

# Council Awards Project Bid

## 2nd Phase of Downtown Revitalization Work to Begin Soon

By Dustin Wright  
Sentinel Managing Editor

Work associated with the second phase of a beautification project in the downtown district of Seminole could begin in the not-too-distant future, following the approval of a scope of work bid by members of the Seminole City Council on Monday evening.

In a unanimous 6-0 vote, Council members approved of a \$298,593 bid from RGCCM, LLC of El Paso for the downtown revitalization project, which will address the address the renovation of sidewalks on the east side of the Gaines County Courthouse square.

Absent from Monday's vote was Dist. 2, Place 2 Councilman Kyle Sodd.

Tommy Phillips, Seminole City Administrator, said RGCCM came highly recommended from Midland-based hotel developer MTP Hospitality Solutions, who uses the company to complete concrete work for their developments, including the Wingate by Wyndham hotel project

being constructed in the Seminole community.

"They do excellent work and they don't mess around," said Phillips. "They get in there and get after it."

City of Seminole officials are looking to continue their project, which was started in the 2011 calendar year with the replacement of sidewalks and installation of floral planters and period lighting in the northern and western portions of the Gaines County Courthouse Square.

This year's project, according to City of Seminole officials, will also include a dividing median in the 100 block of S.E. 2nd St., and a similar dividing median between 100 block of S. Main St. and the west parking area of the Gaines County Courthouse.

Monday's approved bid also includes a \$107,122 bid to perform the replacement of sidewalk system and installation of flower planter boxes and period lighting to a parking median/sidewalk located on the western grounds of the Gaines

County Courthouse, where the County's current Veterans Memorial is located.

"That portion of the bid was included because we had received a verbal commitment some time back from the County that they would be interested in participating in this project," said Phillips to Council members prior to Monday's vote.

Gaines County Judge Lance Celandor, in a Tuesday morning interview with the *Sentinel*, said Gaines County Commissioners -- in previous discussions during a past Commissioners Court -- had consensually agreed to participate in the project, but didn't recall whether or not the Court took formal action for the project.

"I am going to have to go back and research to see if we actually did or not," said Celandor. "If we didn't, we will address it in our next regular meeting (in March)."

In a break down of Monday's approved bid, \$112,040 of the project is devoted to concrete and construction work for the sidewalks

along 100 block of S.E. Ave. B, in front of CashSavers and C&L Real Estate.

Separate from the bid, Seminole City officials will also purchase \$29,700 in period lighting for the project, which Phillips said could be done at a cheaper cost through this route rather than through the bid process.

"We will be dealing directly with the company who makes these light poles, since they did the work for us on the last project we did," said

Phillips. "They know what we want and I feel we can get a better deal by negotiating with them directly."

In the 2011 calendar year, the City of Seminole saw the completion of the first phase of the revitalization project, which has boasted a total estimated cost of \$1.06 million.

The multi-year project is anticipated to see improvements to the City's sidewalk system around the Gaines County Courthouse square, as well as on the east and west sides of the 200 block of S. Main St., and the

100 block of N. Main St.

The first two half-blocks renovated by the City -- the 100 block of S. Main St. and 100 block of E. Ave. A -- was completed in the fall of 2011 at a price of \$316,910.

The City of Seminole, in 2011, received a \$150,000 grant from the Texas Dept. of Agriculture's Texas Capital Fund for the project, which paid for roughly one of the half-block portions of the project.

# Seminole EDC to Negotiate Terms with Potential Exec. Director Candidate

By Dustin Wright  
Sentinel Managing Editor

It has been over nine months since the Seminole Economic Development Corp. had an executive director at its helm.

On Monday evening, following a lengthy executive session discussion, the corporation could soon be filling that vacancy.

SEDC Board president Michel Powers, following Monday's session, appointed herself, board vice president Chet Clark and board member Kevin Petty to serve as a negotiation committee to negotiate potential terms with Michael R. Tolleson of Austin, who interviewed with board members Monday as a possible candidate for the executive director's position.

