

The Cunningham Courier

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(620) 298-2659 e-mail: cunninghamcourier@gmail.com

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2016

PCC and Skyland Grain sign Agreement for New Agriculture Program at Pratt Community College

PRATT - Officials from Skyland Grain, LCC visited the Pratt Community College campus on Aug. 8 where they made their partnership official. Skyland Grain CEO David Cron and members of the Skyland team travelled from their headquarters in Johnson, Kan. and eastern administrative offices in Cunningham to visit the PCC campus and together signed a partnership agreement for the newest agriculture program launching this Fall.

PCC President, Dr. Michael Calvert and Skyland Grain Assistant CEO, David Rodriguez sat together with Skyland Grain's Agronomy Division Manager, Justin Ochs, and PCC's VP of Instruction Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick on Monday to sign the official documents.

Rodriguez and Calvert expressed their excitement for the new partnership and know that it will be a great addition to the Ag program.

"Everyone at PCC has been a pleasure to work with getting this program launched," said Rodriguez. "We are honored to be a part of PCC and the development of students. PCC is where we want to be"

The partnership between PCC and Skyland Grain will bring a Crop Application one-year certificate program to the agriculture department. At the end of the program students will have learned fundamentals of agriculture science, technology at PCC and gain workforce experience from Skyland Grain.

Calvert expressed his anticipation for the programs launch and what it will bring to the agriculture department and institution as a whole.

"For the fourth year in a row PCC students graduating with an associate's degree have a higher annual wage than the average of associate's degree and bachelor's degree graduates," said Calvert. "I anticipate that the success of this program and the students who will earn their certificate and be able to join the workforce will be an asset to our state."

Crop Applicator careers are on the rise according to PCC's Career Coach. Job openings are projected to grow six percent over the next 10 Years and starting salary ranges between \$44,000 and \$55,000 at Skyland Grain. Crop Applicators are highly trained professionals specializing in pesticide handlers, sprayers and applicators, mixing pesticides, herbicides, or insect sprays and repellents for application on lawns, landscapes, crop fields and pastures. They are able to identify areas requiring treatment and they manage the transportation of equipment and chemicals to and from the treatment site.

Pratt Community College's Skyland Grain Crop Applicator option is a one year, 34 credit hour, Certificate Program. To successfully complete the Program, students are required to enroll in an occupational work experience course and be prepared to test for the Commercial Pesticide Applicator License and obtain a Class A Commercial Driver's License upon employment.

Skyland Grain and PCC are offering scholarships to students who enroll in the program that will begin this Fall. For more information about the program contact Lori Montgomery at lorim@pratcc.edu.

City Approves 2017 Budget Holds mill levy and property taxes steady

by Dave Steffen

The Cunningham City Council met in special session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 15, 2016 at City Hall.

Included on the evening's agenda was the 2017 Budget Hearing. The city budget for the coming year has an estimated tax rate of 71.722 mills. The mill levy in 2016 was 71.892 mills, a slight increase over the 71.551 mills levied in 2015.

Total property tax levied in the 2017 budget is \$162,822. In 2016, total property tax levied was \$160,860, up from \$162,147 levied in 2015.

Assessed valuation for the City of Cunningham for the 2017 budget is \$2,270,160, up from \$2,265,649 in 2016.

The estimated 2017 Neighborhood Revitalization Program Rebate is \$18,154, up from \$12,756 in 2016 and \$10,070 in 2015.

Following the hearing, the City Council voted unanimously to approve the budget at presented. Copies of the 2017 Budget are available at City Hall,

119 N. Main in Cunningham.

In other business, the governing body approved a bid from Clarke Well and Equipment, Inc., Great Bend, in the amount of \$6,172.75 for a test well for the City. Darling Drilling Co., Hutchinson submitted a bid of \$6,699.72 for the work.

In an update on the Valley Street Improvement project, the City has received a Notice to Proceed letter from KDOT. The next step will be to sign the contract with Apac Shears, the successful bidder on the project and to schedule the start of construction on the upgrade of South Valley to three lanes from First Street to the US 54 interchange.

Work has begun on the Love's Travel Stop on the southeast corner of town.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Attending the meeting were Mayor Aaron Murphy; Council members Eric Meyers, Bart Ricke, Jason Ruckle, and Tim Schultz; City Superintendent Keith Neufeld; and City Clerk David Steffen.

County's 2017 budget keeps mill levy the same as 2016

by Nancy D. Borst, Communications Coordinator, Kingman County

The Kingman County Commission has approved a budget that will keep next year's county mill levy the same as 2016.

After several lengthy budget discussions over the past few weeks that concluded Monday afternoon, commissioners voted to publish a 2017 county budget with a total mill levy of 62.041 mills. This is the only mill levy set by Kingman County government.

A mill is \$1 for every \$1,000 of assessed valuation (assessed valuation and appraised valuation are not the same thing). From year to year, the value of a mill to the county for tax purposes is determined by the total assessed property valuation.

In 2016, the county's assessed property valuation was \$110.6 million. In 2017, the county's assessed property valuation is \$103.6 million, a drop of approximately 7 percent. The 62.041 mills raised \$6.87 million for the county in 2016 but the same mill levy will raise only \$6.43 million for the county in 2017 - a decrease of approximately \$438,000.

Commissioners committed to use

\$762,000 of the \$2.2 million one-time payment received from the newest commercial wind farm (Kingman Wind Energy 1, LLC) to hold the county mill levy steady. Commission Chairman Fred Foley said he wanted everyone in the county to benefit from the wind farm payment.

