

RATON ~ NEW MEXICO NEWS

Lawmakers urged to act quickly on budget shortfall

By **BARRY MASSEY**
Associated Press Writer

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) – Lawmakers began considering cost-cutting proposals Wednesday for closing a projected \$450 million budget deficit this year and they are looking at taking almost \$56 million from a rainy day fund to offset a tax rebate approved last year.

Gov. Bill Richardson and staff of the Legislative Finance Committee outlined separate plans for cutting government and public education spending, chopping state and local capital improvement projects, tapping into cash balances and collecting more revenues without a general tax increase.

The governor and lawmakers are proposing to use \$56 million from a reserve fund to cover the cost of income tax rebates that went to lower- and middle-income New Mexicans. It will take a two-thirds vote by the Legislature to take money from the fund, which is known as the "tax stabilization reserve" and is part of the state's \$700 million in

cash balances.

The one-time rebates were approved during a special session last year that Richardson called when it appeared the state would receive a revenue windfall because of high prices for oil and natural gas. However, the state's finances have deteriorated as energy prices plummeted and the national economy soured.

The Legislature convenes next Tuesday and the chairman of the LFC said lawmakers need to act quickly – possibly next week – to approve a package of measures to balance this year's budget. The current 2009 fiscal year runs through June. Unlike the federal government, the state must balance its operating budget.

"I want to remind everybody that time is of the essence," Sen. John Arthur Smith, a Deming Democrat and committee chairman, said as the panel reviewed options for resolving the projected budget shortfall.

Once lawmakers and Richardson agree on legislation to eliminate the deficit, there's still more difficult budget work to

do, Smith said. The Legislature must approve a budget to finance general government and education in the next fiscal year, which starts July 1, and there's no new revenues to pay for growth in services and programs. That means agencies and programs can expect more spending cutbacks in next year's budget.

Lawmakers and the governor don't want to drain the state's reserves to deal with the budget problems because they say it's prudent to keep healthy cash balances in case of continued economic problems or unexpected financial emergencies in the future.

LFC staff outlined a plan that trims \$188 million in spending this year – about \$80 million more than Richardson has proposed. It would be largely left to agencies to determine how to implement any cuts in their budgets.

The LFC proposal includes a net reduction of 1 percent in Medicaid; 1 percent from public schools; reductions of 1.35 percent in the court system; and 2.5 percent cuts in other govern-

ment spending.

The LFC plan also calls for scrapping \$163 million in previously approved capital projects – about a \$100 million less than Richardson has recommended. There's no agreement yet on which projects should be eliminated, however.

Richardson and the Legislature are looking at proposals to generate more than \$100 million in revenues this year:

- Changing the schedule for corporations to pay their estimated income tax payments, which will provide \$65 million in one-time revenues. Richardson and lawmakers appear to agree on the proposal.

- Transferring cash balances of programs and agencies to the state's main budget account. The LFC and administration proposals call for differing amounts of fund transfers, but at least \$24 million.

- Selling unclaimed taxpayer property that is held by the state, such as stocks, could generate \$8 million, according to the Richardson administration.

- Improving collections of excise taxes on the sale of motor vehicles, which is estimated to raise \$6 million. To collect the money the state would crack down on people fraudulently understating the sales prices of trucks and cars.

Roll-off dumpsters will no longer be provided after Jan. 17

Special to the Chronicle

Starting Jan. 17, 2009, the City of Raton will no longer

be providing the solid waste roll-off containers for trash disposal on First Street or near the City Warehouse off

of Grant Ave. The last day to deposit any trash in a roll-off container is Friday, Jan. 16, 2009. After Friday, all trash will have to be placed legally in a city-owned dumpster or taken to the city landfill. City residents, with proof of residency will have all fees waived at the landfill upon delivery Monday through Saturday.

Once again, the City of Raton encourages its citizens to place all trash in the dumpsters. Any trash, including

yard debris, tree trimmings, old appliances, old furniture, and miscellaneous items that do not fit in the dumpsters should be hauled off to the city landfill. Contractors and residents of the ETZ area around are reminded to purchase vouchers at Raton Water Works for disposal at the Raton Landfill.

