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County Commission Communications

A Periodic Column Written by Ed Douglas, Presiding Commissioner

COURT HOUSE HAPPENINGS THIS LAST MONTH

February 25, 2016

GREAT NORTHWEST DAYS: A large contingent of approximately 250 people from Northwest Missouri traveled to Jefferson City for various meetings with legislators February 1, 2, and 3. West District Commissioner Todd Rodenberg and I represented the county along with a very large group from Chillicothe organized by the Chillicothe Chamber of Commerce. I was asked to give a ten-minute presentation to the legislators on Monday night, as well as to our entire group of 250 the next day, on transportation needs in the state. I was pleased to be asked to make this presentation because I feel very strongly about the importance of transportation and good roads.

COMMISSION TRAINING: The next week, Commissioners Todd Rodenberg, Ken Lauhoff, and I attended a three-day mandatory training in Columbia for all county commissioners. In addition to hearing talks on timely county topics, this provided an opportunity for us to visit with fellow commissioners to discuss with them how they handle issues and needs in their counties.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: In the third week of the month, we had our semi-annual Livingston County Emergency Preparedness meeting (LEPC). The representation for this meeting from the various county organizations was fantastic. We had presentations from HAZMET (hazard materials organization and partner from St Joseph), MERC (Missouri Emergency Response Commission), and SEMA (State Emergency Management Association). Darrell Wright, who is our Emergency Management Director for our county and city, made a presentation on the follow up from our emergency response simulation last fall. Additionally, he announced that we will have another training exercise in conjunction with Grundy County in May and that the Bike across Missouri event this summer will serve as a training exercise for our response team. I would like to give a special mention to Matt Gabrielson of Gabrielson Truck Repair and Towing who has trained 15 of his staff to be available in an emergency. He is just an example of the many people who dedicate their time and efforts to help make us safe. March 3rd is our annual storm spotter training at 7 pm at the Calvary Baptist Church. The public is encouraged to attend.

ELECTIONS: Our County Clerk, Sherry Parks, is also the Election Authority; and she and her staff have been working extremely hard to prepare for three elections. The first is the presidential primary March 15. The second is the municipal election which includes the Chillicothe RII Schools Building Proposal April 5th. The third is the August 2nd primary for county, state and federal. Work began on all three of these elections last fall. It takes considerable work and effort to prepare for these elections. I happened to ask on the 18th of the month how many people had newly registered the day before, and it was estimated to be 50 people.

COMMISSIONERS RETIRING: In the last part of the month, Commissioners Todd Rodenberg and Ken Lauhoff both announced that they would not be running for re-election. Ken has served 20 years as Eastern District Commissioner, and Todd has served 8 years as Western District Commissioner. Both Ken and Todd have done a great job for the county. They are both good friends, and I will miss working with them. Their knowledge and experience have been extremely helpful to me. As a sidebar to this announcement, Mayor Chuck Haney called me and pointed out that with long-time Presiding Commissioner Eva Danner retiring two years ago, the County Commission was losing a combined 48 years of experience. I told Chuck "Thanks for reminding me of this fact." Obviously, it is a concern; but I am aware of at least some of the people who have told me they are planning to run for these positions, and I am pleased that there are quality people that I believe, if elected, will do a good job.



[Return to Top](#)

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