

County considering tobacco-free policy

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 21 July 2011 13:41 -

Commissioners want to allow employees ample time to quit.

LEXINGTON—Knowing tobacco use contributes to a multitude of health problems, Dawson County commissioners are likely to take strong encouragement to quit a step farther.

During their regular bimonthly meeting on Friday, county board members discussed moving toward a smoke-free environment in all county buildings, grounds and vehicles.

With the implementation of a wellness program through the county health insurance and annual blood draws available to all employees, commissioners have been working to not only cut insurance costs but help get healthier employees.

Addressing tobacco use is the next step.

Board chairman Dean Kugler of Gothenburg said the idea is to make all county buildings, grounds and vehicles tobacco free. Hopefully, he said, that will move more people toward quitting all together.

County clerk Karla Zlatkovsky said commissioners might be surprised to learn that a majority of county employees likely either smoke or use chewing tobacco.

But commissioners aren't going to require employees to quit cold turkey.

All agreed there would have to be substantial time for everyone to ease into it.

Two Rivers Public Health Department has offered to help formulate with the smoke-free policy

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and offer guidance for its implementation.

No formal action was taken on a smoke-free policy but commissioners agreed to notify employees through a payroll memo that it's coming.

In other county business, board members:

heard the monthly crime report from sheriff Gary Reiber, who stated there were 1,483 calls to dispatch in June with 1,020 calls for service. He said the average daily inmate population in the jail was 129.5 last month with 79.5 being contract inmates. With all of Lincoln County's inmates returned to North Platte, the county will begin housing more Lancaster County inmates, Reiber said.

approved emergency manager Brian Woldt's application for the annual Emergency Management Performance Grant. Woldt said he typically applies for half of the total budgeted allowable expenses which is \$38,050 for the coming year. He received \$24,000 last year.

accepted a resolution to strike \$855 in delinquent personal property from the county tax rolls as presented by treasurer Sharon Wood. The board also reviewed a report from Wood which showed \$91,061 in distress warrants were issued last fiscal year with the sheriff's department collecting \$74,807. This is a typical annual ratio.

authorized the chairman to sign an annual agreement for child support enforcement services for the district court.

adopted a resolution empowering the county to charge pivot owners for damage caused to county roads by water from pivots spraying on the roads.

With this, the sheriff's department has the authority to ticket the owner or shut off the water well.

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Commissioner Bill Stewart said there are probably 10 pivot owners who have been told water from their pivots has washed out roads but they have refused to change the pivot settings.

If an accident were to occur because of pivot damage to a road, commissioner Butch Hagan said civil action could be filed against the pivot owner.

entered into an agreement with Two Rivers Public Health Department for an extension of the county's wellness program for employees.

Two Rivers has received a grant which will help provide incentives for county-formed wellness activities such as a walking challenge, Zlatkovsky said.

The Two Rivers program is designed to enhance follow-up to the annual blood draws through the wellness program already in place with the health insurance plan.