

Commissioners plan new budget

Written by Darci Tomky

At the Phillips County commissioners meeting Tuesday, Sept. 29, commissioners reported planning county's budget has kept them busy during the month of September.

This year, county property was reappraised by county assessor Doug Kamery, a process that takes place every other year. From this, the county's assessed value is figured.

Phillips County's preliminary assessed value was recently reported at \$58,327,170, a \$9.3 million increase from last year's \$48,975,446.

Commissioners noted the number is based on production income in 2008 which was high due to natural gas production. The price is much lower in 2009, so the county's assessed value will drop back down again next year.

Final values are due by Dec. 10 so budgets can be planned and groups will know what they are allotted based on the mill levy.

Additionally, commissioners met with several regionally funded groups Sept. 2 to plan their budget for the coming year. These groups included Northeast Colorado Health Dept., Northeast Colorado Bookmobile, Centennial Mental Health, Northeast Colorado Association of Local Governments, County Express, Eastern Colorado Services for Developmentally Disabled, Golden Plains Extension and the District Attorney's Office.

Furnace installed at Courthouse

A furnace contract with BDM Boiler Repair from Brighton was approved by commissioners, and construction on the Courthouse furnace began last week.

Two steam boilers will be installed, and commissioners reported they will use the lead-lag system which is more efficient than the previous system used in the Courthouse. The cost of the boilers plus installation totaled \$67,851. Commissioners noted the county received a \$40,000 grant for the project.

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The first boiler should be installed by the middle of October, but the second, needing to be ordered, will take several weeks to arrive and be installed.

Event Center construction continues

Commissioners noted construction on the Phillips County Event Center has been gaining but is going somewhat slowly. They have been busy organizing final touches on the facility during the month of September. Source Gas has been working at the Event Center, and flooring and electrical work are being wrapped up, reported the commissioners.

County to receive funding

Colorado has changed the way mineral lease money is distributed, and Phillips County will get an increase in funds from what was previously received for mineral production. Commissioners said the county will receive \$42,258 from Energy Impact funds and \$6,125 from the Federal Mineral Lease.

Other business

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

—discussed rates to charge for use of the Event Center and compared them to other facilities' rates in northeast Colorado.

—noted the Phillips County Sheriff received a \$3,200 criminal justice grant from the stimulus package to be used for evidence collection equipment.

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—approved Holyoke City Public Works, including the Holyoke Volunteer Fire Dept., to move their antennae to the Courthouse roof.

—noted prisoners put tin from the former fairgrounds building on beef barns at the fairgrounds.

—approved a size increase of the Ward gravel pit by Amherst to up to 19.8 acres. It was previously 9.9 acres.

—noted Phillips County is looking for people to serve on the fair board. There are vacancies in Districts 2 and 3 as well as one at-large vacancy.

—approved the use of the Courthouse square for Relay for Life June 4-5, 2010.