

Press Release

Lea County FY 15/16 Budget Review Process

Lea County Courthouse, Lovington, NM: Lea County Manager Mike Gallagher reports “we are well into the FY 15/16 Budget Preparation Timeline. With an early start this year, we have completed almost half of the budget review meetings. The next Budget Work Session is 8:00 am Friday, April 10, at the Lea County Board of County Commissioners (LCBCC) Meeting.

Lea County Finance Director Chip Low states “every aspect of the Budget Work Sessions with the LCBCC and staff receives a thorough review.” Budget Hearings include Capital Outlay, Personnel & Operating, Departmental & Elected Officials, and Outside Agency Presentations. Some of the Budget Highlights include a reduction in Lea County Operational Expenditures, excluding Trust Funds; \$13.35 million in Capital Outlay Grant Funding; and Funding to reconstruct Delaware Basin Road.

In addition, Lea County will continue to maintain five months (5/12) General Fund cash reserve. Lea County Commissioner Dale Dunlap says “although the state only requires a three month (3/12) cash reserve, the Lea County Board of County Commissioners continue to have a conservative approach requiring the county to maintain a five month (5/12) cash reserve for unforeseen county expenditures.”

Lea County Commissioner Vice Chair Ron Black states “we consistently strive for a conservative budget, transparency and a high quality of professionalism. Not only do we support capital outlay grant funding, the LCBCC prioritizes the health, safety welfare and quality of life for Lea County residents. We value the recruitment and retention of qualified employees. Therefore the commissioners continue to approve funding for a 5% employee salary adjustment.”

Throughout the April LCBCC Meetings the Interim Budget Review & Discussion will continue and the Final Budget will be submitted to the New Mexico Department of Finance by July 31, 2015.

Lea County Board of County Commissioner Jim Britton comments “the financial health of an organization is one of the most important aspects for success. I am very proud of the management and

staff of Lea County for making us one of the best in class with the recent Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2014 budget. This award signifies the dedication and effort put forward by all Lea County employees, and I thank them all very much. The GFOA Award is a well-deserved recognition for all their hard work.”

The Lea County Finance Department has a history of winning accolades and awards for their work. The New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC) selected Lea County for the 2011 annual Audit Accountability Award that was given out at its Legislative Conference in January 2012. The award is given in recognition of a large, mid-sized and small county that have done outstanding work on their audits and have sustained excellence with the highest audit opinions for the past three years.