By VICTORIA CALDERON • Leader & Times Last year, the Liberal Coalition for Families applied for a Safer Routes to School (SRTS) grant, which would be used to fund improvements to the safety of sidewalks and other infrastructures near schools to make it easier for children in grades K-8 to walk or bike to school.

Although the coalition's request for the grant was rejected, they were encouraged to apply again in 2013. This is exactly what the Coalition, along with the Liberal Police Department and the school district, plan to do. LPD chief of police Al Sill will discuss his letter to the city commission at its regularly scheduled meeting this evening to discuss the Safer Routes to School program and how it will help the community. In the letter, he described how the project would take effect. "The infrastructure related projects will focus on 1) sidewalk improvement, 2) traffic calming/speed reduction, and 3) pedestrian and bicycle improvement. The non-infrastructure related projects will provide students and families with information on pedestrian safety and healthy lifestyle choices," Sill noted.

There are two different phases of the SRTS program to receive grant money from: Phase I and Phase II.

Those awarded with Phase I funding receive $12,000 to be used to create an SRTS Plan. Phase II grants consist of $200,000 and are used to implement the planning from Phase I by improving infrastructure and engaging students in educational activities.

The Phase I grant will be what the LPD applies for this year, with Phase II following next year.

Certain criteria must be used when implementing the grant. Sill wrote, "The area must be within approximately two miles of a school. With this in mind the target area will be Pine Street and the three schools that it serves."

This year, the LPD will be submitting the application for the grant instead of the coalition due to changes in the guidelines. However, if they receive Phase I funding, the LPD and the other two collaborating agencies will also work with community members, the City of Liberal, Liberal Parks and Recreation Department and the Liberal Safety Council on the SRTS plan.

Applications for the grant will be due June 7, and those receiving the grant will be notified in September or October of this year.

Other agenda items, such as rehabilitation of airport taxiways A and C and the six-points bid award, will be discussed at tonight's city commission meeting.

The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers, located at 625 N. Washington.