

Holt County Officials Optimistic About 2013 Budget Picture

(KTNC) - Holt County officials are optimistic about the budget picture heading into 2013.

In the past year, the county was able to recoup some funds and rebuild infrastructure that was lost during flooding in 2010 and 2011. The return of traffic to Interstate 29 following the 2011 flood helped boost the county's tax receipts.

County Clerk Kathy Kunkel says the General Revenue Fund brought in 105-percent of what was projected. That helped the county boost its cash balance from by more than \$148,000 to \$417,000 heading into this year. (play audio :21)

Even with the added revenue, Kunkel says elected officials maintained conservative budgets in 2012, spending only 84-percent of budget appropriations. She says the 2013 budget continues to be conservative, with enough to pay bills and – hopefully – build more cash reserves.

Kunkel says the big items in the budget continue to be employee fringe benefits – especially health insurance – along with the Sheriff and Jail Department funds. (play audio :14)

Holt County will look to continue upgrades to its 911 System in 2013, with upgrades to Phase 2 Wireless, and the purchase of upgraded recording and radio equipment. Holt County Commissioners approved the 2013 Budget at their January 14th meeting.

One concern Kunkel has in future years is the loss of population in the county. She says many Holt County residents who vacated their homes to escape the flooding in 2011 have not returned to the county. (play audio :33)

Nearly 600 Holt County residents were uprooted by Missouri River flooding in 2011. Of those, Kunkel estimates between 60 and 100 have not returned to the county.