

County may soon acquire more community centers

By Cody Hooks

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The Taos County commissioners moved forward Tuesday (March 17) on a revived plan to add two community centers to the county's portfolio of property.

The Arroyo Hondo Community Center and the Talpa Community Center are both owned by the Taos Municipal School District, according to Taos County Grants Director Anita Padilla. A "multipurpose court" in Los Cordovas is also a part of the revived arrangement that would transfer ownership of the three properties from the schools to the county.

The transfer agreement was first crafted several years ago by the county commission and school board at the time, but the paperwork was never filed at the clerk's office. "It didn't happen the way it should have happened," Padilla said.

The transfer agreement will go before the Taos school board at its April 15 meeting. The plan would then need further approval from the New Mexico Public Education Department and the State Board of Finance.

Padilla said the community centers are "pretty much already in [the county's] inventory," as county workers do small maintenance projects at the sites on occasion. Arroyo Hondo operates as an independent community center, she said, meaning it isn't affiliated with the county.

Bringing those facilities into Taos County's portfolio should enable the county to provide more services as it already does in Llano Quemado and Penasco, Padilla said. Furthermore, the county could then act as the fiscal agent for the centers, allowing community associations to go after additional grants and public funding.

The commission also approved a contract for Wayne Rutherford General Contractor for \$43,000 to begin much-needed repairs at the Amalia Community Center, which is owned by the county and has become dilapidated from years of neglect, a vanishing contractor and stalled bonding efforts.