

Welcome sign gets improvements



The Banks Community Foundation (BCF), a non-profit organization committed to enhancing cultural, social and economic development in Banks and surrounding communities, recently collaborated with the Banks Chamber of Commerce to visually enhance the "Welcome to Banks" sign located on Main Street and Hwy 6, with a new landscape of specially selected plants.

The Way Out West, "WOW" chapter of the Hardy Plant Society donated both time and expertise in creating the landscape design. The Thompson and Walters Nursery, Bea Peters, and Lumberjack Farms

donated all of the plants. Matt Phil Excavating donated time and equipment to deliver four yards of compost that was donated by Natures Needs, negotiated by Bob Bobosky.

Volunteers who got down and dirty to do the planting and complete the project, were Stuart Douglas, Denise Dethlefs, Tami Stewart and Kevin Grove.

Holiday Concert will collect food items

From page 1

Attendees are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the local Sonshine Food Bank.

Sunset Park Association and the Banks Chamber of Com-

Police funding still requires decisions

At the Banks City Council meeting in December, the mayor and councilors discussed the implications of the failure of the police levy in November. At this point, Banks will have no local police services after July. The city had contracted with Washington County to provide police services but was depending on the levy to make that a long term possibility.

Citizen Franklin Smith wanted to know if the council planned to put the levy forward again, since it has been defeated, in different versions, four times. Mayor Mike Lyda said that the failure was "disheartening," and noted that the measure did receive a majority vote, but turnout was not high enough. He said that as long as a double majority is required, it will be difficult to pass a levy. The results of the levy were 169 yes to 105 no. Banks has 775 registered voters, so 343 people would have needed to

vote for the measure to carry.

Councilor Teri Branstire said that she had been looking at other small communities and found that many of them fund their police services from the general fund, rather than passing special levies.

Council member Chris Thackeray recognized that the issue has been put to vote repeatedly, but said "we'd be negligent in our duty if we don't continue to put it out there and say this is something we need."

Deputy Berning stated that he thought there continued to be confusion among voters about what the levy was for. People approached him thinking that if the levy passed it would mean going back to a city department instead of contracting with the county.

Council also discussed how to fill staffing needs for the city since the resignation of Tim Grossnickle. Mayor Lyda proposed separating the water department work from city administration duties, as it is limiting to find a candidate with in-depth knowledge of both areas. A job description for a City Administrator is being considered and Pete Edison will head a committee to bring a recommendation to council in February.

The paving of the library and public works building lot is complete and the lot is open. The parking lot was in worse shape than originally thought and

caused the project to come in \$15,000 over budget. Because excavation and gravel had been bid by the square yard instead of the cubic yard, the extra costs were higher than they appeared.

The Market Street portion of the project will continue. The Mayor thought that the overruns would not be as significant for Market Street because the street wasn't failing.

The gazebo lighting project is finished and locks have been installed on the light boxes.

Attorney Rob Ireland and Sunset Park Association President Mel Clark presented an update on the park's progress toward clearing up land use issues. They said they had met all of the city planner's requests. The group had finished its application and was submitting it to the Planning Commission.

The final outcome of the numerous surveys and studies allows the park to keep all existing asphalt. A bio-swale will be constructed to deal with run-off and even allow the park to grow in the future. The Association will need to kill and remove noxious plants, especially Scotch broom and blackberries. They will also need to clean refuse from the wetland area. The noise study concluded that existing abatement efforts were sufficient.

City Planner KJ Won will re-
Please see page 18

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