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STATE OF CITY, ECONOMY ADDRESSED BY MAYOR, EDC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT CHAMBER BANQUET

Sat, 02/09/2019 - 11:00pm

BENJAMIN HETTICK

Information about the City of Lamesa and the local economy was presented in separate reports by Mayor Josh Stevens and Sean Overeynder as part of the annual Lamesa Area Chamber of Commerce Banquet this past Thursday.

Stevens first presented a State of the City address at the Chamber Banquet two years ago after being elected mayor in May of 2016.

This was the first year for a State of the Economy address by Overeynder, who was hired last August as executive director of the Lamesa Economic Development Corporation and Lamesa Economic Alliance Project.

State of the City

Stevens compared Lamesa to a "sleeping giant." He said the town is full of opportunity and this is an exciting time for Lamesa.

When he first became mayor, Stevens said he met with City Manager Shawna D. Burkhart to optimize the town's expenses and operations.

Some of the new equipment and vehicles the city has acquired since Stevens took office include a new fire truck, lawnmowers, police vehicles and more.

About five years ago, Lamesa Municipal Golf Course had a \$93,000 loss for the year, which had to be subsidized by the city's General Fund, Stevens said. He added, "... and the golf course is something that a lot of people are not really happy about."

The city has been "tackling" the golf course over the past two or three years, Stevens said, and the city has changed things like dues and tournament fees and cut the annual deficit down to \$56,000.

Stevens said he wanted to give the credit "completely" to the dues-paying golf course members, who have paid for repairs out of their own pocket and been dedicated to keeping the course.

The mayor also brought up improvements to city buildings. The Forrest Park Community Center has received a new kitchen and hail-damaged roofs have been replaced on city buildings throughout Lamesa.

Lamesa, TX
WEATHEROLOGY



73°
Mainly Cloudy

Dew Point: 60°
Humidity: 64%
Pressure: 29.96"
Visibility: 10.0 miles
Winds: S 16mph

Forecast
Currents
Radar
city,state,zipcode
get forecast!

The city also has installed new phone and internet systems, which help keep the city online even when the power fails. However, the city also discovered the air duct system in City Hall was falling apart, so the city just completed repairing those air ducts.

The city, along with donations from local organizations, has built a new pavilion and restrooms at the Boys and Girls Club Lake.

Lamesa also has worked on important legislation over the past few years, Stevens said. The most important is an interlocal agreement regarding the resale of trust properties within the city's jurisdictional lines, Stevens said.

Those agreements are crucial to the city and to the taxpayers because they are important for economic development, code enforcement and adding delinquent properties back to the tax roll, Stevens said.

If the city can get those properties back, officials can develop the land to housing or retail, which helps to take the tax burden off the citizens.

Stevens asked residents to contact the city if they know who the property owner is for land that has been vacant for over a year.

The city is making an effort to beautify Lamesa. Stevens said the second most important piece of legislation passed over the last few years is an ordinance for property maintenance for land within 5,000 feet of the city limits.

Those property owners now will be subject to the city code concerning building and yard maintenance.

"I don't want to be the mayor of the city that people look around and go, 'man, look at this junk hole'," Stevens said.

Lamesa has made strides in the city's water distribution service, Stevens said. For example, workers have started putting in quick valves across the city and replacing water lines on the east side of Lamesa and working their way to the west.

Quick valves allow the city to easily shut down water lines that affect a couple of buildings, instead a much wider range of land, and repair leaks as needed.

The city also has purchased an emergency six-inch pump that helps the water department repair leaks more quickly and easily.

The city has attained a USDA grant for construction of a 15 million gallon water storage tank to maximize the amount of its water allotment it is able to receive from the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority.

The city pumps in CRMWA water from Lake Meredith but the pipeline between the lake and Lamesa is 60 years old and "is deteriorating faster than anyone thought possible," Stevens said.

"It's not if those lines will break, it's when and how bad," Stevens said.

Stevens recognized current members of the City Council. He said the council has been working very hard and all of the improvements to the city have been a group effort.

State of the Economy

Lamesa's unemployment rate is 4.1 percent compared to the 3.6 average around the state, Overeynder said.

He pointed out that actually can be good for Lamesa, since businesses considering a move to Lamesa may look at the unemployment rate and see there is an available workforce that they can hire.

As far as personal growth for income, Lamesa is setting at 4.9 percent compared to the state's level of 4.4 percent. The previous year, Overeynder said, the city saw only a 2.9 percent growth in income.

The city also has seen growth in its businesses, Overeynder said. He named Fresenius Kidney Care and U.S. Silica as two employers that have and will continue to contribute to the city's financial growth.

Overeynder said the city needs housing as it continues to grow. The planned state housing tax credit apartments and the Chase Gardaphe manufactured home community are two projects that will help the city grow in that area.

Hospice Butterfly Release set here in remembrance of Page 45

Tom, Andrews split first two, deciding game is Suburban Page 45

Registration continues for summer, fall at Howard College Page 45


Lamesa Press-Reporter

1910

1910 Year No. 18, 147 Pages, Two Sections

1910 Year No. 18, 147 Pages, Two Sections

NATIONAL LAND AND RANGE J IN LAHOMA




National runners-up

Klondike FFA only two points behind title winner

Officials will hear presentation Tuesday at Commissioners Court

The well-organized and well-run team of Klondike FFA members, led by their advisor, Mr. [Name], presented a professional and informative presentation to the Commissioners Court. The team's efforts were recognized by the court, which praised their dedication and hard work.

Sands is first runner-up at state OAP competition



First runner-up at state

The team from [Location] placed second in the state OAP competition, earning a well-deserved runner-up position. The team's performance was highly praised by the judges, who commended their creativity and teamwork.

Thought

The best time to give advice to your children is while they're old enough to believe you know what you're talking about.


Weather




High: 80 Low: 60 Wind: 10-15 mph

Source: National Weather Service

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The city also has seen growth in its sales tax. From 2016 to 2018, Overeynder said, the city has seen a 24 percent increase.

“Not a lot of communities, let alone rural communities, can actually boast about that,” Overeynder said.

In the future, Overeynder said, the city will focus on developing workforce that industries are needing and on industries that will bring in jobs.

The Census has predicted that Lamesa will see a 30 percent increase in jobs, but Overeynder predicted that increase will be even higher.

Overeynder pointed out the importance of education in the community's economy and emphasized that the city is continuing to work on residential development.

“In order to continue to grow, we’ve got to encourage economic development to run on all cylinders,” Overeynder said.

NEWS

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P.O. Box 710
Lamesa, TX 79331
806-872-2177

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