

## County Commission Update: Grantsville Senior Center Project

By Wade Mathews, Public Information Officer

Senior citizens are, unfortunately, sometimes a forgotten and neglected group of our population. What we should remember is that our senior citizens once were and continue to be great contributors to our society. They are a group that deserves our recognition and gratitude for all that they have done to prepare the way for the younger generations and to make the world a better place.

The Tooele County Commission recognizes the greatness of our aging members of society and wants to make sure their needs are met. With that in mind, Tooele County pursued and won a \$74,357 grant to fund the much needed remodel and upgrade project at the Grantsville Senior Citizens Center.

“It’s taken all of the County Commission’s efforts to get this accomplished. Commissioner Hurst is on the CDBG Board, Commissioner Johnson has a high interest in the senior population, and this has been one of my major goals,” said Commissioner Bruce Clegg.

Tooele County Aging Director, Josh Maher, administered the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. Maher said the county sought this grant for many years. This year they pursued the grant differently. Instead of proposing several small projects, only the Senior Center project was pursued.

Commissioner Jerry Hurst was highly involved in the CDBG application process. “The grant application took a lot of time and effort. It goes through a long review by the rating and ranking committee. We had the highest ranking project. It worked out good for us,” Hurst said.

Maher said the county got high grant points for large contributions from other sources. Tooele County pledged a \$10,000 match and the Grantsville Seniors also pledged a \$10,000 match. With both pledges and the grant amount there is a total of \$94,357.50 for the renovation project. Maher said, “We’re getting a big bang for our bucks.”

Commissioner Colleen Johnson said, “It’s something they’ve needed for a long time. The Center Board has raised money to put towards the upgrades, which gives them some ownership in the project. We’re trying to incorporate their ideas into the remodel.”

The remodel project will involve removing two of the walls around the dining area, opening the room up into the existing foyer and hallway. That will add about 40 percent to the dining area, creating a larger space that will accommodate more people.

Outside of the center the project includes replacing uneven sidewalks, installing more ramps from the parking areas, removing trees that drop limbs onto sidewalks, and installing a handrail.

Commissioner Clegg said, "Originally we wanted to put an addition onto the north side of the building, but with the struggling economy and state and federal funding cutbacks, we need to keep the renovation project manageable while at the same time maintaining the high level of senior citizen services, especially our food programs."

Maher is excited about the changes that will take place. "Well, it just removes some of the deterrents for some of the people to go to the Senior Center. They go in now and see how crowded it is and leave. The biggest hope is people will feel welcome and come in and participate. It's also a big hope we can prevent accidents from happening either from overcrowding or unsafe conditions outside," Maher said.

Because it's a federally funded project the county has to follow a restrictive bid process, ensuring that the winning contractors meet specific labor conditions. The county hopes to move forward with this project in the fall, possibly early October. Maher said he will probably have to close the center for no more than one week. He will either be transporting seniors to the Tooele Senior Center or looking for an alternative location in Grantsville for that week of construction.