

## County Commission Update: 2012 County Overview

By Wade Mathews, Public Information Officer

At their Commission meeting on February 21, Commissioners Johnson, Clegg, and Hurst each reported on the departments for which they have oversight. Following is the transcription from that meeting. Commissioner Johnson began the report.

First I want to pay tribute to two fine men that passed away this year, Barry Formo who worked for the county for 33 plus years, and who is missed, and Gary Griffith, a former County Commissioner who has done numerous things for Tooele County. I also thank the employees of Tooele County, the citizens of Tooele County, Bruce, Jerry and Cheryl Adams for the work they do. I'll discuss each of the departments I am over in alphabetical order. The **Wendover Airport's** revenues are keeping up with expenses, which is good news for any airport. The Wendover airport is the second busiest airport in its class in Utah. There are 16 county employees and 20 TSA's. There is a grant to build a new taxiway. The casino flight program is continuing to grow. They are still working on the historical restoration. The **Auditor's Office** keeps track of all the budgeting, accounting, accounts, invoices, payroll, tax disclosures and reports. County sales tax is up slightly, option tax is up 5%, general sales tax is up 11.8%, restaurant tax is up 12.3% and room taxes are down 3.1%. Mitigation fees are down, some of which is due to the economy. We are still holding our own, which says a lot. This year we were able to offer our employees a 1.5% COLA. Again this is due to the department heads and elected officials managing what they have. The **Clerk's Office** handles all of the elections. This year will be a big one with the presidential election coming up. And they handle the municipal elections as well. A few years ago they started using county employees to help with early voting, which saves a lot of money. The redistricting is done. After the state did all of their redistricting the voting precincts had to be realigned, along with the school district boundaries. The Clerk's Office also helps with the risk management, insurance claims, business licenses, purchases for the county stores, and they are beginning to archive the county documents. **Human Resources** is always busy, even with the low turnover. They have been very busy with staffing of the new county jail. Insurance is always changing and this year they were able to offer the county employees the option to opt out of the county insurance, which saved the county \$112,000. HR also does all of the tracking for the volunteers and community service workers. This is the third year they have been involved in organizing the county employees for the corporate games. The **Public Safety Department's** new correction facility is now finished and ready for occupancy. The Sheriff's Department has been involved in the new detention facility from the beginning, along with handling 10,000 cases and 1,200 investigations. They also do the dispatch for over 40 different agencies. This new facility is something Tooele County can really be proud of. The **Recorders Office** has initiated a new program making Tooele County the first in the state to have prepaid access to records on line. They have also made an arrangement with the LDS Church to scan the old books which will be stored in Granite Mountain and to provide copies for the county. They have also implemented new programs to save tax dollars and to make them more streamlined. The employees in the Recorders Office have also volunteered to plant flowers in the flower beds in front of the county building. **Relief Services/Food Bank's** primary function is to assist and coordinate services for families in crisis. The employees are paid through grants. They received some CDBG money to help with the transitional housing project. This is for

housing and counseling which helps people to transition out of crisis. The Food Bank has over 4,000 active files and is seeing 25 new clients per week. The county is wonderful, when word is put out that we need something, county residents really come through. **Solid Waste or Landfill** has a new sort line that helps pull out the recyclables. Eventually this will reduce transportation costs. We are still using the blue bag program. They are going to test curb side recycling and eventually hope to be able to go with it countywide. The **Surveyor's Office** was involved with right-of-way issues last year with Rocky Mountain Power and realignment of South Mountain Road for the new jail. Other projects they are working on are getting roads dedicated and working with the Parks & Recreation Department on the trails system. The **Treasurer's Office** is the complaint department. They collect all of the property taxes; 93% of the \$36,500 million that was assessed has been collected. They keep track of the payments and late fees. Then they are responsible for getting the money redistributed to the taxing entities. They also incorporated a new credit card system that should streamline the system. I feel the county is strong and moving forward, but not without challenges. The chemical stockpile munitions have been safely destroyed and economic development has a lot of projects in the works. I am very proud of our county and what we do.

Commissioner Bruce Clegg followed.

