

More than half of county employees are overweight

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Commissioners consider wellness program.

LEXINGTON—A comparison study by Dawson County's health insurance company shows more than half of the county's employees are overweight.

Numbers presented to commissioners during their regular bimonthly meeting on Feb. 16 show at least 57% of county employees are carrying more pounds than medical experts think they should.

Tonya Thompson of Health Care Solutions said that percentage of overweight people is high. She said overall, 27% of Nebraskans are considered overweight.

Commissioners agreed to get more aggressive in creating a wellness program for employees.

The county's health insurance plan includes wellness benefits but clerk Karla Zlatkovsky said many employees haven't taken steps on their own to become more healthy.

Zlatkovsky said with Thompson's help, the county could implement a program to offer incentives to employees who work toward a more healthy weight or controlled blood pressure.

"Even a walking program would help get us a little more active," Zlatkovsky said.

Healthier employees translates to lower insurance premiums and fewer workman's compensation claims.

"It would be good for everyone all the way around," Zlatkovsky said.

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In other action, the county board accepted a juvenile justice grant from the Nebraska Crime Commission for \$4,752 that will provide a juvenile facilitator in the county probation office.

Michael Ambriz-Villa will implement six different programs for juvenile offenders over the next five months ranging from drug or alcohol addiction to anger management and gang intervention.

Zlatkovsky said the programs will be ordered by a judge to help juveniles learn behaviors that might keep them from returning to the legal system.

Commissioners also adopted the one- and six-year road plan following a public hearing in which no one spoke.

The one-year plan includes a new entrance road to Rock Haven Camp east of Gothenburg, a bridge replacement southwest of Overton and 10 miles of overlay from Lexington to Overton.

In other business, commissioners:

- heard the January crime report from sheriff Gary Reiber. There were 985 total calls for service, 228 new inmate bookings and 1,211 dispatch calls during the month.
- received an agency update from Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) director Cristina McIntire.
- approved an amended contract with Service Master for cleaning the Extension office building.
- approved the delinquent tax sale list for 2010 including 643 parcels advertised for sale totaling \$638,411.91.