

***By Jan Rahn***

***Managing Editor***

Building maintenance is the main focus of the new fiscal year budget for Perkins County Health Services.

Updating a facility that is over 40 years old is a constant challenge in budget preparation.

The Board of Directors for the Perkins County Hospital District adopted a \$16.6 million budget for 2010-11 during the middle of September.

“This year is focused a lot on the building maintenance, making our facility more in tune with the 21st Century and the electronic medical record that must in by place by 2012 or the government reduces our reimbursement,” said PCHS Administrator Pam Holm.

Holm explained further about the electronic medical record system. It must be completely done by 2014, however, by 2012 there must be meaningful use of the system. An example she gave of “meaningful use” is transferring records to North Platte for instance.

She said the cost of implementing electronic medical records is about \$1.5 million.

The Perkins County Health Services facility has also acquired several pieces of equipment over the past two years and those debts need to be paid down, said Holm.

A new generator was recently installed at the medical facility and new wiring had to be put in

place to meet a requirement by the state fire marshal.

The new generator and electrical updates were the main focus of last year's \$16 million budget, along with a new heating/cooling system.

Tiffany Weber, chief financial officer, said PCHS was notified the first part of July of \$230,832 in grant funding from the Nebraska Energy Office as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money allocation.

Weber said this grant will help replace old windows and doors in the hospital and allow the facility to become more energy efficient.

A tax rate of 2.69 per \$100 of valuation is set for the new budget year with a tax request of Perkins County hospital of \$169,335. Tax asking in last year's fiscal year budget was \$147,690.

The newly adopted 2010-11 budget includes \$14.3 million in operating expenses for the upcoming year. This amount pays for salaries, benefits, supplies, contracts/leases, and small equipment purchases.

A necessary cash reserve built in to the 2010-11 budget of \$2 million brings the total resources available to \$18.6 million for the Perkins County Hospital District.

"I am quite pleased with the job that the directors are doing in trying to hold down spending this next year," said Holm. "Like everyone else, we are hit with large increases in cost of supplies, food, fuel and electricity."

A Business Improvement Committee consisting of 15 personnel including directors, board members, employees, supervisors, Dr. Cliff Colglazier and a provider from the Grant Medical Clinic looks at strategic planning over a period of several years to update the facility.

