

Starting a foundation

SCHD votes to create supportive nonprofit

By Robert Galbreath
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PINEDALE – The Sublette County Hospital District Board of Trustees voted unanimously to create a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) foundation at its May 25 meeting to support the district and its proposed critical access hospital and long-term care center project.

The foundation will be a separate entity from the SCHD and its status as a 501(c)(3) organization will allow it to submit applications for any grants that apply to hospitals, said Dave Doorn, district administrator.

While the foundation's primary purpose is to raise money for the hospital, it will also gather resources to support "all good causes related to health care" across Sublette County, Doorn said.

The board's motion on May 25 granted trustees control over appointing members of the foundation's governing body. The composition of the foundation's board, its bylaws and other details will be determined at a later date as the SCHD begins the groundwork for the foundation, Doorn said.

Board Chairwoman Tonia Hoffman designated herself and trustees Jamison Ziegler and Dave Bell to form a committee to begin drafting bylaws.

Doorn told the Roundup several community members had already volunteered their time to serve on the board.

Ziegler said he was "excited" to "begin the journey" with the new foundation.

"The folks populating the foundation's board will get things together to synergize

DOI aims to increase clean energy development on public lands

WYOMING – The U.S. Secretary of the Interior announced earlier this week a new policy geared toward increasing clean energy production on public lands as part of the current Biden Administration's goal of a net-zero economy by 2050.

U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland made the announcement in Nevada during a clean energy roundtable that included other government officials, stakeholders and energy producers. One of the main goals was cementing ongoing efforts to permit at least 25,000 megawatts of renewable energy on public land by 2025. During that discussion, Haaland announced the implementation of a new policy to reduce rents and fees charged for

wind and solar projects on public lands, as well as establishing Renewable Energy Coordination Offices in the Bureau of Land Management offices throughout the West.

"Clean energy projects on public lands have an important role to play in reducing our nation's greenhouse gas emissions and lowering costs for families," Haaland said. "As we seek to advance President Biden's clean energy goals, the Department of the Interior is continuing to meet the moment in coordination with local, state and elected officials, Tribes and conservation and industry groups to help ensure we modernize America's power infrastructure while creating jobs and bolstering climate resilience."

Director of the BLM, Tracy Stone-Manning, said this endeavor is the latest step to attract renewable energy investments on public lands while still being environmentally conscious.

"This will help support our clean energy economy by creating good-paying jobs, increasing our energy security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

The Energy Act of 2020 provided the BLM with authority to reduce rents and fees if necessary to promote use of wind and solar resources. The new rate reduction is aimed at incentivizing industry to partner in responsible renewable energy development. On average, the BLM expects rents and fees to decrease by over 50 percent.

the (SCHD) board and get things started," Ziegler added.

USDA update

The SCHD reached the "end of the list" and checked off all the boxes in the latest round of information requested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding the district's loan application, Doorn reported.

In late April, the USDA requested additional environmental studies on the proposed hospital's impact on a range of issues, from endangered species to wetlands, Doorn said. He thanked Jorgensen's for helping complete several studies and the Board of Sublette County Commissioners for reaching out to contacts at various agencies.

The SCHD plans to apply for a portion of money set aside by the state from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund infrastructure projects like hospitals, Doorn said. The Wyoming State Lands and Investments Board (SLIB) will distribute the grants and the application deadline is June, he added.

The SCHD hopes to have an answer from the USDA before the SLIB's deadline, Doorn said.

Doorn and SCHD administration are in constant contact with USDA officers to push for approval of the district's loan application.

"We've done everything they have asked and jumped through hoops," he said. "We want an answer soon."

Bell encouraged the SCHD district to reach out to Wyoming's national congressional delegation.

Budget, strategic planning and fireworks

Trustees voted to approve a draft budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023. The SCHD business office prepared the draft budget and the board finance committee presented the document for the other trustees to review.

State law requires the district to submit a draft budget in June, said finance committee member and trustee Kenda Tanner. A final budget will be presented to the board at its June public meeting before the next fiscal year begins in July, she added.

Tanner thanked Michelle Stauthamer, finance manager, for going through the district's budget line by line with the finance committee.

The board reviewed final results from the community needs health assessment during a

workshop before the May 25 meeting. Nearly 500 residents from across the county filled out the assessment, responding to a range of questions on health-care needs, concerns and resources in the community.

Mike Hunsaker, chief operating officer for the SCHD and Star Valley Health, the district's management partner, said SCHD administration would review the community needs health assessment in detail and use the results to address common themes and develop the district's strategic plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

Hunsaker said the final strategic plan will be ready for board review and approval at the SCHD's June meeting.

Doorn reiterated the SCHD's commitment to do everything it can to provide space for the Town of Pinedale to host its annual Fourth of July fireworks display on the hilltop site next to the clinic as long as significant construction on the hospital was not underway.

In other SCHD news, Dr. Rafael Hasty, the district's new internal medicine physician, is scheduled to begin seeing new patients on Wednesday, June 1.

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