

Commissioner Comments

Hello again. This month there is no shortage of things to talk about. My only problem was what to write first, and how much to say.

Platte County has been in the news lately due to the recent string of shootings. Our thoughts and prayers should go out to the victims and their families, and also to law enforcement. These types of crimes are not what they are used to dealing with in Wheatland. It has been a rough time for law enforcement and the attorney's office. The upcoming trials will most likely be very costly for Platte County.

Budget time is over, to relief of all. We had declining revenue this year that made for some tough decisions. The first was not to give raises to employees. This is the second year in a row they have gone without. We have a good bunch of people working at the county and not being able to reward them is a hard pill to swallow.

We have implemented a wellness program in the county, as an added benefit to employees, and as step one in getting control of our health costs. If we can show an improvement in the overall health of our employees we will be able to work out a better deal on health insurance for Platte County in years to come. The other option was to do nothing until we can no longer afford health insurance for county employees.

I serve on a wind task force along with several commissioners from wind counties in the state. We have been trying to get all involved parties to agree on some kind of Wind Tax Bill, to present to the joint revenue committee in August. We have worked very hard, and so far it has been like herding cats. At this point not even the wind producers can agree on anything. Some would say that the future of wind generation in Wyoming is dependent on this debate on taxation. That's not entirely true. There are several issues, Transmission, Market, and Federal Incentives. All are somewhat uncertain in today's world. I will keep you posted.

The oil play is moving along slowly as they said it would. A shortage of rigs and some bugs to work out in the fracturing process will keep things slowed down for a while anyway.

If you don't already know I will try and get you up to date on what BW3, HPI is and what we are doing with it. It was a study funded mostly by private entities and some state grant money. Platte and Goshen counties agreed to participate and each put in a small amount of money. The study was basically a conversation, had in all the communities about what the future might bring to our counties. There were ideas kicked around, lots of questions and discussion, a few scenarios run. As all of you know the commissioners regularly ask for input from residents. During this process we received a lot of input. Some of the loudest came from a group that think this study was pushed by Agenda 21, the UN, or some other group with some sinister plot in mind. They presented us with videos, emails and letters, and made some very good points about how things like this have gone very wrong in other parts of the country and the world. We recognize that their fears are very real. Keep in mind that this is a very conservative board of commissioners, and we have worked very hard to simplify our rules. In no way

was a study like this done to create more rules. It was simply done to gather information about where people thought we should be headed in the future. In the end, a report on the study was given to the local officials and to who ever else wanted one. The report is just that, a report. No proposed rules, just information. And no action was taken.

There was some concern at our last meeting that the Commissioners were too emotional or maybe a little angry toward some citizens who had asked us to shut down BW3&HPI. They also asked us to destroy the report so that information couldn't be used in the future! BW3 is a private organization so shutting them down or destroying a report belonging to them is unconstitutional, so we were a little surprised that a group backing constitutional rights asked us to do something that violated them.

I will only say that I believe we are elected to be honest, to follow the law, and to do the job with some passion. That is exactly what we are doing.

As always, stop by or give us a call with concerns

Tim Millikin