



Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky 41822

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

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Coal severance tax funds to benefit Knott

By KAREN JOY JONES

Knott Countians stand to benefit from a healthy coal economy, as our county is set to receive over \$9 million dollars in coal severance tax funds during the next budget cycle.

The amount of coal severance money each county receives is based on the amount of taxes paid. Of 29 coal-producing counties, Knott County is currently second in the state, surpassed only

by Pike County.

"Stephanie Stumbo told me last week that we had almost \$10 million, but since then I believe Gov. Fletcher has taken around \$700,000 off the top for special projects of his own relating to our region -- things like \$5 million for need-based scholarships for coal counties."

Judge-Executive Randy Th-

ompson told the Times he has requested around 50% of Knott's coal severance money be directed toward local water projects.

"I asked that \$4 million be allocated for waterline extension throughout the county," Thompson said. "It's my opinion that the best thing I could do was request the funding, and allow the water board to use their expertise to determine specific locations to apply

those funds and what would best serve the most people. Of course I would reserve the right to make suggestions if I'm made aware of a particular need."

Thompson detailed a long list of other projects included in his requests for allocation of Knott's coal severance tax funds.

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"Before I developed this list, I talked to several community leaders and asked their opinions about needs in Knott County -- people like Mayor Janice Jarrell and school Superintendent Harold Combs. They said it was unusual to be asked for input, and they seemed to appreciate it," Thompson added.

The judge also spoke with both legislators, State Rep. Ancel Smith and State Senator Johnny Ray Turner, whose votes in the legislature will help determine whether the judge's requests become reality. Both expressed approval and support of Thompson's recommendations for Knott County.

Funding has been requested for the following:

- Judge Thompson asked that each volunteer fire department and park be given the traditional \$10,000. In addition, he asked for funds to help develop, construct and operate a proposed regional ATV training center, as well as funding to develop ATV and horse trails around the county.

- Funds were requested to purchase the Gambill property on the Al Stewart Highway (Hwy. 160/80 Connector), to be used for future economic development.

- The judge asked for \$500,000 to purchase and renovate the buildings formerly housing Beckham Combs and Caney elementary schools. This would serve a dual purpose -- help the school system in a time of financial hardship, and allow development of two facilities to be used to serve their communities. Two possible uses under consideration for the buildings are an assisted living center and a drug treatment facility.

- Funds were requested to continue remodeling the Human Services Center and to begin renovation of the old courthouse, which is in poor condition.

- \$250,000 was requested to begin construction of a proposed amphitheater in Hindman. Matching funds were also requested to use toward expanding the School of Craft to house a ceramic department.

- Judge Thompson asked for funding to help pay for expansion of the regional jail in Perry County to allow that facility to house more state prisoners; this would reduce the county's jail costs.

- The judge requested matching funds for the Main Street/City of

"It's a hand-up, not a hand-out," Amy says of the WIA. "I needed help, and they made sure I got what I needed so I could help myself."

Amy relocated from Lexington to her native Knott County in 2001 with only her savings to support her and two-year-old Hunter. When a local supermarket called with a job offer, Amy accepted.

"But I couldn't raise a child on \$5.15 an hour," she says.

Frustrated by her financial limitations, Amy decided to try college at the HCTC branch in Hindman. Her interest in computers led her to pursue several computer science-related courses within the business management curriculum.

Amy received financial aid that covered her tuition, but she soon became aware that going to college also meant coming up with additional funds to cover travel, food, and childcare expenses.

"Financial aid won't cover those things, so I didn't know what I was going to do," Amy says.

Amy found the solution to her dilemma when she picked up a flyer from the L.K.L.P. Community Action Council that described services available under WIA programs. WIA programs are administered throughout the region by the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP) and provided locally by L.K.L.P. under contract with EKCEP.

WIA Career Adviser Bobbie Slone told Amy that WIA could cover her college-related gas and food expenses, and also provide her with funding to cover daycare and babysitting costs for Hunter.

"There's just no way I could have paid someone to watch Hunter, and paid for gas and food, too," Amy says. "You can stretch money, but I really don't think I could have gone to college without the WIA."

As WIA helped Amy with supportive services funding, she continued to excel in her classes at HCTC. She attained a perfect 4.0 grade point average and made the Dean's List.

The final element in Amy's movement toward a meaningful career and a brighter future fell into place during her last semester of college, when an administrator told Amy that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had called the college about a part-time job opportunity and suggested that she should pursue it.

Although Amy—as she laughingly recalls now—had no clue what the Corps was, she warmed to the idea when she learned the job would make

ghost stories, they are firsthand accounts of the events," insisted Rex.

The tales in the book range from spotting the family dog, years after his untimely death, to seeing her grandfather, Doc Tolliver, sitting on the edge of his bed in his overhauls in Seven Black Birds.

Publish America, Rex's publisher, bought the rights to the book, leaving Sharon with the royalties and without the expense of printing it.

Rex is already working on her second book, about ghosts of coarse. The ghostly events surrounding a murder that occurred in Knott County 18 years ago may be included, as well as stories from both Indiana and Kentucky. She also would like to write a how-to book over landscaping in the future.

Sharon Rex encourages anyone with a ghost story that they want to tell to contact her. You can send your story to:

Greg and Sharon Rex
10825 W 200N
Cromwell, IN 46732.

Growing up with Ghosts is available on PublishAmerica.com, Amazon.com, and BarnesandNoble.com. The book is projected to be on shelves on February 13th.

Knott Receives FEMA Funding

Knott County has been awarded federal funds under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. Knott County has been chosen to receive \$ 8,082.00 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county.

The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from The Salvation Army; American Red Cross; United Jewish Communities; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; and, United Way of America. The Local Board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

A Local Board made up of the following: Margie Thomas, John Scholl, Shirley Conley, Janice Jarrell, Donetta Dobson, Mary Hall,



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