Tolleson formerly worked for the Lower Colorado River Authority in Austin as a Senior Economic Development Specialist, before the abolishment of the LCRA Economic Development office at the start of the calendar year, according to Seminole City Administrator Tommy Phillips on Monday evening.

Phillips, in the wake of the May 2012 resignation of former SEDC Executive Director Donna Johnson, has been serving as the local development corporation's interim executive director.

"I anticipate the negotiation's process to begin immediately," said Phillips following Monday's meeting of the SEDC. "But, I am not sure how soon a decision will be made. It could be immediate or it could take a while."

Tolleson, who had been employed with the LCRA since 1992, has also previous work experience with the Texas Dept. of Commerce, Odessa Chamber of Commerce and Texas Governor's Office, according to a copy of a resume obtained by the *Sentinel* from City of Seminole officials on Monday.

He is a 1976 graduate of the University of Texas in Austin, and received a Masters degree in Public Affairs in 1978, also from UT.

Johnson had served as the SEDC's Executive Director since 2006, as she replaced former executive director Monty Montgomery, who served in the position from 2003 to 2005.

The SEDC, which was founded in 2002, works under a 4B corporation status as defined by the Development Corporation Act of 1979.

Under the Act, cities across the state of Texas were allowed to establish a corporation to administer the sales and use tax funds, and city voters must approve this special, dedicated tax at an election held for that purpose.

The SEDC operates on funding provided by a 1/2 percent of all sales tax allocations received by the City of Seminole from the Texas Comptroller's Office.

According to the Texas Comptroller's Office, 4B corporations may use funding for the recruitment and/or development of manufacturing and industrial facilities; research and development facilities; recycling facilities; distribution centers; small warehouse facilities and distribution centers; military facilities; primary job training facilities; corporate headquarter facilities; job training classes; career centers; telephone call centers; business infrastructure; airport facilities; and operation of commuter rail, light rail or commuter buses.

In addition, 4B corporations may also fund retail business incentives (if city population is less than 20,000); sports and athletic facilities; entertainment, tourist and convention facilities; public parks and related open space improvements; affordable housing; and water supply and conservation programs (with special voter approval).

## Local News Briefs

### USDA Discrimination Complaints for Minorities Due March 25th

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has recently reminded Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades that there are 45 days remaining in the filing period closing March 25.

"Hispanic and women farmers who believe they have faced discriminatory practices in the past from the USDA have 45 days left to file a claim in order to have a chance to receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness," said Secretary Vilsack. "USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and mail their claim packages on or before March 25, 2013."

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate

in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants may register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) or may download the forms from the website.

All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website at any time or call center telephone number Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time. Website: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

Phone: 1-888-508-4429  
Claims Period: September 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, USDA has instituted a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Department as a model service

provider and to ensure that every farmer and rancher is treated equally and fairly as part of "a new era of civil rights" at USDA.

In February 2010, the Secretary announced the Pigford II settlement with African American farmers, and in October 2010, he announced the Keepseagle settlement with Native American farmers.

Both of those settlements have since received court approval.

Unlike the cases brought by African American and Native American farmers, the cases filed by Hispanic and women farmers over a decade ago were not certified as class actions.

The claims process provides a voluntary alternative to continuing litigation for Hispanic and female farmers and ranchers who want to use it.

### First Aid Class Slated March 16 at EMS Station

A "Heart Saver and Pediatric" first aid class has been slated to be held March 16 at the Seminole EMS Station, according to local emergency technician officials.

The class is \$35 per student and "is a great class for teens who are interested in babysitting."

The Seminole EMS station is located in the 200 block of N.W. 8th St., just south of Memorial Hospital.

For more information about the class, call the Seminole EMS at their non-emergency number, (432) 758-8816.

## MINUTES OF COUNTY TREASURER'S REPORT

We the undersigned County Judge and Commissioners in and for Gaines County, Texas, hereby certify that we have this date made an examination of and compared the County Treasurer's Quarterly Report, filed with us on this the 25th day of February, 2013, and that the total of all funds held by the County Treasurer, as well as other assets in his hands, is the sum of \$31,320,481.28.

