

***By Jan Rahn***

***Managing Editor***

The city's auditor made many positive comments during the time he gave a 2008-09 audit presentation to members of the Grant City Council during their regular meeting Tuesday, Jan. 26.

"We've come a long way in four years and there have been a lot of challenges in four years," said City Auditor Terry Galloway from the Grand Island firm of Almquist, Maltzahn, Galloway and Luth.

"Incredible," was his remark when pointing to the property taxes in Grant.

Grant's property taxes per person are \$147 compared to \$240 per person in communities the same size.

All of the comparisons Galloway made throughout the audit presentation were against a peer group of the same population.

Grant is also getting more state allocation than other communities of similar population.

The top five sources of revenues from governmental activities include transfers from other funds, where Galloway says the City of Grant is "right on track," the franchise fees in helping to shore up cash reserves, property taxes, state allocation, and charges for services.

Grant is one of only a few towns left who have no sales tax.

Galloway was complimentary on the things done in the last couple of years to improve conditions of the city.

In referring to the revenue funds, in particular sewer and waste, Galloway said Grant is “ahead of the game.” Council has increased rates for 2010. “That’s what needed to happen and you’ve already done it,” he said.

In the operating income category, Galloway was complimentary on the percentages of operating revenue, especially in the electric fund. An adjustment has already been made with a 2010 rate increase.

“You’ve beat me to it again,” said Galloway.

In the governmental expense areas of administration, police, cemetery, etc., Galloway said Grant is right on track.

He was especially complimentary about the per person cost of police service. The recommended amount is \$80 per capita. At \$75 per person, Galloway said, “This is pretty unique—most Nebraska towns are much higher.”

Recreation for the current year is \$93 per person; the recommended amount for peer population groups is \$100.

Galloway said the Grant Municipal Airport was hard to compare to others. The current year expense per person \$45; the recommended per capita expense for towns Grant’s size is \$30.

“It’s a very nice airport—I can’t even compare you to other cities (the same size),” said Galloway.