By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

A lower tax rate for residents is good news from the Perkins County Commissioners who approved their 2009-10 fiscal year budget last week.

The new tax rate for the proposed budget is 45.07 cents per $100 of valuation—down from the previous rate of 48.99 cents from the previous 2008-09 budget.

The total figure of the new budget is $7,010,055—which is a decrease of $521,000 from the 2008-09 figure.

Of last year's $7.5 million budget there was approximately $4.8 actually spent by the county.

Of the $4.8 actually spent last year, only approximately half of that amount was from tax dollars.

Perkins County Assessor Bonnie Appel, who prepared the budget which was adopted Sept. 8, said the same scenario will most likely be true this year.

The new budget carries a proposed property tax request of $2,474,220. The previous year's tax asking was $2,235,197.

"When working with the budget, the commissioners wanted to be able to lower the levy so that even though valuations on ag land and some residential and commercial property may have increased, the actual taxes due for 2009 would be at 2008 amounts," said Appel.

Appel said this was possible due to county budgets being maintained at 2008-09 levels and a substantial increase in valuation in the county.

She said $55 million of the total valuation increase of $93 million was due to the Rockies Express pipeline that was completed in Perkins County during January 2009.

The county's valuation increased from $456 million to $549 million. Appel said for the second fiscal year the county commissioners requested that all county offices maintain their budgets—except for salaries—which increased 4 percent.

Appel said the complete budget summary is available to the public Monday through Friday at the Perkins County Clerk's Office during regular business hours. Questions concerning the budget would be welcome.