

# THE OLATHE

## Hometown FOCUS

**Debut**  
Two Olathe teens discover their acting talent.  
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**NEWS**

SOUVENIR PROGRAM  
 1981  
 Published by Booster Club

## Sports: Movin' on

Nine years later, Wheeler has come to grips with his departure.  
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# Group suggests changes to EPA plan

**STEPHANIE CHEN**

Special to The Olathe News

Residents who live near contaminated land in central Olathe are asking for more aggressive soil and groundwater cleanup.

The Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), which represents residents living near the former Chemical Commodities, Inc. site on Blake Street, are submitting their suggestions for cleanup to the Environmental Protection Agency.

CAG Co-Chairs Ron McVeigh

and Glen Andrews said they tried to find a solution in the best interest of the community even if it meant altering parts of the EPA original proposal.

"The EPA is not unwilling to do anything," Andrews said. "We just need to work together now."

The EPA made its original proposal in June, and the agency is taking public suggestions until Sept. 15.

"We want it to be an open opportunity for the public to have an input on the remedy," said Mary Peterson, remedial

project manager at the EPA.

Dedicated to the Superfund site since the early 1980s, the EPA has conducted numerous studies and tests on the area to develop a feasible cleanup solution for the careless disposal and maintenance of chemicals by CCI.

Peterson explained cleaning up the toxic waste in the soil is a simpler task than removing chemicals like trichlorethylene (TCE), a common industrial solvent for degreasing, from the groundwater. Groundwater injections and

treatment could take decades, she said.

The advisory group was unsatisfied with the EPA's proposal of building two trenches to clean the contaminated groundwater. The group wanted the trench along Ocheltree Street lengthened and the creation of a third trench along Park Street to prevent the spread of the plume, Andrews said.

The underground plume stretches across several

See **GROUP**, 8A

Though the election is more than seven months away, one of three Olathe city councilmembers whose terms expire in April already has decided to run again.

Kathleen Huttman, who represents the city's southeast corner in Ward 3, said Thursday that she already has contacted key members of her campaign staff and plans to seek re-election next year.

Meanwhile, Ward 4 Councilmember Marge Vogt and at-large representative Bob Montgomery said they hadn't made up their minds.

"I'm committed to running next year," Huttman said Thursday.

The council appointed

ning commissioner, to the seat in 2001. She won a two-year term in 2003.

Chief among Huttman's concerns appears to be Black Bob Pool, where attendance and the facility's condition have depreciated in recent years.

If voters approve a 10-year extension of the city's eighth cent park sales tax during the November general election, the use of those funds could directly affect residents i

See **COUNCILMEMBERS**, 5



**Huttman**

# LOCAL

## Group says parts of EPA plan not adequate

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blocks beneath residential homes. Andrews said the plume, filled with TCE and other hazardous chemicals, is estimated to travel 20 feet a year.

"If we don't pursue aggressive cleanup then the plume will keep on moving and posing a threat to homes," he said.

Andrews said the vapors emitted from the plume are a health hazard. Twenty-three homes have had ventilation systems installed in the last two years, and six more homes are scheduled to have vents in place in the coming months.

Because groundwater treatment takes so long to be

effective, the group also suggested the EPA provide the most modern treatment methods for now and the years to come.

The EPA's plan for soil cleanup is not adequate, they say.

The EPA's plans to dig six feet of soil, which still leaves 50 percent of contaminants in residential area.

Andrews said the group asked for more removal so concentration levels are below 60 parts per million instead of the EPA's suggestion of 1,000 parts per million.

For four years group has fought for a cleanup plan on the 1 1/2 acre property along Blake Street.

**“** If we don't pursue aggressive cleanup then the plume will keep on moving and posing a threat to homes.”

— Glen Andrews  
Citizens Advisory Group co-chair

McVeigh said the group and other residents are trying to move forward by possibly filing a lawsuit. He said the group is persuading affected neighbors to sign up with lawyers.

The group also continues to contact elected officials, McVeigh said. Though

cleanup is not a quick process, he sees promise.

"I have several people say that this won't get done in their lifetime," he said. "But there were people who said they would never see the building come down. Now they have to eat their words."

## Church to break ground for new, larger facility

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financial blessing we've seen," he said.

He said members of the congregation have been meeting every Saturday to pray for guidance and funding for the new facility. Prayers have been answered many times, and the church has seen donations of up to \$2 million for the new facility.

"That's been exciting to meet each month and see how God has answered prayers along

more readily," he said. "Right now there's sometimes competition for space."

He said members of the community are invited to attend the ground breaking ceremony.

"We would invite people from the community who would have knowledge of Berean Bible Church and Berean Christian School to come out and join us," he said.

He also said the congregation will continue to pray as the