

## Members Voice – Williams County

Snow is disappearing, flooding is non-existent, load limits are in place, business is picking up, and things are looking good in Williams County. Commissioner Wayne Aberle said this week's county commission meeting agenda was lighter than it was a couple years ago when oil industry issues occupied much of the agenda. "We don't have near the business [in our meetings] that we used to have," he said.



Aberle said he expects oil business to pick up in the county in 2017. Last year was slow, but already this spring, leasing agents are visiting landowners to ask about leasing property. He said the oil field traffic hasn't resumed to the levels it was few years ago, but the county weight enforcement officer is busy. "He hasn't come across a great number of overloads, just a few. The important thing is that operators know he is out there checking weights," he said.

Road plans for the county include adding another chip seal to some of the highways that got a chip seal coat last summer. The second layer of chip seal will add to their durability. He said the county doesn't have enough money in its road budget to do much work. On the long term plan is a set of three bridges on one highway. He said when the county has enough money to work on all three, they'll be done at the same time.

Developers continue to build single-family homes in the county. Aberle said those homes in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range are most popular, but some more expensive homes are being also being built. The drive for more housing follows the demand for more workers, especially fracking crews and truck drivers. They're being paid a premium if they have a haz-mat certification. Even truckers who haul and gravel to frack sites are making \$100,000/year.