

I am Duane Mitchell Richland County Commissioner

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. Thank you

At the meeting on March 12th Senator Hoven asked, just what help if any has the Richland County Commissioners provided too the city of Sidney? Jessica Redfield, Sidney's city clerk, stated infrastructure funded didn't help the spending part of their budget.

As you all are aware it is not legal according to state law for a county to give money to a city budget, we can only help fund projects. As commissioner we offered to loan the city of Sidney money at a very low interest rate, so they could build their new sewer lagoon without having to go through all the loops and hoops, extra money and time to apply for grants or loans from the state.

With the help of our Clerk and Recorder the commissioners were able to pull a few numbers together. However, before we get into the numbers please realize these are not all the numbers just major figures.

I would like to address some of the extra revenue that Sidney is currently receiving because the county commissioners thought funding these projects was a wise investment. Here are a few examples;

The county paid \$1,699,384.00 for the Dry Red Water expansion Sidney South Pipeline. To date Sidney has collected from DRW \$349,209.00. The city will continue to earn income from this venture from the customers that were able to build south of Sidney.

In the past five (5) years the Justice Court has collected \$2,393,000.00 in fines and forfeitures, of which Sidney has received \$1,087,647.00. During this same period the city of Sidney has paid to the county \$180,00.00 for attorney wages, while the county has paid over \$2,320,000.00. Nice money maker don't you think?

The new \$7.9 million fire hall replaced the old fire hall that is now being utilized by the city for much needed shop space. But here is the thing, while the old fire hall was in use there wasn't a water bill paid to the city. The new fire hall that the county built is required to pay \$15,600 annual for city water. Sounds like there is some extra income.

I know this sounds nitpicky, but it is frustrating when you think you are helping and hear things like this.

A few projects funded with oil and gas monies from Richland County invested directly into the city of Sidney.

Parks and recreation	\$ 850,000
Street maintenance	\$1,275,000
Water and sewer expansion	\$10,569,739
Law enforcement vehicles and salaries	\$169,610
Ambulance purchased	\$750,000
Old Sidney Landfill (owned by Sidney)	\$1,750,000
	Total \$15,364,349

Projects that have been paid for that benefit all Richland county with Sidney receiving direct benefit are:

Law enforcement housing	\$2,759,748
Justice Center	\$19,000,000
Community Service Building	\$5,000,000
Airport improvements	\$2,827,000
MSU Extension Research Center	\$1,000,000
Richland County Fair renovation	\$6,380,000
Fire Hall	\$7,900,000
Richland Transportation (Sidney riders 99%)	\$606,171
	Total \$45,502,859

Here are some more investments that have been funded with the oil and gas revenue in Richland County;

Lambert streets and sidewalks upgrade	\$1,300,000
Savage streets and sidewalks upgrade	\$1,300,000
Savage M-2 sewer system	\$ 650,000
Fairview Fire hall/Senior Citizens center	\$2,200,000
Fairview land purchase and shop upgrade	\$216,047
Grand total	\$66,533,255

There are several other things we could discuss but I am sure you all can see the Richland County Commissioners are not hoarding our meager share of the oil and gas revenue. If the formula is change that reduces our share instead of increasing it, like it should be, Sidney will not benefit as well as they have. As county commissioners we can only share what we have.