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Commissioners voiced concerns about tax exemptions with State Senator Ralph Okerlund

By Myrna Trauntvein

Times-News Correspondent

Juab County Commissioners have concerns about taxes—particularly sales tax exemptions and tax redemptions.

They also have concerns about a variety of topics that they hope Ralph Okerlund, Utah State Senator, 24th District, Republican, can help them resolve.

Okerlund represents the 24th Utah Senate District which is located in Juab, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, Tooele and Wayne Counties and includes Utah House Districts 1, 21, 67, 68, 69, 70 and 73.

Okerlund, a Republican from Monroe, said he had been visiting each of the county commissions in his district to find out what is of concern on the grass roots level.

"About 30 years ago, when I was a young mayor in Monroe, Senator Cary Peterson visited all of the city councils and county commissions," said Okerlund. "That was a great help to me then and I am trying to do the same."

"We are wondering about tax exemptions," said LuWayne Walker, commissioner.

The commission would like to find a way to exempt the Ute Stampede Committee from paying the enormous sales tax required by state law.

"They are not part of the county but are an independent organization," said Chad Winn, commissioner.

Jared Eldridge, county attorney, said that the Stampede is organized under a 501C3 which does not exempt them from the sales tax requirement.

"Let's fix it," said Okerlund.

Pat Ingram, county clerk/auditor, said she had a great concern with HB 23 "Certified Tax Rate Amendments" (2009).

"Our tax rates are lower," said Ingram. "We will start out at \$45,000 less because we cannot use those redemptions. Our base will go lower. What is the reason?"

"In fact, if we wanted to collect the same amount next year, we would have to hold a truth in taxation hearing," she said.

That was not the intent of the bill, said Okerlund.

"This is one that slipped through the cracks, I suspect," he said.

The bill Included property tax redemptions (payment of delinquent property taxes) in the Certified Tax Rate process. For the redemption recovery only, the legislation exempts taxing entities from "Truth in Taxation" for the first year of implementation.

"That is this year, 2010," said Ingram.

What is the current Certified Tax Rate (CTR) process? (The Truth-in-Taxation free rate) is the Previous Year's Budgeted Revenue PYBR) Current Year's Adjusted Taxable Value--less new growth=Certified Tax Rate (CTR).

Under current law, the determination of the PYBR incorporates a five-year collection rate component. The new process

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OOH, AAH, OOH, AAH • Due to the perfect weather, the crowd turned out in force on Saturday night to watch the fireworks in Mona. Above, by the red glow of the fireworks these two young ladies were impressed with the show. Around town, we heard comments that Mona's show was better than Nephi's. Way to go Mona. Photo Sean Gibson

Fine arts programs in the district will continue to move forward

By Rebecca Dopp

Times-News Correspondent

The fine arts programs within the district are going to continue, but teachers are asked to prioritize their wants and needs. Darin Clark, clerk-treasurer, reported on the budget for the fine arts programs.

The district has budgeted \$20,000 for the fine arts program. That is in addition to the regular instrument account in the junior high of \$10,000.

The district has asked the fine arts teachers in the district, Laren Swenson, JHS drama instructor; Kristy Carter, JHS art instructor; Tana Esplin, JHS choir director; and Lane Johnson, JHS/JJHS band director, to meet together and make a wish list, prioritize it, and work out how they would like to spend the money.

"There was some budgeted

last year," said Clark, "and they had some big-ticket items they wanted to get for the orchestra and the band, and they requested to carry some of that over into this year to allow them to purchase some of those instruments."

He said they met last year to discuss their wish list.

"I think they are more than fair on how they set their priorities and make sure each area gets a turn," said Clark. "Right now I think it's been more focused on band and orchestra, but as they get situated with a new program, that might shift. That is budgeted out of capital outlay."

Board member Stacy Brooks asked if the \$20,000 was sufficient for what the teachers needed.

Clark said that it was not really sufficient for what the programs needed, but in light of the recent budget cuts, the teachers were relatively pleased

with what they received.

"I've told them that even if there isn't enough, to make sure they identify those needs and what they need beyond that and then I will take it before the board and the superintendent," Clark said.

Superintendent Jim Shank reported on his meeting with Tana Esplin who is also the Elementary Music Program Coordinator and Curriculum Development. He said they wanted to discuss the future of the elementary music programs.

"My understanding is that we are going to continue to fund that through Public Trust Lands funds," he said.

He had asked Esplin what her intentions were concerning the programs and how she understood the direction of the district in respect to the program. The goals she has set forth include trying to make sure the curriculum is understood, and what is

being expected is being taught to the elementary students.

"Obviously, funds are an issue," said Shank, "but we want to make sure we grow and develop those programs so we have a strong music basis to feed our junior high and high schools."

Shank recognized that fine arts programs are critically important in the students' development.

He said he is going to meet again with Esplin and pinpoint specifics in direction for the programs. He also wants input from the area principals so they have a good line of communication open.

"We both agree that this is a program that needs to expand, not retract, and we are going to look for ways to do that," Shank said.

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Mona residents need to keep green waste out of garbage cans

By Myrna Trauntvein

Times-News Correspondent

If homeowners place garden refuse and tree limbs in their home garbage can, they could cause problems for the landfill.

Inadvertently, they will also cause problems for themselves in the way of higher taxes and increased landfill fees.

But, despite a request from the landfill operator, Bill Mills, Mona mayor, said that he wanted the contractor for Mona's garbage service to keep picking up the cans with garden refuse and tree limbs in them.

"Back off and keep picking up the cans until we have had a chance to talk it over and come to a conclusion," said Mills.

Jay Mecham, owner of Country Garbage, who serves the community of Mona with a

weekly garbage collection, met with the city council to discuss the problem of those who are misusing the system.

"There is a problem that Allen Pay (who operates the JRDA Landfill) has brought to my attention," said Mecham. "He asked me not to pick up cans that contain yard waste."

Mecham said that he was coming to the Mona City Council because he had a contract with them to provide garbage service and to pick up garbage placed inside the cans.

"I asked him to not pick up the cans of those flagrantly refusing to keep household garbage separate from yard waste," said Pay.

Pay said that he thought the Mona City Council would like to follow the same course used by the other communities in the county. He said that refusing to pick up the cans of the

flagrantly disobedient was one way of educating users about the consequences.

Michelle Dalton, city secretary, said she had put a notice in the last city newsletter.

There are separate areas at the JRDA Landfill, said Pay. Each of those areas is designated for a type of garbage to be disposed of at the landfill.

One area is designated for household garbage, another for yard/garden waste and a third for disposal of construction materials.

The yard/garden waste and tree limbs are kept separate so that they can be burned at certain times of the year. That clears the area so that it can be used over and over without jeopardizing the tonnage allowed at the site. Thus, it does not count against the tonnage allowed at the landfill.

The rules need to be observed because the landfill can only have so much garbage dumped per week. If that tonnage is exceeded, then the rules for operation of the facility will change.

That could mean higher fees for everyone.

"Household garbage should be inside the garbage can and should be inside a plastic bag, like the ones received from a grocery store," said Pay.

Garbage should not be loose.

According to the EPA, the average American contributes nearly 4.5 pounds of garbage a day or 56 tons a year of garbage that is carted off to the landfill.

There, the household garbage is smashed and buried.

Residents of the United States

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