

County reviews fair budget, future arena plans

By Tom Betz
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Sherman County commissioners and representatives of the fair board reviewed the annual budget for the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair at the meeting on Tuesday and feel it is working out well.

Steve and Aaron Duell met with the commissioners to discuss the fair operation, and plans for future improvements.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said the commissioners put the same amount for the fair in the budget of \$30,000, and did not raise that, but were paying some bills as they came up.

“We are running great,” Steve Duell said.

He handed out a budget for the fair he said Aaron Duell and Janet Rumpel, county clerk, had put together.

Rumpel said the budget was up to \$30,000, but sometimes they do not get all the money because of delinquent taxes.

The budget shows the county contributing \$28,000 and that fair week income brings in another \$10,900 from the tractor pull, howdy rowdy rodeo, the various ven-

dors inside and outside the ag building and wood chip sales in the animal barns.

With the county money the total income is \$43,250.

Steve Duell said they had a pretty good tractor pull this year with about \$7,500 total including about \$3,000 from the sponsors.

He said the Howdy Rowdy Rodeo had a great turnout this year with about 90 kids.

He said the wood chips are in the livestock barns and they buy the first round. Then the kids pay \$6 a bag after that. He said the cost is about \$1,800 and they buy 250 bags. He said they usually have some left for the spring show.

He said they give the 4-H Ambassadors \$175 to do the parade and provide the prizes.

He said the hot dog feed was sponsored by Eagle Communications who gave them \$500, and it balanced out perfectly.

For the Catch-a-Pig they have been buying 12 pigs, and have been lucky to be able to sell most of them back to break even.

On the expense side Steve Duell said the judges are costing about \$4,500 because it costs a lot to get judges out here.

On the prize premiums he said they always feel the more the people entering the better, and they average about \$5,000 on that and \$500 for ribbons.

He said they do the kids tractor pull, and go out and buy the prizes. He said they had several qualify and go to the state pull this year.

The fair board pays about \$2,200 for water, electricity and Internet service.

The total for expenses is \$39,775, and he said that usually leaves the fair board about \$3,500 to start the next year.

“We have managed to stay in the black the last two years,” he said. “We are good at \$28,000 to \$30,000. We can do well at that.”

Aaron Duell said the fair was a good success and numbers were up for all the event including the talent show that had to be moved inside because of the rain on Thursday.

He said the carnival hit a new record on Tuesday and then beat it on Friday for the most money the carnival has ever taken in. He said they went through 50,000 tickets plus the wrist bands.

He said he heard a lot of positive comments about the new concrete between the 4-H and Ag Building and long the north side of the 4-H building.

Aaron said they got the sound system completed in the grandstand, and the original cost was about \$3,000, but when he got the bill the total was \$4,779. He said the fair board donated \$1,000 and Kiwanis donated \$500 toward that.

Steve Duell said he had a donation for \$250 for that from someone who goes to the races all the time.

Commissioner Larry Enfield said the county had agreed to pay that and made a motion to pay the \$3,029 remaining to Fixsen Electronics.

Aaron said he had another bill for an electrical issue dealing with an old fuse box and B&B Electric fixed it for \$225. He asked the commissioners to pay that bill.

Enfield and Strnad agreed to pay the bill to Gene Becker.

Steve Duell said they had been talking to Kiwanis about the present arena. He said the Kiwanis may do away with the Demo Derby next year, and go with a mud bog race

to have something new. He said they have the 180 feet for the main area, but need 100 feet on either end.

He said he has talked to the horse people about building a new arena to the southeast part of the county property. He said they would remove all the current arena and be able to open the area up.

He said they would not do lights right off, and might have to do that later. He said the new arena would be set up for horse shows and practice. He said he did not see a lot of expense as they could reuse much of what is there. He said he wanted to get started and bring it to the commissioners to look at what the ideas are.

He said the new arena would probably be a little larger to be able to do barrel racing.

Enfield and Strnad said it sounded like a good plan.

Steve Duell said they will probably tear down the current arena this fall and build the new one in the spring. He said they would leave the announcers booth for the races and other events.

Volunteers explain Senior Health Insurance Counseling

By Tom Betz
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Sherman County commissioners were in search of an available computer, and asked the two volunteers from the Senior Health Insurance Counseling of Kansas to explain their program and the use of two computers and a printer.

Carol Guyer and Cheryl Ketter appeared at the meeting on Tuesday morning, and Commissioner Cynthia Strnad asked them to explain to the commissioners what they do in working with seniors in the county.

Guyer said it is a volunteer program, and last year Sherman County volunteered some money to help, and said we could use it and we did. She said they purchased two laptop computers and a printer, and paid Ketter mileage for trips to town.

Guyer said the two are part of the SHICK program and they have been trained and are certified to talk to seniors about the various Medicare programs. She said they meet with seniors and help them understand the insurance and the supplemental options including the Part D for

prescriptions.

She said they meet with people year round, and submit a contact report with the SHICK program in Washington.

