Community News

When the temps go down the need goes up, United Way of Lea County is in need of heaters. Please consider or encourage your next donation to THE HEATER DRIVE. They have a lot of request from elderly clients. Help keep them warm. For more information call 2-1-1, 393-8203 or come by the United Way office at 320 N. Ship in Hobbs.

The EUNICE LIBRARY has new operational hours. The hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed on Saturdays and Sundays. Library story hour is on Wednesdays from 3-5 p.m.

Nor-Lea and Light of Lea County are seeking VOLUNTEERS for the American Cancer Society Resource Center set to open in February in the Nor-Lea Cancer Center. If you’re interested in helping in an office setting, providing patients with info about local resources or just providing some encouragement, call Community Outreach at 396-6611. Training is required.

A HUNTER SAFETY course will be offered beginning Feb. 4 with registration ending Jan. 28. Registration must be done online at New Mexico Game and Fish website. This is a hunter education and follow the instructions. Manuals and class materials are available at all Game and Fish locations. A $10 fee is requested to offset expenses.

State overpays Eunice

Eunice facing a $2 million tax repayment bill, plans to protest

SHEV HAHN
NEWS-SUN
EUNICE — The City of Eunice could be forced to pay the state Department of Taxation and Revenue $2 million during the next three to five years.

“They said they overpaid us by $5 million over the past 30 months,” Mayor Matt White explained. “We had absolutely no warning. They were very casual about it.”

According to White, the state is expecting Eunice to repay the $2 million and start by cutting about $100,000 from monthly revenue tax disbursement. Check if those payments continue, it could mean steep cuts to the city’s spending as it could reduce the expected monthly checks to the city by approximately 80 percent.

The state notified the city about the overpayment in a letter dated July 13. The state will now make a monthly repayment of $400,000 over the next five months. If the city does not agree, the state may file for a court order to have the city repay the overpayment.

White said that the state did not give the city any reason for the overpayment.

The overpayment comes from the estimated $4,000,000 monthly gross receipts tax payment from a business using Eunice’s zip code. White said it appears that the business contacted the state about the $4,000,000 payment and the state opted to recoup the money from Eunice.

The city councilor Billy Hobbs said there are very few businesses in Eunice that could be generating a monthly $2 million tax.

20130506

“Your going to have to be moving some product, ” he said.

White estimated a business would need to make about $100 million annually to rack up the $4,000,000 monthly.

Eunice’s most notable large companies, UNICOR USA, does not pay gross receipts tax and is not the mystery business, White said.

According to White, the city’s January gross receipts tax was $40,000.

The city is about $100,000 lower than in February. White said the city is working on its reserve funds.

Eunice is currently running on its reserve funds.

Hobbs agrees to affordable apartment project on Clinton

LEVI HILL NEWS-SUN

The City of Hobbs will provide nearly $1.4 million for a 72-unit low-to moderate-income housing project if the developer can secure state tax credits.

The Hobbs city commission unanimously approved the contract with All Associates Development Group, Inc. at Tuesday night’s commission meeting.

Yes Housing, which at one time was a potential buyer for the Casa Hermosa apartments with plans to seek state tax credits to rehab the facility plans to build a 75-unit apartment complex at the corner of N. Paseo and Clinton streets — the former Tacos Grocery store site. The project will be called City Park Central.

Kevin Robinson, city engineer, said the city partnered with Yes Housing last year and agreed to supply $1.4 million for a similar project, but Yes Housing failed to acquire the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority’s tax credits.

“We need them to champion this process all the way through,” Robinson said.

Michelle Den Bleyker, vice president of federal and state development for Yes Housing, said the company lost out by one point last year when it applied for the tax credits for the project.

This year’s application is due Jan. 31 and she said the company has already pur- chased the five-plus acres for the complex.

Hobbs city planer Kevin Robinson explains some of the plans for the 72-unit apartment complex.

SEE APARTMENTS, Page 3

SEE CHIEF, Page 3

SEE OVERPAYMENT, Page 3
Leona County Commission

Four capital projects currently under consideration will be discussed at a meeting set for 5 p.m. in the Leona County Commission Room on the fifth floor of the Lea County Courthouse. The meeting is open to the public.

NMJC Board

The New Mexico Junior College Board of Trustees will meet at 8 a.m. on Friday in the Fred Frenzel Student Union on the NMJC campus. The meeting is open to the public.

FDAP banquet

Palmer Douglas, executive director of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, will celebrate his 30th year with a retirement ceremony at the FDAP banquet on Thursday at the Spanish Lakes Convention Center. Tickets will be sold by Kenneth Leathers.

Leona Museum Town Hall

An African-American experience exhibit on the history of the town will be featured at a discussion on a panel at 6 p.m. on Thursday in the DeVoe Library in the Marshall Auditorium. Tickets will be sold by LaVonne Den Bleyker.

Overpayment

In an interview with Marty Moore, a list of overpayments was cut to about $360,000 through June, the latter date.

The cuts include a hiring freeze, suspending full-time positions that aren’t supported by service or public safety, restructuring the departments of finance and human resources, and delaying some capital projects.

Some capital projects currently under construction will be completed, though. Moore said the city is building a new public works office, a new cemetery, a water tower, and an addition to the Marshall Park.

The hospital’s new volunteer office is open and looking for volunteers.

Two new projects have been added to the list of overpayments: a baseball complex, which will be completed in 2014, and the city’s new Motor Vehicles Department, which is not expected to be completed until 2015.

Moore said he has set aside $1.3 million in the city’s budget to pay for these projects.

Leona County Dance

The Lea County Dance will be held Friday from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Tatum Club. Tickets are $15 per person or $25 per couple.

The dinner will be served at the Spanish Lakes Convention Center.

GENEALOGY SOCIETY

The Lea County Genealogy Society will hold its annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Saturday in the Lea County Courthouse.

APARTMENTS

The Hobbs Senior Center will host an AARP Drivers Program on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The fee is $25 per person.

Leona County Museum Town Hall

The impact of church on the African-American experience will be discussed at a meeting on Friday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Lea County Courthouse.