

County concerned about state child welfare funding

Written by Darci Tomky

Phillips County Department of Social Services recently took a big hit because of the lack of state funds for child welfare, reported Phillips County Commissioners at their Sept. 30 meeting.

Last year, Phillips County overspent fairly significantly on their child welfare allocation from the State Department of Human Services. This is due to a cost increase from \$3,000 to \$5,000 to place a child in a foster home for one month.

The state takes money left over from other counties in the state who underspent to bail out the counties that overspent. Because Phillips County was so much over their allocation, they were one of the last counties considered to receive the extra money.

Phillips, Pitkin and Weld counties all were left out of the state bail-out.

Small counties should be the first to be bailed out, said Judy McFadden of Phillips County Department of Social Services. The county has no other resources to make up the funds.

Phillips County paid \$73,000 out of their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reserves. They also paid \$14,000 from parental fees they had from the child welfare program.

Now the county doesn't have a cushion to help out this year, said McFadden.

She is working with the state to get some of that cushion back.

"This is a major concern right now for all of us," said commissioner Bud Bieseimer.

Phillips County Event Center is now being used the first Wednesday of every month for a mobile food pantry in partnership with Food Bank of the Rockies. Volunteer Joy Schafer said Heginbotham Hall at the Event Center was a great place to set up for distribution.

County concerned about state child welfare funding

Written by Darci Tomky

The food bank distributes over 8,000 pounds of food to 148 families with the help of 26 volunteers.

They are planning a distribution in Haxtun in January, and if it goes well they will use that for a regular distribution site as well.

Commissioners noted the county will help sponsor a meeting with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union in Holyoke Monday, Oct. 11. The focus is to present information on how Amendments 60 and 61 and Proposition 101 affect the county and the state.

A VALE (Victims and Law Enforcement) grant was recently applied for to fund Shawna Bergstrom's position, a job that is entirely grant funded.

Additionally, commissioners reported the county is beginning initial presentations for department budgets.

Other business

In other business in the month of September, commissioners:

—approved the use of the Courthouse lawn by Holyoke Chamber of Commerce for Dandelion Daze.

—noted Jason John was hired as new maintenance personnel. Gale Wiebers will be retiring at

County concerned about state child welfare funding

Written by Darci Tomky

the end of this week.

—signed a proclamation for 4-H Week Oct. 3-10.

—approved road occupancy for Atlas Rockies LLC for gas and water lines in the northeast part of the county.

—approved road occupancy for PC Telcom to bury more fiber optics cables.

—noted Phillips County Sheriff's Department held an unused prescription drug collection.

—noted Phillips County Department of Social Services moved into a portion of the newly remodeled section at 127 E. Denver in Holyoke.