

By VICTORIA CALDERON

• Leader & Times

Last night's brief city commission meeting began with a kind farewell from the commission to Joe Sealey.

Mayor Dave Harrison presented Sealey with a plaque to commemorate all his hard work and dedication to the city of Liberal.

"Joe is much more to this organization than a list of projects," Harrison said before presenting the plaque. "He's a boss, he's a leader, he's a friend. Joe is respected by many, and his opinions are valued."

After each of the commissioners shared memories and their thanks for Sealey, the meeting moved on. The next item on the agenda was the rezoning of platted land.

Ordinance No. 4412 was created to change several blocks and lots in Liberal near Cortez Street from "R-2" (two-family dwelling lots) to "R-3" (multiple family dwelling lots).



The ordinance is hoped to help relieve the rental property issue in Liberal.

The ordinance was voted on to bring back for a second reading. The motion passed 5-0.

The next item on the agenda was the robotics grant. The robotics program is based on a cooperative union between the Mid-America Air Museum and USD No. 480. MAAM Director James Bert spoke to the commission at last night's meeting about how the \$5,860 grant would benefit the program.

Bert said that the grant would be used in a myriad of ways: acquiring new robotics kits, expanding the number of robotics teams from 14 to 16 and improving the quality of the 4-8 grade program. They also plan on expanding the age range to kindergarten all the way through grade 12.

The program is "growing leaps and bounds," Bert said. "I'm very proud of it."

Although the robotics program helps area children, it can potentially be tremendously beneficial to the community.

"Not only is it benefitting Liberal's children, but for the summer camp, this summer, we had parents driving every day from Guymon, Ulysses and Meade... these folks come in here and buy our gas and shop in our stores," Bert said of the impact on the community at large.

The robotics program has three main grade levels: K-3, 4-8, and 9-12. There are many opportunities to travel in this program for all ages. For example, a team in the 4-8 grade level from Liberal travelled to an international competition in St. Louis this year, and many more opportunities exist.

“Anything we can do to further the growth of this program, I think would benefit the city and the museum tremendously,” Commissioner Joe Denoyer said, “Science is taking us to another level. It’s good for our country.”

Approval of the grant was passed 5-0.