

Last time, we brought you boring numbers and dry material to read. The idea was to continue to be more specific in this article of where your tax dollars are going. With the current fiscal crisis facing the State of Colorado, we will not be bringing you the specifics of our budgets now until Governor Ritter and the Legislature has settled the budget cuts that are being proposed. The State is looking at cutting budgets in every area. One example is that TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) monies will be cut which will cause our Social Services Department budget to be cut as well.

In light of these issues, here are goals and objectives for Rio Grande County for this year.

For declining revenues, we will monitor monthly. This month we have set priorities for expenditure reductions, and will be reviewing all fee schedules. If revenues drop by 5% in any one quarter, we will implement necessary priorities to maintain cash flow.

For the airport runway expansion, we are working on securing funding, and will be planning on starting construction and working on rerouting the county road this April. This is subject to the new Federal stimulus package now in Congress. We are being told we will have Federal funds for this project. This will allow the Del Norte airport to be able to accommodate air ambulance planes for Rio Grande Hospital, thus saving lives.

We are working on the Alpine Village sanitation study. We will have the study completed by March. April through June, we will have discussions with other sanitation districts and municipalities on a possible centralized system for Rio Grande County. The county may have to go to election for a special district this fall, and with a positive outcome, in 2010 collect funds for construction and have an elected sanitation district board to take this over.

On January 22, the land use office held another public meeting on gas and oil regulations. That was a most informative meeting. When the results of the new State gas and oil regulations are in place, Rio Grande County land use will complete our regulations. Land Use office and planning commission will also work on final revisions to the Master Plan.

Our building department along with doing building inspections is becoming certified to be able to offer plumbing inspections as well this year. The plan is to implement plumbing regulations by March and start inspections April 1 of this year.

The county is working hard with BLM and Forest Service and Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, to be able to transfer land that is located near South Fork, from BLM to Rio Grande County for and Amphitheater. This amphitheater would be used in the summer months for concerts, possibly performances by Creede Repertory Theatre, as well as educational events by Forest Service or other groups.

At the managers meeting last week, there was a presentation by Mr. Leonard Snow Vice-President of HR/QI at San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center, on pay for performance for employees. The commissioners are looking at this process to reward top employees and encourage all employees for top performance for our customer service which is you

the public. We want to be the best and do the best possible job for Rio Grande County. We will be working on a strategic plan to be in place in March and implement this with training in May.

We are faced with providing more space for another District Judge ad clerk as well as space needs for district attorney personnel. The county is struggling to find more room, so we are looking into possible expansion and how that might look in the future.

Many of these goals may or may not go forward depending on the outcome of the State of Colorado budget and also the Federal stimulus package now being proposed in Washington D.C.

These goals and objectives cover the General Fund of the County and the commissioners are working on setting the goals for the Road and Bridge Fund now. With the high cost of oil and costs of preparing roads for paving, we are carefully studying these proposals and will have a better idea of what we can accomplish shortly.

Finally this at time, we are wishing to recognize any county resident 90 years or older on their birthday. If anyone has a family member who is 90 years or older please let us know. It is fun to hear their history and possibly tie information in with museum projects that record our counties history.

For the commissioners, Robert Hagedorn