

Commissioners oppose three ballot measures

Written by Darci Tomky

Two resolutions were signed by Phillips County Commissioners in the month of July addressing tax reduction and medical marijuana centers.

In an effort to protect the fiscal health of local government, commissioners oppose Proposition 101 and Amendments 60 and 61.

Their nonsupport resolution explains how the ballot measures would restrict the ability to finance long-term capital improvements like buildings, fire stations and road and bridge projects. Restrictions and revenue reductions could severely limit services and programs in Phillips County.

Commissioners also signed a resolution prohibiting the operation of medical marijuana centers, optional premises cultivation operations and medical marijuana-infused products manufacturers' licenses within Phillips County.

This was one of the topics of discussion at the commissioners' quarterly meeting with the towns of Phillips County held Monday, July 26. They wanted to bring everyone up to speed on the marijuana resolution as well as Proposition 101 and Amendments 60 and 61.

The 2010 preliminary valuation for assessment for Phillips County is complete, reported commissioners at their July 30 meeting. According to the assessment, the county is down \$6 million in gas production from the 2009 assessed value.

A total loss of \$5.7 million in Phillips County's assessed value means there won't be as much money in the county's budget next year, said commissioners.

Also in the month of July, commissioners met with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) including Region 4 transportation director Johnny Olson as well as the regional highway commissioner Kim Killin.

CDOT is in the process of updating their Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a planning document that identifies the transportation projects CDOT intends to fund in

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the upcoming years.

Commissioners updated CDOT on the county's current needs and transportation issues. Two of Phillips County's top priorities right now are constructing a shoulder on Highway 385 and replacing bad railroad crossings. Highway 23 is also scheduled for an update in a couple years.

Additionally, the board recently approved a \$14,554 contract with Sidwell Company from St. Charles, Ill. for mapping for the assessor's office. They will help with the geographic information systems (GIS) data conversion and support services. The goal is to get all county maps to work together in the same system.

Event Center nearly completed for Fair

Phillips County administrator Randy Schafer reported work crews got a lot accomplished at the Phillips County Event Center in the three weeks leading up to the county fair. Most of that work was completed by county employees, he said.

Event Center features completed last month include the parking lot/driveway, sod, sprinklers, flag poles, flowers, signs, sidewalks, yard lights and the preschool playground/fence.

Commissioners noted they received a contribution from Kinnie Grain Company of Julesburg and Elton and Eunice Oltjenbruns of Holyoke for the flag poles.

Projects that still need to be completed are painting stripes on the parking area, installing signs at the doorways and planting buffalo grass or sod on the north side of the building.

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Even with the few things that need to be completed, the facility was still in great shape to greet participants at the Phillips County Fair last week.

One element that will make the Event Center a more viable location for many events is a stage. A fund raiser is currently taking place, and commissioners remind county residents that donations to the stage project will be maximized by receiving a tax benefit from the Enterprise Zone.

Other business

In other business in the month of July, commissioners:

—approved a gravel pit application for Ritchey’s Redi Mix & Precast Inc. in Wray for the Falk/Ritchey’s Redi Mix & Precast Inc. pit in the .

—reported the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce’s spotlight lunch at the Event Center was successful as a large crowd was there to see the new building.

—approved subdivision exemptions for Clark and Fran Rueter and Merl and Mary Ellen Koch.

—noted the Resource Center at 127 E. Denver in Holyoke is currently being remodeled and a garage door was taken out last month.

—approved PC Telcom’s plan to install approximately 20 miles of fiber optic cables in rural Phillips County.

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—approved Phillips County Clerk’s request to permanently move the polling place for Districts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 from First Christian Church to the Event Center’s Bieseimer Room.

—reviewed a number of natural gas permits that are being processed by the State Oil and Gas Commission. The proposed wells will be drilled by Omimex Resources and Black Raven Energy.