I enjoy working with Colleen, Jerry and Cheryl every day. The **Engineering Department** is divided into two divisions. We lost head building inspector, Barry Formo, which was a big loss to the county. Construction statistics for the year are 348 permits, 4,052 inspections performed, with the total value of construction in Tooele County at \$31,146,224.77. Total fees collected were \$609,933.10. Of those \$325,000 went directly into the general fund, \$123,000 went to North Tooele Fire District, \$126,000 to Stansbury Park Recreation District, \$3,500.89 to the Lake Point Improvement District, and there was a state surcharge of \$102,000. Intrepid Pot Ash in Wendover is one of the biggest projects the Engineering Department worked on in 2011. Planning and Zoning has three committees that meet twice a month: the Tooele County Planning Commission, Erda Township Planning Commission and the Pine Canyon Township Planning Commission. They allow people to come and speak their mind no matter how long it takes. This relieves the pressure and gets the item on the table so it can be discussed and solved. We had water issues in 2011 with the biggest snow pack in 50 years. We were able to work through the problems and it took all of the resources the county had. It was a total county effort to mitigate these water problems. The roads that Engineering is working on are South Mountain, Mormon Trail, Mid Valley Highway, and the county has been approached by Herriman City to bring a road over Middle Canyon at Butterfield Pass and possibly tunnel through the mountain. Through the **Emergency Management Department**, I belong to several boards and one of the boards is the DCD RAB board, pertaining to environmental cleanup of the depot. Everyone knows that it is closing and going away. Another board that participated on this was the BRAC. For the last 10 years the BRAC has said they were going to take over the south area project, and put part on the market for private citizens. The only ones who could afford the liability was the federal government, which they finally realized. When it was taken off the BRAC, the Deputy of the Undersecretary of Defense came to a meeting and I asked how they were going to take care of the solid waste management units (SWMU) -- areas of contamination requiring cleanup and mitigation. These need to be cleaned up before the Federal Government releases any of this property. He told me that he had \$100 million to take care of these SWMUs. With the closure of DCD the SMWUs will be turned over to Tooele Army Depot. I feel Tooele County needs to keep an eye on these areas to

make sure they are cleaned up because our water is in jeopardy of being contaminated. CSEPP has been a part of Tooele County for 23 years and has brought in \$75 million of revenue to help with the emergency preparedness, schools, hospitals and the county coffers in general. DCD has destroyed more than 13,000 tons of the nastiest stuff. Another board I serve on is the Citizens Advisory Committee which oversaw the stockpile cleanup - their job is done and the board is being dissolved. Tooele County Emergency Management sprang up from this project; this department had to be in place to qualify for the federal funds. Historically they've had 12 people employed; now they are running at a high level of preparedness with six people. Emergency Management will continue with emergency plans even after CSEPP is closed out. The great Utah ShakeOut exercise will be this April where we will practice how to deal with earthquakes. The department is continuing to apply for grants to continue the emergency preparedness efforts and education within the county. The **Assessor's Office** appraises all personal property and sends that to the Treasurer's Office to be taxed. Our employees are licensed and are able to assess property correctly. Historically they have had 13 and now have 11 employees. Motor Vehicle's Division registers people's vehicles. **Ageing and Adult Services** operates from the Older Americans Act. They are subsidized by the county and the state. Last year they served 37,288 meals and 20,000 meals on wheels. We want no waiting list for meals on wheels and to help with the cost of providing this food we have switched to a new food vender this year and are looking to save \$70,000 with the switch. They have eight certified CNA's. The goal of the Older Americans Act is to keep people in their homes. They have two drivers that can take people to and from where they want to go. Both Tooele and Grantsville Centers have been renovated and brought to a higher standard of service. The **Justice Court** deals with misdemeanors. They handle up to 50 cases per day and service all of Tooele County for these crimes, except for Stockton and Grantsville City. The **Weed Board** is tremendously active and functions well. And we have one of the best weed technicians in the state, Jerry Caldwell. Canadian thistle has shown up and they are trying to keep it under control. Livestock cannot be run on the ground where this is, due to the thorns and thistles.

Commissioner Jerry Hurst concluded the Commission report.

