

Letter #2 from Tim Addison

In continuing with the articles on how our county works, I want to talk about taxes. This may be a two-part series because it is a very complicated subject to explain. Before I get started, I want to compliment our Emergency Management Coordinator, Dave Tedford, on his management of the fire that crossed into our county from New Mexico. I was so proud how our two amazing fire departments, from Plains and Denver City, performed and protected the county. Our very own precinct hands and commissioners were there with maintainers and water transport trucks. It was a collective effort during some very unbearable conditions. Yoakum County owes you all a debt of gratitude.

Perhaps discussing what your taxes pay for might be a good way to get started. State statutes dictate that we will provide for a county road system and a sheriff's department to enforce the law and keep people safe. Our taxes also pay for a court system, keeping our county's records, and provide services too numerous to mention in this letter. These are the things we do that most of you are familiar with. They are the things that most counties provide their constituents. I would like to point out the things that our tax rate provides that are not typical in other counties.

We are privileged to have a state-of-the-art hospital and clinic system. Almost all counties, that are fortunate to have a hospital, fund it through a hospital district. There are few skilled nursing facilities (nursing homes) that are owned by counties. Almost all of those are funded through a hospital district. Most hospital districts levy a tax rate in excess of 20 cents. This is an additional tax that is not currently levied in Yoakum County. We fund both of these ventures through our ad valorem tax rate. We can keep the costs lower by cutting out a tier of administration by not creating a special district. Our hospital board and staff need to be congratulated for providing a quality product while being fiscally responsible.

The Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) and the two fire departments were mentioned earlier. The county funds the EMC position and purchases trucks and equipment for the fire departments. The county also purchases ambulances and equipment for both communities. The senior citizen's facility, home delivery of meals, two public libraries, two swimming pools, an 18-hole golf course, two baseball parks, three community buildings, and three public parks are funded by the ad valorem rate. The county owns and operates an airport and partners with the City of Denver City on another. Possibly the most atypical task the county performs, are the monies spent on street maintenance and the budget for owning and operating the landfill. I don't mention all of these things to make an infomercial for the county or to stop providing any of these services, but these things must be considered when comparing our tax rate to other counties. I have heard people say that oil companies pay our taxes, and they do pay around 90% of the total, however, they don't pay your taxes and they don't pay mine. When the tax rate is high because mineral values are low, we all pay more to make up the difference. This court is dedicated to striking a balance between services provided and the burden they may put on the taxpayer. If you have any questions, please ask one of the commissioners and we will try to provide you with an answer.

Thank You Again for Your Time,

Tim Addison Commissioner Pct. 4

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