

COMMISSIONERS CORNER

By Dick Scott

More complication with asbestos has delayed work on the Murdock Project. More asbestos has been found and the removal process has greatly increased the cost. The cost has gone up by about \$85,000.00 but it has also changed the budget to the extent the State Historical Fund will not allow the project to move forward until budget revisions have been made. The budget revisions are underway but the process will probably delay work on the project for at least six weeks. The budget revisions are all being made internally and Kiowa County has not been asked for more money at this time.

Some very pertinent information on this project was provided through NPS this week. Colorado Preservation Inc. is acting to prepare and administer grant proposals to the Colorado Historical Society for funds amounting to 75% of the renovation costs, currently estimated at \$2,500,000.00 to \$3,000,000.00. The county is responsible for identifying the remaining 25% or about \$650,000.00, which (they add) “at this point is a seemingly overwhelming hurdle for this small community”. (‘seemingly’ would be a mega-under statement).

The National Park Service is a major player in this project and they do have some funds they would be willing to expend to make the project viable. With some direction from Alexa Roberts, NPS the commissioners have asked Cory Gardner to submit a Bill that would authorize NPS to expend up to \$650,000.00 on this endeavor. NPS already has funds allocated but they need the authorization to spend them on this project. It seems like this may be the most workable solution to the Murdock Building funding problem.

Without question the NPS Sand Creek Massacre Visitors Center and the accompanying Sand Creek Massacre Research Center would certainly be of benefit to Kiowa County along with a much needed Senior Citizens Center. Our problem is that it is an extremely costly project and Kiowa County is simply not in a position to put more money into it at this time.