

The Craig Daily Press

Front page stories

County, state barter over roads

By Brandon Johansson

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Moffat County commissioners again asked the Colorado Department of Transportation on Tuesday to take Moffat County Road 57 off the county's hands.

And again, state officials didn't jump at the opportunity to take over another road.

The county discussed the road with state officials at a meeting last year as well.

The 24-mile road, which runs from U.S. Highway 40 near Maybell south to the Rio Blanco County line, is used for interstate traffic, not local traffic, commissioners said.

"Huge convoys of trucks" from oil fields in Wyoming use the road to get to oilfields in Rio Blanco County, Commissioner Darryl Steele said.

When C.R. 57 hits the county line, it becomes Rio Blanco County Road 7.

Roads used for intercounty or interstate traffic are generally the responsibility of the state, not counties.

Commissioners met with CDOT officials Tuesday and asked the state to take over the road.

But Ed Fink, CDOT regional transportation director, said the state is not looking to take on any more roads.

"It's our policy not to take on additional miles," Fink said.

Plus, CDOT wouldn't want to take over just the Moffat County side of the road, and leave the Rio Blanco side in that county's hands.

Tom Walsh, a transportation commissioner for CDOT, said he recently drove on the road and noticed a big difference between the conditions in Moffat and Rio Blanco counties.

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"The Moffat County side is in very good condition," Walsh said, but the Rio Blanco side needs work.

Commissioners said they would be willing to make a trade with the state for C.R. 57.

Commissioners said they would give the state C.R. 57, which they say is in good condition, in exchange for Colorado Highway 394.

Colo. 394 needs extensive culvert work so the state would be getting a good deal, commissioners said.

But Fink said if any trade were to be made between the county and the state, the roads being traded would have to be close to equal in terms of mileage. Colo. 394 is shorter in Moffat County than C.R. 57.

Fink told the commissioners to try to work out an agreement with Rio Blanco County and bring a formal request to the state.

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In other news

â€ Commissioners discussed the tax value of the Craig Station power plant with County Assessor Suzanne Brinks. The county is protesting the state's valuation of one of the plant's owners, Phoenix-based Salt River Power. Brinks discussed the state of the county's protest. Commissioners tabled the decision on the topic until Brinks presents a few additional numbers.

â€ Commissioners discussed wild horses with members of the High Plains Mustang Club. Club members asked commissioners to make the mustang the official animal of Moffat County. Commissioners didn't make a formal decision, but said they aren't likely to name the horse the county's official animal.

â€ Commissioner Saed Tayyara did not attend Tuesday's meeting because he was at a Colorado River Water District meeting.

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