

City sees increase in sales tax revenue

By Jeanne Davant

At first glance, Manitou Springs' sales tax revenues for January look amazing.

According to the report Finance Director Mike Leslie gave City Council on Tuesday night, the city's collections on taxable sales increased nearly 16 percent over January 2009.

That picture is a little bit too rosy, Leslie said.

A boost of 688 percent over last year in the amusement/bars sector came from a vendor who "made a delayed contribution," he said. That skewed the figure.

Still, if you discount that bulge, sales tax receipts were up 3.66 percent for the month compared with the previous January.

Gift and other retail shops showed a healthy increase in January, topping the last year's receipts for the month by 8 percent. Sales taxes from other in-city businesses jumped 27.9 percent, and those on utilities rose 22.5 percent.

But the local economy showed weakness in other sectors. Taxable sales collections from lodging businesses such as motels and B&B's dropped by more than 55 percent. Revenues from food and gas stores were down 33.5 percent, and restaurant receipts sank 27.2 percent.

Leslie said his latest update of the actual 2009 city budget revealed an additional 3 percent in General Fund revenues above the budget's estimated totals. That amounted to about \$42,000.

Leslie expects to provide Council with a clearer picture of the 2009 budget—and the final amount that will be carried over into this year—at the next Council meeting.

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