have been developing a contingency plan since mid-March, including how to provide breakfast and lunch for our students."

The district will continue to provide Grab-N-Go meals for the rest of the school year. Meals can be picked up at the south cafeteria door at Decatur Community High. These are free for any child age 1 to 18. Call either school by 10 a.m. on Mondays to give the kitchen staff a meal count for the week.

The number at Oberlin Elementary is (785) 475-2122 and the high school is 475-2231.

This is the district tentative plan for the three weeks since hearing of the closure:

• Last week - Prepare and disinfect the buildings. Only essential staff is allowed inside.

(See SCHOOLS on Page 6A)



STUDENTS WERE ALLOWED into Decatur Community High on Monday and Tuesday to clean out their locker. Sophomore Tabitha Kier walked out with her supplies and books in hand. Students may begin home and internet study next week. - Herald staff photo by Dayna Mannebach

Stores, offices restricting lobby access

Many Oberlin businesses and offices have closed their lobby or store to protect the safety of both customers and employees.

Ward Drug is open, but the door is locked. Pharmacist Derek Chambers asks customers to call ahead to order medications, prescriptions and other goods. When you are outside the store, call and someone will bring your items to you. The store also offers in-town delivery and mail-out service.

Decatur Health is restricting all visitors to the hospital until further notice. Patients coming for clinic or specialty clinic appointments, emergency room visits or any outpatient service will be screened before they are allowed in. During regular business hours, check in with the front-desk receptionist on arrival. After hours, go to the emergency entrance and ring the bell for someone to provide the screening.

Before coming to the hospital or clinic, call ahead if you are experiencing fever, cough or shortness of

breath. If possible, patients should come alone.

With the state ban on gatherings of 50 or more, and gathers larger than 10 discouraged, Pauls Funeral Home must limit visitations and funerals to less than 50 people.

Everyone is welcome to come in and sign the guest book, but attendance at funerals will be limited to immediate family members, said funeral directors Adam and Alyssa Gobber. Call (785) 475-3127 for questions.

Several businesses are offering deliveries during the emergency.

Raye's Grocery has free delivery of over eight items on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Call (785) 475-2952 to arrange an order.

Frontier Cafe is providing carry-out only since last Monday. Hours are from 8 to 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and from 8 to 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Call at (785) 470-4291 for order. (See STORES on Page 6A)

Events, meetings mostly cancelled

By DAYNA MANNEBACH dmannebach@nwkansan.com

With government officials and medical authorities urging people not to gather but to observe "social distancing," many organizations have cancelled or put off regular and special events. In Oberlin this week, that includes:

The Decatur County Last Indian Raid Museum's annual rummage sale in early April.

Director Sharleen Wurm said they're not sure on a new date. It will just depend on how things go, she said.

The board has decided the Oberlin City Library will remain closed until further notice, but the staff will continue to serve people by phone or email.

Employees will be at the library from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, said Library Direc-

tor Ronda Schroer. You can request items to check out by phone at (785) 475-2412, set up a time for pick-up and someone will bring your items to the front door.

No patrons will be allowed into the library and no fines will be charged for late items, she said.

"You can put items in the book return drop outside anytime," she said. "If they are DVDs, you can put them in a sack and tie it so the discs will not fall out or put a rubber band around them."

The Western Plains Arts Association has cancelled a marimba program set for Sunday in Oakley, said Eric Yonkey, a board member and spokesman for the group.

"We hope to reschedule at another time, but this will depend on developments in the next several weeks," he said. "Nashville Legacy, which (See EVENTS on Page 6A)

Chamber plans 'Quarantine Qruisin'

Social distance is the new norm, but that doesn't mean we can't have some fun and still stay safe, says Cynthia Haynes, president of the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber plans a "Quarantine Qruisin" event from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday in Oberlin, starting at the top of Penn Avenue in the Pizza Hut parking lot and going down to North

Street, around the Good Samaritan Center and back to Penn on Ash Street in front of the center. Drivers then will cruise down the street to the end of pavement at the Decatur Co-op parking area and turn around and go back up to the north end.

Everyone is welcome to bring their vehicle - be it a classic automobile, an everyday car or a tractor. To add to the fun, the Chamber is asking

everyone to have one or more stuffed animals along for the ride so we can have a crazy cruisin' zoo. Lights and signs are fine. Honk at your friends, neighbors and relatives. Wave and holler. It's all OK. Just don't stop in the middle of the road to visit. Let's keep our social distance, and make this a fun time for everyone.

And anyone who can, at a business or at home, should put a stuffed bear

in their window to make this an Oberlin bear hunt. That will allow parents to take their kids around town looking for the bears.

And if you don't have a bear, any other stuffed animal will do, Mrs. Haynes said.

The Oberlin Police Department has agreed to lead the way for the cruise. While the Chamber plans to (See 'QUARANTINE' on Page 6A)

Oberlin graduate works as lab tech

By DAYNA MANNEBACH dmannebach@nwkansan.com

Oberlin native Jordan Dreher, 27, is working at Decatur Health as a medical lab technician student from Barton County Community College in Great Bend.

Ms. Dreher said she plans to graduate in early May.

"The degree has been two years," she said, "so I've done my phlebotomy (drawing blood) and mostly all of my clinicals here in Oberlin throughout the past two years."

Ms. Dreher said she already signed a contract to start working as a tech here when she graduates.

"That's exciting," she added. "I've learned a lot here. All of my classes through Barton were online, so that can be difficult, but I can tell you I wouldn't have been able to

do it without (clinic manager) Jodi Votapka."

The hospital has been really helpful in letting her come here, she said.

"You can only read so much without having to do it," she said, "without actually physically going to class and learning from your teacher."

"You're pretty much teaching yourself online, so they've been really helpful here."

Ms. Dreher said what she does in her job now is to draw blood from patients. The technicians run all the tests in the lab.

"If they run the complete blood count," she said, "and there are high white counts or abnormal results on the machine, it'll flag it and then we have to read it manually, count (See WOMAN on Page 6A)



Jordan Dreher

City Council chooses projects for summer street replacement

By CYNTHIA HAYNES cynthia.haynes@nwkansan.com

Oberlin will replace the pavement in the 700 block of East Ash Street and the 200 block of South York Avenue this summer and may pick a third project later if there is enough money and time left.

The two projects were among five that city foreman David Sporn recommended for this summer's work.

The City Council made the choice Thursday after looking over the five projects, which also included the 300 block of South Beaver Avenue and the 400 block of West Mill Street, the 500 block of South Antelope Avenue and the 500 block of North Marks Avenue.

The city can do about 1,000 feet of pavement, Mr. Sporn estimated, and the two the council chose total 960.

Councilman Scott Gawith, who attended the meeting via speaker phone, said that he didn't think that the five choices were the worst streets in Oberlin.

"There are some terrible streets in town that aren't on here," Mr. Sporn agreed.

However, he said the five had been chosen, in part, because they either have new water mains under them

or no water mains. Since the city is replacing old mains, he said, it would not make sense to put a new street down only to tear it up in a year or so so that water or sewer lines could be connected.

On a related matter, City Administrator Halley Roberson told the council that the city's request to add more water mains to its summer replacement project had been authorized by the state Department of Commerce. Bids for the project, being done with a \$600,000 state-federal Community Development Block Grant, came in quite a bit lower than expected.

"We're going to have a larger water main project than we had originally planned," she said.

The council met in the Gateway arena Thursday with the required six feet between each person, including members of the audience, who were scattered over across a chilly room. The meeting was broadcast live on Facebook, with council members Deb Lohoefer

(See COUNCIL on Page 6A)

