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USDA Rural Development discussed program and opportunities available to local residents

By Myrna Trauntvein

Times-News Correspondent

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a rural Development program that may be of help to Nephi City residents.

The office that covers the Nephi area is located in Manti and Jason Justesen and Karl Larsen, from that office, attended Nephi City Council meeting to discuss the program and opportunities available to local residents.

"This is a great resource for the community," said Justesen. "We can facilitate 40 different programs to assist communities."

Last year over \$156 million from the USDA Rural Development impacted needs for Utah residents, businesses and communities.

Those helps were in community facilities direct loans and grants, economic impact initiative grants, Native American water and environmental grants, solid waste management grants, technical assistance grants, water and environmental grants.

There were also high speed internet and broadband loans, business and industry loan guarantees, rural business opportunity grants, rural business enterprise grants and intermediary relending loan programs.

Money was also used to provide direct home ownership loans, guaranteed home ownership loans, rural home repair loans and grants, housing preservation grants and rural rental assistance.

Jim Wilkey, council member and builder, said he had directed people to the Manti office for help in purchasing a first home. However, not many had taken advantage of the help available.

"We would like more people in Juab County to benefit from our programs," said Justesen. "If they are just starting a business, improving a business, are developing a nonprofit housing program or are low-income or are looking at developing community projects and they don't use us, they are missing out."

Other counties and cities were making use of the many programs available. For example, he said, Utah County was buying lots and developing those lots. There is a specific project in Provo where housing is being developed and is, thereby, providing assistance to low income home buyers.

Santaquin also has a similar program.

A similar program, said Mark Jones, mayor, was unsuccessful in Nephi because a lot could not be found that met the specifications of the program.

This is a different program, said Justesen, and does not require the same things. This program is a great way to get into a nice home with one of the programs designed to help home owners with lower incomes.

"One of our most recent grants went to Tooele to help with strategic planning," he said.

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WHAT'S BRIGHT AND SHINY RED AND GOES ROAR • Well these Red Cliff Elementary Kindergarten kids got the chance to find out as Nephi City Firemen, as part of "Fire Safety Week," showed off their equipment on Tuesday. They will be touring schools this week as part of Safety Week.

Nephi City Council would like to provide more Christmas festivities in the community — any volunteers?

By Myrna Trauntvein

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Those who have been grouching that Nephi, as a city, does not do enough to make the Christmas holiday a community event, may be in for a surprise.

"We (city council members) have been discussing the upcoming Christmas season," said Mayor Mark Jones.

Jones said the council wanted the celebration of Christmas to extend further than just having the city decorate city hall and put up some lights along Main Street.

He explained that he had contacted the Juab Fine Arts Council and invited someone to attend council meeting to discuss what was being done by the Arts Council and ways the city council might join the group to provide more festivities in the community.

Representing the Arts Council at the meeting were Fran Peterson and Lisa Woodland.

Jones said the city council had discussed lighting up the Old Mill Park and, perhaps, begin the tradition of a light parade that could travel along Main Street from that park.

"We also talked about lighting up the main city park," said Robert Painter, city council member. "We could have Santa there one night."

The cost of lights had been surprising to the council but, they said, perhaps merchants in the community could also help pay the cost of the new project by donating lights or funds.

"If we fixed up the park nice enough for people to walk through it, they may be willing to pay a fee," said Jim Wilkey, council

member.

He said there are a large number of people who go to Spanish Fork to view that city's light display and he is always impressed by the number of people willing to pay to drive through the mile-long wonderland at Canyon Park. Admission is \$5 per carload.

Perhaps Nephi could have a light parade which would lead from the park to the county building where residents could participate by attending the Christmas pageant.

"We could have a competition and offer a prize for the best float," Wilkey said.

Thanksgiving Point in Lehi also has a drive-through Christmas light show that begins the end of November.

