

County receives list of safety violations

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 23 April 2010 20:30 -

Commissioners vow to make fixes right away.

LEXINGTON—When Dan Schomer of EMC Insurance plopped a thick report book in front of each member of the Dawson County board last week, commissioners' eyes got big.

The inch-thick booklet provides details for a long list of safety infractions—complete with photos—that Schomer found throughout county-owned buildings when he toured them on March 17.

“The easy ones you can take care of right away,” Schomer said of such things as electrical cords across walk areas or missing exit signs. “Some others may take additional scheduling and planning.”

Schomer's safety audit was done not only for insurance purposes but also to give the county a starting point for forming a safety committee of volunteers from across the county's offices.

“This identifies infractions,” Schomer said of the report, “and it also give you a little more detail than you might get from the fire marshal or OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) or ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) officials.”

Should OSHA inspect the buildings and find such safety violations, Schomer said the county could face large fines.

Brian Woldt, coordinator for the county's buildings, said some of the items listed in Schomer's report have already been addressed.

“In my 12 years on the board, I'm not sure anything like this has ever been done,” said board chairman Bill Stewart of Lexington. “I think we can get right on this.”

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A representative from each county office has been asked to serve on a safety committee which will have regular meetings to address any issues.

In other action, commissioners accepted a bid for a 10-mile resurfacing project on the old highway from Lexington to Overton, also known as the 13th Street project.

The county asked for bids on both an in-place recycling process and new 3-inch overlay.

The low bid commissioners accepted came from Paulsen, Inc. of Cozad for new overlay at a cost of \$1,655,182.

Commissioners said they were surprised the new overlay bids were cheaper than recycling.

Other bidders for the new overlay were Werner Construction of Hastings—\$1,791,381; Vontz Construction of Hastings—\$2,091,078; and Western Engineering of North Platte—\$2,220,283.

The lowest recycle process bid was \$1,666,039 by Werner.

Work will begin in late July with completion set for September.

In other business, county commissioners:

- listened to a presentation by Eric Templin and Joe Long of Hays Company of Denver, a health insurance brokerage firm.
- heard the monthly crime report from sheriff Gary Reiber. There were 1,397 dispatch calls, 1,125 calls for service, 216 new bookings at the jail and an average daily jail population of 110 inmates. Gothenburg commissioner Dean Kugler commended Reiber and his staff for meeting

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or exceeding all criteria for compliance review by the jail standards board.

- accepted the single bid from Nebraska Machinery for a fork lift to be used by the roads department. The bid for \$84,649 is less than the \$85,000 budgeted to replace the 30-year-old machine used now.
- approved a bid by Platte Valley Auto Mart of Lexington for two 2010 Ford Explorers to be used by the sheriff's department. Chief deputy Gary Norseen said the two vehicles will replace a pair of sport utility vehicles in the three-year lease cycle. A third will be kept as a back-up. The only other bid received was from Pony Express Chevrolet of Gothenburg for Chevy Traverses. Two new vehicles were bid at \$54,665 and program cars were bid by Pony Express at \$53,000.

- learned from Cozad Development Corporation director Robyn Geiser that an Economic Development Administration grant application will be submitted by the April 20 deadline. The grant, if awarded, would help the county recoup some of the jobs lost by the closure of Cozad's Tenneco plant by renovating an existing building in Cozad for an industry that could employ approximately 50 people. Geiser said plans changed from the previous intent to apply for money for all three of the largest communities because a more concrete plan in one town makes the application more competitive. The award should be made by June 1.
- voted to vacate Road 756 between Roads 423 and 425 as well as an old unused road near Road 444 as previously requested.
- approved an application by Dawson County Transit for \$54,549 in federal funds and \$26,274 in state money for operation of the county handibus. The remaining one-quarter of the budget will be covered by the county. Commissioners also learned from handibus director Barb Hollenbeck that the Federal Transportation Association is requiring the county to pay the assessed value for the new bus barn. Officials negotiated to pay \$127,000 for a building at the intersection of Van Buren and Plum Creek Parkway in Lexington. Stimulus grant funds totaling \$200,000 are to pay for the building purchase and renovation. Now FTA officials require the county to pay the \$133,500 assessed value for the building.
- approved a special designated liquor license for Lake Shore Marina to serve alcohol outdoors in a tent during a fishing tournament at Johnson Lake June 4-6.
- learned through a letter to the board from county assessor John Moore that value on agricultural land in the county could rise as much as 15% in the coming year to meet state mandates.

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