New court security measures are being taken to protect Phillips County Courthouse when court is in session.

At their meeting Tuesday, March 31, commissioners announced the only door that will be unlocked on court days will be the door on the east side of the courthouse building.

On those days court is in session, they ask that patrons entering the courthouse bring no items that could potentially be used as a weapon inside. This includes any form of knife, ammunition or simulated “toy” weapon, aerosol/chemical irritant and self-defense sprays, any form of tool, large flashlight or Leatherman style tool, any form of an electronic tasing or stunning device, any form of restraining device including a handcuff key, any form of club, baton or self-defense weapon, any form of an alcholic beverage, any illegal drug or drug paraphernalia and cell phones.

Those entering the building on court days will have to pass an inspection by the courthouse security officer with a magnetometer.

Court dates change every month depending on factors such as judge availability. However, a list of dates was provided for April and May so residents can be aware and prepare accordingly:

April—7, 13, 14, 21 and 28.

May—5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 19, 26, 27 and 28.

Work is currently being done in the courthouse to remove asbestos from the boiler room and the utility tunnel. Precautions are being made to ensure the asbestos does not escape outside or into the rest of the building. An inspector from the State Health Dept. has been in to check on the work being done, and reported it is being handled properly.

Commissioners added the removal will cost approximately $25,000 total, but it is something that has to be done.

Following the asbestos removal, the boiler will also be taken out of the building. Commissioners said they have made no concrete decisions yet as to how they will replace the heating system.

Meusborn leaves landfill

Matt Meusborn is officially stepping down from his position as Phillips County Landfill Supervisor to supervise the landfill at Logan County, starting May 1.

Meusborn has held the job in Phillips County since 2002, and was there when the county installed its new baling system at the landfill. “We would have loved to keep him, but we just couldn’t compete with what Logan County offered him,” said commissioner Bud Biesemeier, adding, “We wish him all the best.”

Commissioners noted they will begin interviewing applicants to replace him this week.

Also mentioned was the sudden death of Ramona Proctor, who was the director of Eastern Colorado Services for the Developmentally Disabled. They said she will be missed and “leaves behind some big shoes to fill.”

Road closure request considered

A request has been made to the commissioners by the Haxtun Airport to close County Road 28, from mileposts 7-9, located on the north side of the airport. According to them, the reason behind the request is that the road runs too close to the airport’s runway, making it harder to secure grant funding for the airport remodeling project.

Commissioners said a hearing will be held by the Town of Haxtun soon. Depending on public opinion, commissioners said they will then make their decision after the hearing. They added

they will only close the road if the town agrees to apply for the grant.

Other business

In other business during the month of March, commissioners:

—renewed a farming contract with Duane Harms to farm the section of landfill not currently being used.

—purchased a 2008 Ford Edge for Sheriff Rob Urbach from Bonanza Ford at $22,500.

—noted Road and Bridge crews have switched to a four, 10-hour day weekly schedule for the summer, with Fridays off..

—signed a TriState resolution to be sent to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in protest of PUC's move to regulate TriState.

—viewed an asphalt zipper demonstration south of Paoli. Commissioners are considering the possibility of purchasing the zipper with help from the towns in a joint ownership deal.

—provided an update on the Event Center building construction. Most of the concrete on the inside of the building is complete. The bricks have also arrived and laying will begin as soon as the weather is warm enough.

—moved the Friday, April 10 meeting to Monday, April 6.