

Commissioners agree to fund part of Johnson Lake trail

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 23 August 2012 13:47 -

LEXINGTON—Funding for another section of the hike and bike trail around Johnson Lake got a boost last week as Dawson County commissioners agreed to help pay for a short stretch on the north side of the lake.

Saying they respect what the lake does for the economy of the county, commissioners voted to contribute \$60,000 toward the \$172,656 it will cost to complete 1.09 miles of trail on the northernmost end of the lake.

Chuck Olsen, a representative of the trails committee, told the county board on Aug. 15 that safety is the main concern with the bike trail.

“Our goal is to find a way around the lake so those on the bike trail surrounding the lake would have a safe and accessible off-road route,” Olsen said.

The trail around the lake has been divided into 11 segments.

The north piece is 1.09 miles from Road 751 to the Lakeshore Marina, with .7 mile in Dawson County.

The remainder of the cost will be shared by donors and Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District.

To help convince commissioners of the importance of the trail, Lexington bicyclist Anne Eilers shared her own story about being hit while biking and suffering a brain injury.

“I love to bike there and so do a lot of other people,” she said. “We need a place where we can feel safe. There’s not even a shoulder on the Johnson Lake road.”

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A kickoff and non-traditional ground-breaking ceremony will begin at noon on Aug. 25 at the lake, Olsen said.

In other action, commissioners voted to deny an \$1,800 claim by Gothenburg land owner Ron Klein.

Klein is at odds with the county over 900 feet of fence he says was destroyed by county employees while they were clearing a county drainage ditch of debris.

The county maintains the fence was encroaching the county right-of-way but has agreed to rebuild the fence at the same value it was when it was removed.

Klein has refused that settlement, requesting a new fence.

Deputy county attorney Kurt McBride said he will inform Klein of the denial again.

"If he were to file a lawsuit, I'm confident we have testimony in our favor," McBride said.

In other county business, commissioners:

heard the monthly crime report from sheriff Gary Reiber. There were 1,693 calls to dispatch in July with 984 calls for service, 232 new inmate bookings and an average daily jail population of 127.6 inmates.

received an agency update from the Dawson County Ag Society with some plans for the year to come that include replacement of windows in the 4-H cafe, a sound system in the grandstands,

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renovation of the hog and sheep barn and an awning on the north side of Stevens Arena. The ag society is partially funded by the county through a political subdivision tax levy.

approved a resolution for design relaxation for the Overton southwest road project. Road superintendent Jon Mooberry said the plan was designed and stamped for approval in 2003 and regulations have since changed. The design relaxation resolution will allow the project to continue without large additions to the engineering plan and could push it forward.

discussed with Kevin Prior of Olsson Associates modifications planned on the Cozad Canal. Prior told the board some of the work will be in county right-of-way and some drainage routes will likely change.

The interaction between Prior and the county was not intended for approval purposes but rather information exchange.

No action was taken by commissioners but they agreed to work closely with Mooberry to work to eliminate future drainage concerns.

authorized acceptance of state funds to help pay for a new bus for the Dawson County Transit System. The state will provide \$38,891 and the county will contribute \$9,723. Most of the county's commitment will come from funds received through rides provided to Health and Human Services clients. Receipt of the new vehicle is not expected until fall of next year.