Nephi council members were shocked when they found out how many hundreds of thousands of dollars Thanksgiving Point paid for the lights they use, and realized that it would be impossible to have that kind of a display the first year.

Peterson said that, in Delta, the city has a celebration where a tree-lighting ceremony is held followed by a light parade featuring floats decorated with lights. She said it was a good idea to begin such a tradition by inviting groups that are already organized, such as the high school honor society, for example, to decorate a flatbed truck with lights for the event.

Kent Park, council member, said that the Price area celebrates one entire week. Helper starts the Christmas season with a lights-on ceremony and a candle light walk up the street. Short entertainment is provided and then the evening is celebrated with the lighting of the town Christmas lights and a visit from Santa at the Civic Auditorium.

Later, there are two night's of Helper's annual Electric Light Parade. A light parade full of Christmas lights covering every inch of the floats can be seen anywhere on main street. After the second night of the Electric Light Parade, the night ends with a Christmas Fireworks display choreographed to Christmas music.

Manti celebrates with early shopping, a Santa visit, a movie, refreshments and a light parade.

Park said that Nephi could have a rubber duck race down Salt Creek to raise money for the sub for Santa program.

Jones said that in the Provo/Orem area such rubber duck races are held with people paying for a duck with a number. When the first duck is lifted from the water, its owner receives a prize, a car.

Peterson said the Arts Council will hold a 45-minute long Christmas pageant this year.

"It will be a theatrical reproduction of the Christmas story along with poetry and music," she said.

It will be performed on Nov. 16 and 17.

The annual Christmas Craft and Food Fair will be held on Saturday, Nov. 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the gym used by the senior citizen's group in the county building.

Once again, said Peterson, the Arts Council is planning to hold the Christmas Tree Charity Auction.

"Last year, each tree was decorated and donated in its entirety by individuals and groups throughout the community," said

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Don't be a victim of crime

By Myrna Trauntvein

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If you have any information on any crime, feel threatened, or see what you believe may be a crime in progress, please call the local police department, if you live in Nephi, or the Sheriff's Office, if you live in Mona, Levan, Rocky Ridge or the county.

If you are the victim of a crime you should report that crime immediately.

Delay in reporting hampers investigation and lessons the chance of making an arrest and recovering property.

Housebreaking is a crime that we all fear, but there are a number of different ways that you can help to deter burglars.

Burglars prefer to gain easy access to homes, so the harder you make it for the criminal the lower your chances are of becoming a victim. In addition, if you do become a victim, there are measures that you can take to increase the chance that your goods will be returned to you if they are later recovered by the police.

Here are some ways that you can protect your property:

Security mark your property with a UV marker or an etching pen. You can use the UV pen to place an invisible imprint of your zip code and house number on your possessions. The etching pen will allow a permanent mark. Both help identify your belongings if they are stolen and recovered.

Placing a sticker on a conspicuous window of your home that states your possessions have been security marked will also help to deter thieves. Ask for one of these stickers at your local police station.

Most house break-ins are committed by opportunist thieves who do not have to break-in due to a door or window having been left open, so keeping your home securely locked at all times is the best deterrent to thieves.

Speak to an officer at your local police department office about the safety devices (locks, timers, lighting etc.) and procedures (closing curtains after dark, canceling regular deliveries when you are on vacation etc.) that you can put in place to increase the security of your property.

If you live in an apartment or in a condo, avoid putting your name, address or room number on your key ring. If it is lost or stolen, the thief will have information that could direct them to your home and your property.

If other people—such as previous tenants—could be in possession of keys that fit the locks in your home, then change the locks.

Do not give keys to tradesmen as they can make copies quickly and easily.

If you see signs of a break-in at your home—like a broken window or an open door—don't go in. The burglar may still be inside. Instead, go to a neighbor and call the police.

If you are selling your home, don't show people around on your own. Ask your real estate agent to send a representative to accompany anyone who wants to view the house. Opportunist thieves

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