

City of Willcox Newsletter
February 2009

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

FREE SMOKE DETECTOR PROGRAM

The Willcox Fire Department is offering a free smoke detector and installation to qualifying applicants. In addition, a fire inspection of your home can be conducted at the time of installation.

THIS PROGRAM IS BEING OFFERED TO RESIDENTS WHO MEET ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

Single Parents.

Parents of newborns.

Disabled Citizens.

Citizens over 60 years of age.

Annual Household Income Under \$20,000

To see if you qualify, or for more information, contact the Willcox Department of Public Safety at 384-4673. We hope everyone has a SAFE and prosperous 2009!

City Budget: the Straight Scoop

Ruth Graham, Finance Director

Please come and enjoy the Senior Sweetheart Dance on Friday, February 27th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Willcox Community Center, 312 W. Stewart St. The dance is sponsored by the City, the Parks and Recreation Commission, Safeway, Alco and the Willcox Real Estate Company. There will be a live band, dancing and refreshments. The cost is \$2 per person and all are welcome. Come and dance to the music of "Partners!"

We have been notified that Cochise County will provide a free dump day at the Willcox Transfer Station on **June 6, 2009**. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

The February utility bills will reflect a scheduled increase in the sewer rates. On 12/17/07, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2007-50 with rate increases for the Wastewater System for the year 2008 and 2009. For services provided on or after January 1, 2009, the monthly rate for a single residential dwelling unit with a 3/4" meter will increase by \$0.52, and for a 1" residential meter the increase will be \$0.71. The rate for a 3/4" commercial meter will increase by \$0.75, by \$0.94 for a 1" meter, \$1.40 for a 1 1/2" meter, \$1.97 for a 2" meter, \$3.75 for a 4" meter, and \$6.10 for a 6" meter. In addition, there will be a Consumer Price Index adjustment of approximately 1.8% for the year 2008 that will apply to all City services.

At the February 16th Council meeting, the City Manager presented financial information for the fiscal year to date, from July 1, 2008 through January 31, 2009. 58% of the fiscal year has elapsed, and General Fund revenues are at 51% of the amount budgeted. City sales tax revenues total 67% of the amount budgeted, and State sales tax receipts are at 45%. Bed tax receipts are at 33% of budget for the year to date and we are projecting that they will total 50% of budget for the year. Overall, we project that there may be a shortfall of approximately \$265,000 on General Fund revenues budgeted at \$4,417,351. Budgeted expenses have been reduced by a net amount of \$20,000 due to grant match monies that will not be used. General Fund expenditures for the year to date are at 50% of budget. The Gas, Water and Wastewater utility funds are showing net revenues, while the Refuse fund is operating at a loss. The refuse rates were set in 2006, and the City has absorbed several service provider and landfill cost increases since then. **Overall, the City of Willcox is in better financial condition than many cities in Arizona.** The staff is working on the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 budget and will be looking at the services to be provided and the cost of those services. The State of Arizona is operating at a deficit, and we have been notified that State shared revenues will be substantially reduced next year. Final figures have not yet been released. The reduced revenues will make it difficult for the City to continue to provide necessary services to the community, and we are making every effort to continue to minimize expenses and maximize services.

Library Renovation Project Moving Forward!

Tom Miner, Library Director

The Library held its first preliminary meeting on Feb 4th with Ms. Dawn K. Brown, Lead Architect and Interior Designer for Libraries, representing the firm of Dick & Fritsche Design Group in Phoenix. Present at the meeting were: *City Staff*: Mr. Dave Bonner, Director of Public Works; Mr. Tom Miner, Library Director; Mrs. Sylvia Stewart, Library Supervisor; *Public Library Advisory Committee (PLAC) members*: Mrs. Delah Aiman, Chairperson; Mr. John Hilton, Vice Chair; Mr. Fred Lewis, member/WUSD Librarian; and Mr. Joe Aiman, member/Citizen Liaison Council Representative; *Friends of the Library*: Mrs. Karla Hansen, President; and of course, Ms. Brown, (www.dfdg.com).

Ms. Brown described her qualifications, which are quite impressive, and include seven library remodels and two complete new library construction projects, all in the Phoenix area. She has been with the firm for over 14 years, and is really looking forward to working with us on this project.

During the meeting, we specified the total Willcox budget amount from the bond; dollar amounts expended to date, for example, the new roofing materials already purchased; projected expenses related to the project scope of work; background/history of the present configuration of the building; what our community needs are, and what the community's expectations are, as outlined in our new 5-Yr Library Strategic Plan. We spent 5.5 solid hours covering all that territory. Ms. Brown collected a lot of data, took a lot of photos, and measurements, and went back to Phoenix to draft a design proposal.

I am happy to report that we have recently received a copy of that draft proposal, and are working on the City's response. We are very, very excited to be moving forward!