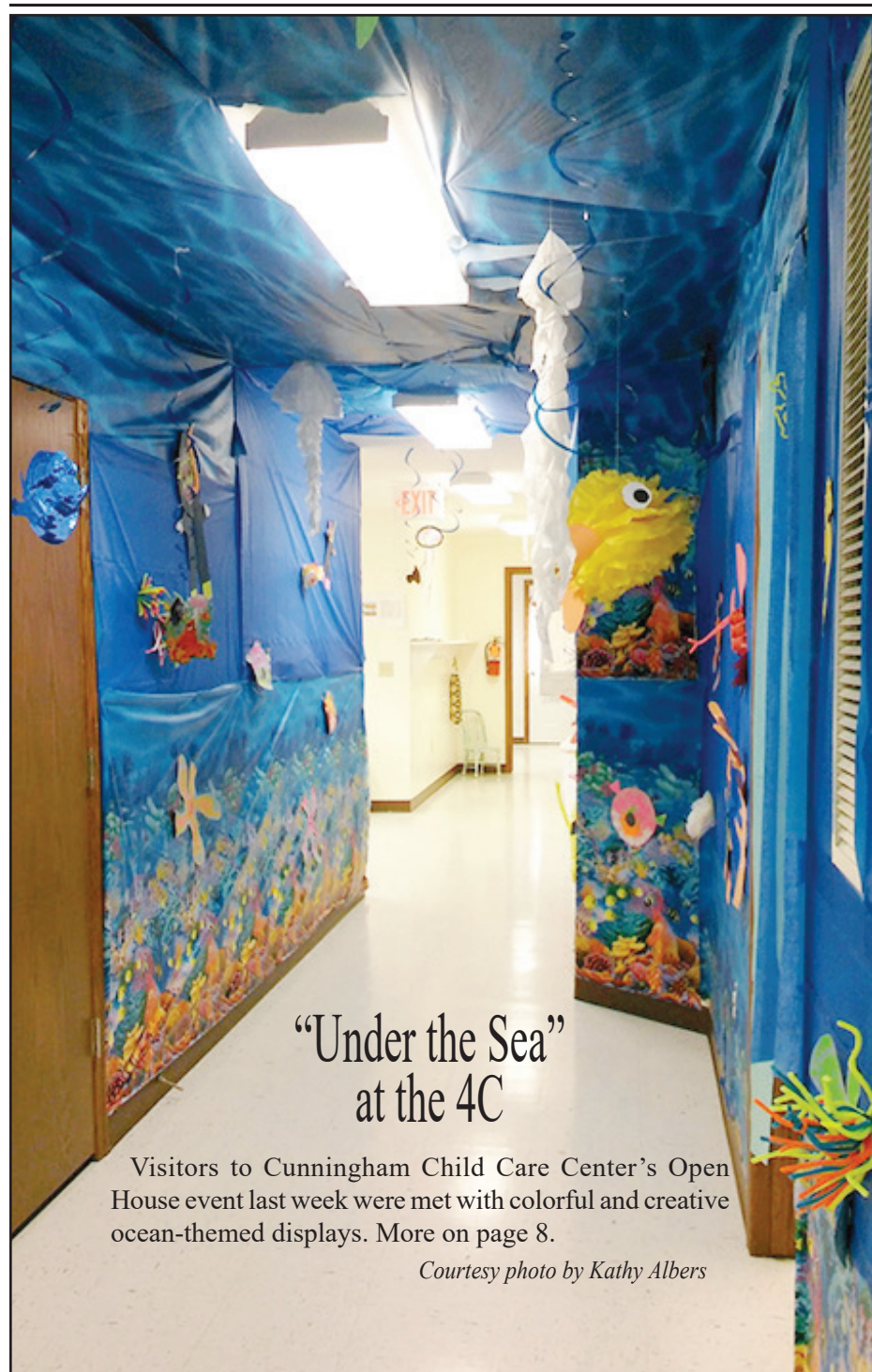
All department budgets remained flat from 2016 to 2017 and funding for two departments - Public Works and Sheriff - was cut. The 2017 budget includes funding for a 2.5 percent salary increase for county employees. Commissioners have not yet decided whether the salary increase will be given.

The county's bottom-line budget for 2017 is \$10.9 million. It was \$12.4 million in 2016.

Justin Mitchell, county auditor, noted the county is in good financial shape.

A state-mandated tax lid coming for the 2018 budget year and beyond will limit how much the county can increase its budget each year without approval by taxpayers via a special election.

The county will hold its public budget hearing at 8 a.m. Aug. 29 as part of its regular weekly meeting.



"Under the Sea" at the 4C

Visitors to Cunningham Child Care Center's Open House event last week were met with colorful and creative ocean-themed displays. More on page 8.

Courtesy photo by Kathy Albers

Back to School Night, August 23

Cunningham Schools USD 332 will be hosting "Back to School Night" on Tuesday, August 23, from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. at the school. Parents and students are invited to bring school supplies and meet teachers. Superintendent Reed will be having informative meetings in the high school library regarding the construction of the new addition. Meetings will be held at 5:30, 6:00, & 6:30 p.m. There will also be activities in the gym for families including Booster Club sign up, Ident-A-Kid, physical activities, and healthy snacks.

Cunningham Public Library Expansion Project

OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

4:30 - 7:30 P.M.

Special Recognition

7:15 P.M.

Refreshments Will Be Served

Hosted by the CPL Board