WITNESS OUR HANDS, officially, this 25th day of February, 2013.

Lance T. Celandor Danny Yocom Craig Belt Blair Tharp Biz Houston  
County Judge Comm., Pct.1 Comm., Pct.2 Comm., Pct. 3 Comm., Pct. 4  
Rick Dollahan - County Auditor

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, County Judge and Commissioners of said Gaines County, each and respectively, on this 25th day of February, 2013.

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, on this day appeared Michael Lord, Jr., Gaines County Treasurer, personally saying that the within and foregoing report is true and correct.  
Michael Lord, Jr., Gaines County Treasurer

FILED FOR RECORD THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013 AND RECORDED THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013.

Vicki Phillips, Gaines County Clerk

### FUND BALANCES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2012

General Fund.....	\$13,775,756.08
Road & Bridge.....	75,348.30
Farm to Market/Lateral Road.....	4,489,350.00
Road & Bridge Precinct #1.....	2,606,791.55
Road & Bridge Precinct #2.....	2,012,554.24
Road & Bridge Precinct #3.....	1,946,753.66
Road & Bridge Precinct #4.....	3,100,907.97
Indigent Health Care.....	29,767.23
State Fee Fund.....	6,863.24
Law Library.....	18,938.06
Sheriff Forfeiture Fund.....	7,017.79
CVC-Crime Victims Fund.....	0.00
Aiport Fund Gaines County.....	113,376.76
Memorial Cemetery Fund.....	103,608.48
RPF County Clerk.....	92,955.64
Courthouse Security Fund.....	11,633.37
Records Management Fund.....	47,488.44
911 Addressing Fund.....	10,469.21
Court Reporter Ser. Fund (SB770).....	21,450.52
County & District Court Technology Fund.....	3,932.70
Judicial Supplement Fund.....	20,601.18
District Clerk Record Preservation Fund.....	4,205.00
Higginbotham Community Center Fund.....	5,005.21
Golf Course Sprinkler Fund.....	1,421.78
Indigent Defense Grant.....	120.00
Golf Course Fund.....	349,718.62
(RAF) Record Archive-Co. Clerk.....	91,724.88
RMF-Dist. Clerk/Record Mgmt. Fund.....	8,203.56
Wal-Mart Grant Fund.....	489.20
Unclaimed Property Fund.....	750.39
Lions Club Grant Fund.....	131.95
JCT-Justice Court Technology Fund.....	62,226.18
JCBS-Justice Court Building Security Fund.....	15,847.52
Jury Service Fund.....	12,822.98
Appellate Judicial Fund.....	290.00
County Child Abuse Prevention Fund.....	24.00
Family Protection Fund.....	7,152.00
Election Fund.....	22,765.80
Fire Truck Fund.....	220,001.78
Sheriff Commissary Fund.....	4,371.44
Capital Projects Fund.....	2,017,644.57
<b>Total All Fund.....</b>	<b>31,320,481.28</b>

WITNESS OUR HANDS, OFFICIALLY THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013

Lance T. Celandor Danny Yocom Craig Belt Blair Tharp  
Gaines County Judge Comm. Pct. 1 Comm. Pct. 2 Comm. Pct. 3  
Biz Houston Vicki Phillips Michael Lord, Jr.  
Comm. Pct. 4 County Clerk County Treasurer

SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME BY LANCE T. CELANDOR-GAINES COUNTY JUDGE AND COMMISSIONERS, DANNY YOCOM, CRAIG BELT, BLAIR THARP AND BIZ HOUSTON, COMMISSIONERS OF SAID GAINES COUNTY, TEXAS, EACH AND RESPECTFULLY, ON THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013.

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, on this day personally appeared Michael Lord, Jr., Gaines County Treasurer, saying that the within and foregoing report is true and correct.  
Michael Lord, Jr., Gaines County Treasurer

FILED FOR RECORD THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013 AND RECORDED THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013.

Vicki Phillips, Gaines County Clerk