

WHITMAN COUNTY GAZETTE

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Small Business Survival: Colfax Downtown Association lands grant

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By Jana Mathia
Gazette Reporter

Colfax Downtown Association Dec. 15 received an \$8,700 grant from the Inland Northwest Community Foundation to bring Becky McCray to Colfax in 2018.

“We’re excited to get the grant,” said Val Gregory, Colfax unified director. “How to save these small towns is what she does.”

McCray is the author of *Small Town Rules* and founder of the website *Small Biz Survival*. She lives in Hopeton, Okla., and has a cattle farm and runs a small town liquor store in Alva, Okla. She has experience in small town and rural county administration.

Gregory became aware of McCray when she came to Pullman previously for a seminar and spoke about small town revival.

“We really wanted her to come and work with us directly,” Gregory said.

She expects McCray’s visit will be during the summer. McCray will work with the Colfax Downtown Association to show what it can do now with little money backing and also develop a long-term plan to boost the city.

Gregory noted if the city’s groups can get a long-term plan, it will put them in a place for continuity regardless of if there are changes in organization or staffing.

Gregory plans to have a reception when McCray arrives so the community can meet her.

Colfax Downtown Association is also looking forward to getting more businesses on board for the Main Street tax credit incentive program. Last year, the program, which provides a Business and Occupation tax credit, brought \$21,000 to the association which goes to help downtown businesses.

The structure for receiving an allotment from the \$2.5 million tax credit by the 35 Main Street Towns involved has changed this year. Now, local businesses will have until April 1, 2018, to sign up. Once the donation request is approved, the business is eligible for a tax credit worth 75 percent of the contribution to the Colfax Downtown Association. Colfax is slated to receive up to \$90,000 from the program. After the April 1 deadline, any allotted money not claimed by the particular community goes into a pool to be up for grabs by any participant.

“We’re excited to have that time,” Gregory said. Previously, the funds were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. It opened on Jan. 1 and all credits were claimed by 6 a.m.