I want to compliment the county employees and their willingness to help whenever needed. I appreciate the other two Commissioners and working with them. The **Roads Department's** Rod Thompson, the Director, is great to work with. They were very busy this year helping with the floods, as well as was the Parks & Recreation Department. The Roads Department has done a lot of projects, including chip seals. Part of the Road Department is the Weeds Division. Jerry Caldwell does an excellent job and is the lead in the State's weed program. Phase one of the South Mountain Road is completed which goes to the jail and they are working on the Mormon trail. They have \$2 million towards this road and can get a loan for \$4.5 million. They're trying to figure out a way to pay for the loan before they accept it. The **Parks & Recreation Department** is led by Mark McKendrick. The Deseret Peak Complex is the jewel of the county. The DPC is so much more than just for "horse people." The Parks & Recreation Department does a great job of juggling all of the activities. They've worked hard on the Trails Program, putting in new trail heads and working with the BLM on acquiring land. They are going to do one on the Mormon Trail, Bates Canyon, Hickman, and are working with Rio Tinto at Lake Point. They are working with the Attorney's Office to outlaw explosive targets that have caused a lot of hazmat problems and fires. The Department is working on Wild Horse and Heritage Days, for June 7 - 9<sup>th</sup>. It is focused around wild horses, doing a lot with the wild horses in the county, adoption, auction, training, horse shoes, drill teams, all based around wild horses. Pony express people are coming in for a race and displays. They also just

completed a four-plex ball field, along with soccer and football fields. We have more people than we can accommodate but the four-plex will help with the usage on the fields. Mark McKendrick and Misty Williams are also over the county fair and do a great job with the county fair. Their department helped with the flood as well. They were willing to do anything and everything to help with the flood problem. The **IT Department** is a great IT Department. They got the new jail connected, with wireless connection to the Road Department. The **Maintenance Department** is great. We had a remodel plan and a great big budget for that before the economy tanked. Maintenance has taken over the remodel in conjunction with their other duties. They just completed the HR Department and are working on the Detectives Division. I want to thank County Clerk Marilyn Gillette for getting the grant for the new elevator. **Extension - 4H, USU Extension** - This is the 100<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the 4-H program. With **Public lands** we have a huge responsibility with what the feds are trying to do to us. There is a bill before the Legislature to have Utah be part of a five state coalition to get our public lands back. Eighty one percent of our county is state or federal land. It ties it up and takes it out of the tax rolls. We do get the PILT funds but that is a pittance. Sage grouse has become a big issue, they are threatened. If they end up on the endangered list it will change things that happen in our country. We are trying to have a concentrated effort to keep them off the endangered list. I'd like to see them on the hunted list again. There are some roads that have been closed (by the BLM) and we are working on getting them reopened with this five state coalition. We are working with the state Legislature and Congress and are making headway on that. There is a moratorium right now that forbids the BLM from opening those lands. However, Representative Rob Bishop is working to try to get these lands reopened. The closings occurred to stop the spent fuel rods from coming into the county many years ago. The **Attorney's Office** has great attorneys. Doug Hogan is the County Attorney and they do a fantastic job. I am amazed at the number of cases that they deal with on a day to day basis. Some are very sad and tragic cases that they deal with. They need some remodeling done. **Health Department** - Tooele County is looked at as the leader with our Health Department. Myron Bateman is great at getting grants and programs. One of the big things that happened at the Health Department was the installation of solar panels to help with the energy efficiency. In all of the new buildings, the new jail, the roads department, they've taken measures to make the buildings more energy efficient. The **Incentive Committee** consists of one person from each department. It's a moral boosting committee that does a lot of good for our county. The committee gets together and does flower planting. We have a lot of good volunteerism, including help with early voting. Mark gets help with the county fair. We have great employees. Commissioner Johnson mentioned the **Wendover Airport**. Jim Peterson is the director and does a fantastic job. You need to go see what work they have done on historical restoration, as well as restoration on the commercial side of the airport. They extended the runway another 200 feet, as well as added the new terminal. A museum is in the works for all of Wendover, which will include the airport as well as the Salt Flats. The Enola Gay hanger is being rebuilt. There's still a lot of work that needs to be done, but a lot is being done. They are giving tours (2 different ones) or you can tour on your own. I am on the **Utah County Insurance Pool Board**, CDBG Board, Utah Water Users Board and the Tooele County Water Board. We work with Realtors and our state Legislators to get bills drafted to make sure people do not lose their water. There's a rider that the Realtors can give to potential land buyers that tells them what they can do to keep their water. We have a great county.