

County applies for GOCO grant

Written by Darci Tomky

Phillips County recently applied for a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant to fund the Homesteaders Park renovation project, reported commissioners at their Tuesday, Aug. 31 meeting.

Commissioners were approached by Brooke Dirks, Michelle Vieselmeyer and Shannon Schlachter with plans for a new playground facility at the county fairgrounds. This park upgrade will be unique in that it is a universally accessible playground with features for all children, including those with disabilities.

No other playground of this kind can be found in northeast Colorado, so it will be a great addition to the community and surrounding areas.

Christine Fisher of Calhan, who was in Phillips County recently working on the Dragon's Wagon Preschool playground, wrote the grant for Phillips County. While it was submitted in August, the county won't get word on the approved funding until December.

The grant is approximately \$370,000, an increase from what organizers were originally applying for. It requires a \$37,000 cash match which was funded through donations.

In addition to the universally accessible playground, the project includes a small turf field and a frisbee golf course for Homesteaders Park.

Any additional donations could provide funds for a fence around the playground and lighting.

Another county project in the works is the construction of a new building at the landfill, a structure that will replace a building that was destroyed in a storm. A contract with Brasby Construction was signed for \$16,810. Insurance will cover the majority of that cost, around \$14,500, but not the entire cost since this building has been updated with some strengthening requirements.

Phillips County's 2009 audit report by Ronnie Farmer & Company of Lamar is back, and commissioners reported it looked extremely good and fund balances are in good shape.

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Phillips County Assessor Doug Kamery has submitted his 2010 preliminary valuation for assessment, and commissioners noted it dropped 10.2 percent from the previous year. This \$5,931,220 decrease is attributed to oil and gas production.

“This might make budgeting difficult,” said county administrator Randy Schafer.

Three of four outgoing Phillips County Fair board members have been reappointed for three-year terms including Brent Vieselmeyer, Ron Thompson and Ken Ham. With a vacant seat left by Corey Koberstein, Gary McCallum was appointed to fill the Fair board spot for the remaining two years of the term.

Other business

In other business in the month of August, commissioners:

—approved a conditional use permit for a commercial truck wash nine miles south of Holyoke on Highway 385 for Dale, Randy and Rudy Haynes.

—renewed Blisties’ liquor license.

—noted Black Raven Energy started drilling for natural gas in the Amherst area two weeks ago.

—reported everything is in compliance at the county landfill after an inspection by the State Department of Environmental Health.

—held a picnic for county employees Tuesday, Aug. 31.

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—began looking for a county maintenance worker to fill the position Gale Wiebers will leave when he retires in October.

—started the process of hiring a CSU Extension agent to fill an empty spot. They have a job description for the family and consumer science/economic development agent and will begin advertising the job in September, hoping to have someone in place at the beginning of 2011.

—noted Laura Schroetlin is a new part-time employee in the Courthouse administration office.