

County updates project progress

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Besides working on the 2009 budget, Phillips County Commissioners were also involved with several construction projects during the month of December. Updates on these projects were given by the board when they met Wednesday, Dec. 31.

First, the board announced it received notification from the State Historical Society that partial approval was given on a grant request to replace Phillips County Courthouse's steps and sidewalk on the west side of the building. Commissioners had little other information to provide at the time, but added more will be coming as a final contract is signed.

As 2008 drew to a close, so did the Communications Center project. All phases of the project have now officially been completed. The project included the remodeling of the building, which was done by Marvin Einspahr Construction.

Remodeling provided a new office for the County Sheriff, a new storage room for use by the Sheriff's personnel and an enlarged office space for deputies. In the dispatch area, a new equipment room was created. The lobby and dispatch center were moved and remodeled.

The dispatch center now has a new dispatch center desk and updated equipment for 911 dispatching and handling 800 MHz calls. Existing map data from the County Assessor's office has been converted for use by the Communications Center. A new generator has also been installed which will allow the entire facility to stay online in case of power outages.

The County does plan to have an open house so the public can see all the new upgrades and changes. A tentative date for the open house is Tuesday, Jan. 27.

Meanwhile, construction continues to go forward on the new Event Center. The metal building has been delivered to the site. Erection will begin this week on that portion of the project.

Current construction includes block work, pouring footers and concentration on the area which will include the new bathrooms. The hollow core decking which covers this area has now been put in place.

Commissioners also met with Lee and Martha Thompson in December. The couple has agreed to head an effort to raise funds for the banquet place settings for the new Event Center. The board's initial goal is to purchase between 400-500 place settings.

Work is also continuing on the County Landfill Recycling grant project. George Woolf Construction has completed putting a new roof on the old incinerator storage building. Additional work has been done to close in other areas of that same building to make it weather tight.

On a side note, the last week of December saw a couple of mishaps occurring at Phillips County Courthouse. Currently, the building is without a heating source as its boiler broke down on Dec. 26. Electric heaters are being run for the present as commissioners work on finding a new heating system.

Exacerbating the problem, the following week the county assessor's window was smashed in. The county had hired Kevin Haidle and his crew to remove one of the trees on the courthouse lawn. During a lunch break, one of the crew's trucks was left in gear. It lurched forward when one of the drivers returned and started it, sending the truck's boom through the window.

The expense to replace the window will be covered by Haidle's insurance.

Other business

In other business for the month of December, commissioners:

—approved the mill levy certification for all Phillips County tax entities for 2009 tax collections.

—granted two subdivision exemptions for Harms Farms, Inc. for the sale of two parcels to

County updates project progress

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Norris Harms.