“We do not get paid by them,” Guyer said. “About 50 percent of those in Sherman County who pay taxes are over 65. We are doing a service, and that is why we came to you.”

She said the supervisor in Hays was not pleased they were getting county money.

Ketter let Guyer do most of the

talking, but said she had received about \$475 last year for mileage.

She said the busy season is coming up, and this year it will run from Oct. 15 to the end of December. The period is the annual open enrollment for the Medicare Part D prescription plan, and last year the enrollment period was from Nov. 15 to the end of December.

She said last year the two volunteers had done more than 140 of the Part D program reviews. She said they meet people at the Goodland Public Library during the signup period.

Guyer said she heard the commissioners wanted the computers back. She said it is in her closet, and she was surprised when she got a call.

“We will need it in October,” she said, “and we will be using it daily and need both computers.”

Ketter said she had volunteered for this, but may not if she does not get the mileage and Carol will have to do it herself.

Commissioner Larry Enfield said the commissioners are doing the budget and will have to look at the program.

Commissioners agree to store, insure medical supply trailer

By Tom Betz
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With some clarification about what the trailer would be used for, Sherman County commissioners verbally agreed to house a medical supply trailer as part of the regional Homeland Security Council.

Gary Winter, representing the regional Homeland Security Council, said he was at the meeting to get the approval of the commissioners to place a medical supply trailer in Sherman County.

He said the regional council covered counties from Sherman to Russell and from the north border and includes Rush and Ness counties.

The Homeland Security Council

had money for two trailers and the one they want to place in Sherman County is similar to one located in Ellis County. He said when the council drew a circle on the map of the region and Hill City and Graham County and Sherman County were selected for the trailers.

Winter said he had approached the Goodland Regional Medical Center and Bruce Gleason from the ambulance service about the trailer.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said Gleason had mentioned the trailer, but she was concerned if it would contain medications that would have to be kept up to date. She said her other concern was what size the trailer was and if it took a larger

truck to pull it that Sherman County might not have available.

Winter said there is not medicines in the trailer. He said it is a medical supply for first treatment. He said it is designed to be pulled by a regular pickup and can be sent anywhere there is an emergency.

He said the trailer is about 10x20.

Strnad asked if it has to be protected from freezing.

Winter said it does not have to be protected from the cold.

Enfield said he felt the county has pickups that will pull that.

Winter said he has a list of things they have not gotten to fill the trailer.

“Is this a good deal,” Strnad asked.

“Yes,” Winter said. “It is a good deal for replacement and support equipment in an emergency situation.”

Enfield suggested storing it in a fair building.

Winter said the total cost is around \$30,000 and the council would be transferring ownership to Sherman

County with stipulation of how it is to be used and the county is responsible for the trailer.

“We provide the place for it and liability insurance,” Strnad said.

“I hope there is never a need for it,” Winter said.

He said there is some record keeping once the trailer is completely filled.

Strnad said her reservations had

County driver's license office closed this morning for upgrade

The Goodland, Oakley and Sharon Springs driver's license offices will begin using new technology today that will simplify the process of getting driver's licenses and help ensure people receiving Kansas licenses are who they say they are.

Today the Kansas Department of Revenue, Division of Vehicles will be installing new equipment and software and training workers at the driver's license offices in the courthouses in Sherman Logan and Wallace counties. The offices will reopen at 1 p.m. in their respective time zones.

During the upgrade, the offices will still be able to process vehicle tags.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NW KS GMD#4 WTAP Sign-up Starts October 1

The Kansas Department of Agriculture will be accepting applications during the period October 1 to November 15 for the Water Right Transition Assistance Program, WTAP.

WTAP is a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to help restore aquifers and streams in critical areas by retiring water rights. Six “High Priority” units in the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 have been designated as eligible target areas by the Chief Engineer because of significant water level declines. They have been designated to be in need of aquifer recovery and are now closed to further appropriations of water. These six areas in Cheyenne, Sherman, Thomas, and Sheridan counties are also the subject of additional management program protocols being discussed with landowners by GMD#4.

Applicants who are selected for WTAP grants are compensated by the Kansas Department of Agriculture in exchange for the permanent retirement of water rights on irrigated land. Priority is given to retiring water rights in areas which would have the greatest impact on the aquifer system. A fixed rate price of \$2,000 per acre-foot of Historic Consumptive Water Use is available for eligible water rights to be retired. WTAP grants are approved on the basis of competitive bids.

To be eligible, water rights must have been actively used in the last 10 years. Dryland farming is permitted after a water right is retired. Limited irrigation can be temporarily allowed to establish a permanent cover on the land being transitioned from irrigation. Partial water right reductions can also be considered for retirement grants.

For more information, contact Steve Frost, Water Conservation Program Manager, at (785) 296-8964. WTAP rules and regulations, applications, maps, and other details are posted on the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation web site at www.scc.ks.gov. Information and assistance can also be provided at the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 in Colby, (785) 462-3915, or at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources Field Office in Stockton, (785) 425-6787.

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