

Meeting in regular session Thursday, January 6 at the Texas Tea Room in Quitman, the board members of the Wood County Industrial Commission (WCIC) voted to establish five working committees to advance economic development and tourism in Wood County. Board members also heard an upbeat report on the local economy including news of a prospective new Wood County business that manufactures orthopaedic devices.

The five committees established by the WCIC board includes working groups which will address 1) high tech communications infrastructure; 2) communications with current local businesses; 3) exposition/events center; 4) land use management/zoning, and 5) county information guide.

In his report, WCIC Executive Director Gary McKinley presented several positive elements to the current economic situation in Wood County. First, he advised board members that progress is being made in locating the manufacturer of orthopaedic devices in Wood County. Second, McKinley reported that a project to revitalize oil wells in the Quitman area could provide an economic impact of \$2-million to the local area. Third, tourism in the county in the fourth quarter of 2010 was above expectations and above the average growth in the past three years.

Reflecting that growth and the raising of the hotel motel tax rate from four percent to seven percent, the fourth quarter was up 82-percent.

The February meeting of the Wood County Industrial Commission will be held Thursday, February 3 at 7 p.m. with the City of Hawkins as host. The venue will be announced.