

Deadline approaching for secession issues

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

While no decision had been made concerning whether or not to put the secession issue on the November ballot as of the Friday, Aug. 2 Phillips County Board of Commissioners meeting, commissioners stated that they are leaning toward equal legislative representation as a more appropriate measure to ensure the rural voice of Colorado is heard.

Phillips County Commissioner Joe Kinnie stated that he and a number of other commissioners from around the state feel that the secession should be looked to as a last resort. If the secession is put on the November ballot and the people decide against it, then the county loses that route as an option.

“We’re leery of whether we really want to put secession on the front burner until we have the representation issue solved,” Kinnie said. “I really think that most of us out here want that more than secession, but if we have to go to that drastic of a measure, we would.”

The idea of equal legislative representation was first proposed by Phillips County Administrator Randy Schafer. As both the Colorado Senate and House are based on population, the change would lie in either the Senate or the House changing to representation by area instead of population.

Kinnie also commented that he has heard from people who are for the secession and from people who are not happy with how rural Colorado is being ignored but believe secession is an off-the-wall approach.

As Weld and Cheyenne counties have already made the decision to put the issue of secession on their ballots, Phillips County commissioners are in talks with commissioners around the state to see how they are approaching the topic before they make their final decision. The board has until Sept. 6 to submit the language of an issue that they wish to include on the ballot.

On Oct. 4, the board will make a formal presentation on the equal representation issue to Colorado Counties Incorporated. CCI offers assistance to county commissioners across the state. CCI makes decisions on which bills they wish to pursue, endorse and oppose.

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County moves forward with enhancement project

McAtee Construction Company out of Sterling was awarded the bid for the Phillips County CDOT enhancement project in the amount of \$216,003.50, which was reviewed and approved by CDOT.

McAtee will be responsible for creating an extension of the current bicycle/pedestrian path around the north side of the Phillips County Fairgrounds in the fall.

Sawyer Waterscaping out of Cheyenne, Wyo., has also begun building the new water feature south of Homesteaders Park. Work on the water feature is expected to wrap up by Saturday, Aug. 10.

Public hearing planned for junk and weed regulations

A final draft of a proposed junk and weed regulation has been recommended by the Phillips County Planning Commission. Commissioners will consider adding the regulation to the current zoning regulations at a public hearing Friday, Aug. 30 at 10 a.m. at the commissioners' meeting room at the Phillips County Courthouse. Copies of the proposed regulation can be found at the county administrative office in the county courthouse.

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Other business

In other business in the month of July, commissioners:

—appointed Dixie Ishee as deputy coroner, serving under county coroner Dr. Dennis Jelden.

—renewed the tavern license for Blisties Inc.

—were presented the 2012 audit for Phillips County by Ronny Farmer. No issues were reported in the audit.

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