The City of Raton would like to thank its citizens for their cooperation in maintaining a clean and beautiful community.

RATON POLICE BLOTTER

Jan. 15, 2009

INCIDENT:

- K&J Storage was the victim of unauthorized graffiti.

CITATIONS:

- A juvenile was cited for

possession of marijuana.

- Adriane Lusan 0 No tags on dog.

- Salomon Marquez, 35 – Criminal damage to property.

NOTICE OF AIR QUALITY PERMIT APPLICATION

Canadian River Compressor Station announces its intent to apply to the New Mexico Environment Department for an air quality permit for modification of the compressor station for the addition of a natural gas fired engine. The expected date of application submittal to the Air Quality Bureau is December 11, 2008. This notice is a requirement according to New Mexico air quality regulations.

The Canadian River Compressor Station is located at a latitude of 36° 57' 20" N and longitude of 104° 52' 15" W. The approximate location of this site is 32 northeast of Raton, NM on the Vermejo Park Ranch in Colfax County, New Mexico.

The proposed modification consists of the addition of a second natural gas fired compressor engine which would be in addition to the other equipment already in place at this site.

This facility estimates its maximum quantities of regulated air contaminants following this project to be:

Pollutant:	Pounds per hour	Tons per year
1. Total Suspended Particulates	0.17 pph	0.76 tpy
2. Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	0.01 pph	0.04 tpy
3. Nitrogen Oxides (NO _x)	7.37 pph	32.28 tpy
4. Carbon Monoxide (CO)	9.47 pph	41.48 tpy
5. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	1.65 pph	7.12 tpy
6. Total sum of all Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs)	0.90 pph	3.96 tpy

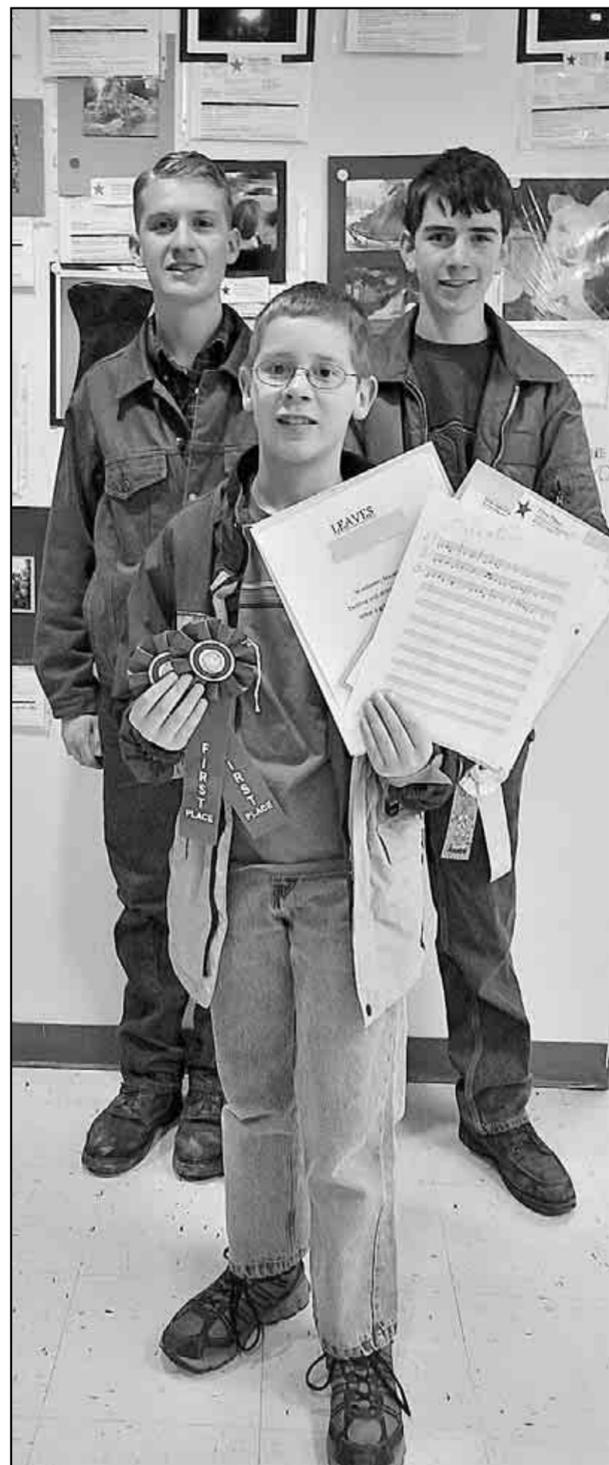
The standard operating schedule of the plant will be 24 hours per day, 7 days a week and a maximum of 52 weeks per year.

