

County commissioners give updates on recent construction projects

Written by Darci Tomky

With a short agenda at their regular meeting Monday, Aug. 31, Phillips County Commissioners gave updates on Event Center and Courthouse heating system construction projects.

Work on the Event Center is making progress with current ventures including flooring, ceilings and painting. The cabinets will be coming in soon with carpet to follow in a couple weeks. Appliances have been ordered, and the Heginbotham Trust will provide \$5,000 to furnish kitchen appliances in the Extension meeting room.

Commissioners reported they are taking bids to replace the heating system in the Courthouse. Proposals are due Sept. 11. Commissioners noted the heating system replacement will be a long process. After it is ordered, it takes six to eight weeks to construct the furnace plus additional time to deliver and install the new system at the Courthouse. Commissioners hope the project can be completed by the first of December or possibly by Christmas.

Extension agent needed

Also in August, commissioners continued work with Golden Plains Area Extension Agency to get a full-time agent in Holyoke. Because the position was open before the Governor's hiring freeze was applied, an agent can still be hired for the Holyoke position. It is one of eight positions they can fill right now.

Commissioner Susan Roll Walter has helped interview for an agronomy agent, and a family consumer services position is also open. Even if someone is hired for an open position, they will not necessarily be located in Holyoke.

Area agents have been coming to Holyoke one day a week on a rotating basis to keep the Holyoke office open.

Hazard Mitigation Plan updated recently

Commissioners have contributed to the draft for the Northeast Colorado Hazard Mitigation Plan. Phillips County is one of 10 counties in the region working on the plan consisting of strategies to

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reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from the effects of natural hazard events such as tornadoes and floods.

A public meeting was held Monday, Aug. 31 to discuss the draft. The public is also invited to review and comment on the draft by visiting the website at www.readynortheast.org. Comments must be received by Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Other business

In other business during the month of August, county commissioners:

—sold a county vehicle to a salvage dealer for \$300.

—reapplied to a court security grant for continued funding of personnel. Because doors are now locked during court days, the funds are needed to maintain a fourth officer.

—looked at the budget for the regional and department meetings being held this week.

—reported from Eastern Transportation Planning Region meetings that stimulus money will be used for I-76 between Sedgwick and the state line. This could possibly free up money to be used on local roads.

—wrote letters about state rule making regarding conveyances and the use of residential elevators in commercial buildings.

—noted Centennial Mental Health moved out of the county's resource center at 127 E. Denver St. to the former Viaero building on Campbell Avenue. Baby Bear Hugs moved into the vacant resource center space which the county will give in kind. Northeast Health will use Baby Bear

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Hugs' former room for additional meeting space.