Owners and operators of the facility include El Paso E&P Company, L.P.

If you have any comments about the construction or operation of the above facility, and want your comments to be made as a part of the permit review process, you must submit your comments in writing to the address below:

Program Manager, New Source Review
New Mexico Environment Department
Air Quality Bureau
1301 Siler Road, Building B
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507-3113
(505) 476-4300

- Other comments and questions may be submitted verbally.
- Please refer to the company name and site name, as used in this notice or send a copy of this notice along with your comments, since the Department may not have received the permit application at the time of this notice.
- Once the Department has performed a preliminary review of the application and its air quality impacts, another notice will be published in the legal section of the newspaper.



Gavin Wilson, left, Forrest McConnell, and Riley Wilson at the PTA Reflections art awards Tuesday night. The Wilson's won senior photography awards; McConnell holds his first place poem and musical composition, "Pulsation." (Photo by Tim Keller)

Raton PTA Art winners advance to state competition

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McCarty and Megan Holland.

Photography was a popular category with many entries. First place awards went to William Holland for intermediate division, Callie Wilson for middle division, and Megan Holland in senior division. The visual arts category was also popular, with most entries being in pastel or pencil drawing. Lindsey Emiro took the primary division, Halle Medina the intermediate, and Mikayla Vertovec the middle division.

Royal Quint was on hand to give awards provided by First

National Bank of New Mexico. All entrants received ribbons and water bottles. Each first place award earned a packet of ten newly-minted \$1 bills in sequential order. Mikayla Vertovec's Best of Show prize was a set of colonial coins.

The national Reflections youth art awards program was created in 1969 by Mary Lou Anderson, then president of the Colorado PTA. The Raton PTA began its annual participation more than fifteen years ago, supported almost from the beginning by First National Bank of New Mexico.

COLFAX COUNTY CALENDAR

Raton Optimist Basketball Registration

Raton Optimist Basketball Registration for K through eighth grade will go through Friday, Jan. 16. Registration forms can be picked up from your child's school. Deadline for registration forms will be Jan. 16, 2009 at 5 p.m. Please make the deadline because there will be no late registrations. Call Jonni Valdez-Silva at (575) 445-2761 or (575) 445-5881.

January Jan. 17

11:30 a.m. - Daughters of the American Revolution, Tierra de Mesetas Chapter, home of Lily Budd luncheon with meeting following at 1 p.m. Program at 2 p.m. on "Methods, Manners and Medals" learning about DAR. Reservations: Lily (575) 445-4297.

Jan. 28

New Mexico Highlands University Raton will be having GED examinations taking place on Jan. 28 and Jan. 29. Please come by 130 Park Ave. for registration. The last day of registration is Jan. 26. The GED examination is limited to the first 10 registrants. For more information, call (575) 445-0445.

Jan. 30.

Red River Ski Area is hosting a 50th Anniversary Gala from 7-11 p.m. There will be dinner at the Main Chalet, drinks, dancing, fireworks, night skiing and more surprises. RSVP by Jan. 20. For more information or to purchase tickets, call Jessica at (575) 754-2223 ext. 200 or Lauren at laurenhouse@redriverskiarea.com