



APRIL 2008

Congratulations to All Newly Elected & Re-elected Officials!

Upcoming League Events

- Thursday, April 24, Membership Meeting, Hazelwood City Hall
Wednesday, April 30, Newly Elected Officials Seminar, Sheraton Westport
Friday, May 30, Installation Dinner, Norwood Hills
Thursday, June 12, Golf Tournament, Golf Club of Florissant. See our website to register.

April 24 Membership Meeting in Hazelwood

The next League meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 24 at the Hazelwood City Hall, 415 Elm Grove Lane. (Directions: from eastbound I-270, exit at northbound Lindbergh Blvd. Go to the first traffic light, which is Elm Grove and turn left. City Hall is behind the strip mall on the right. From I-170, exit at onto westbound I-270 and then onto northbound Lindbergh Blvd. Go through the traffic light at Dunn Rd. and up the ramp onto Lindbergh. Take the first left at the

light at Elm Grove as described above.)

The main item of business will be the election of officers and Board members. The report of the Nominating Committee will be distributed by email and regular mail prior to the meeting.

Program: Emergency Radio Communications

RCC Consultants recently presented the results of a study outlining problems with our current police/fire radio systems. Homeland security funding paid

for the study due the urgency to improve coordination. Some of the problems include:

- Inability of neighboring agencies to talk to each other;
- System interference, delays & repeat calls;
- Loss of signal when outside the city, for example when pursuing a criminal;
- Non-compliance with FCC rules; and
- Lack of repair parts.

A panel of local experts will outline potential solutions. (See article on Page 2)

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Newly Elected Officials Seminar - April 30

The League will hold its Annual Seminar for Newly Elected Officials at 4:30 pm on Wednesday, April 30 at the Sheraton Plaza Tower Hotel (not the chalet) at Westport Plaza in Maryland Heights. The cost is \$55, which includes materials and a buffet dinner.

We hope all of our new elected officials will

join us for an informative introduction to municipal government presented by municipal attorneys Kevin O'Keefe, Paul Martin and Stephanie Karr from the Curtis, Heinz, Garrett and O'Keefe law firm, along with Olivette City Manager Mike McDowell.

While the program is designed for new offi-

cial, experienced officials are welcome as well. The deadline for reservations and cancellations is Monday, April 28.

Invitations and registration materials have been sent to all newly elected League members and to all municipal clerks.

## March Meeting Synopsis

At the March meeting the membership heard two presentations. The first, by Tom Blair of MODOT, explained how the state will implement a variable speed limit on I-270 to help reduce traffic jams. In theory, when a jam develops, speed limits for vehicles approaching the jam will be reduced so cars do not reach the incident as quickly and speeds can be more consistent. Mr. Blair indicated that cities along I-270 can be notified when speed limits change so that police will be aware. Most of the cities served by I-270 are working to amend their ordinances to remove specific speed language.

The second presentation focused on how cities that are near light rail lines or bus trans-

fer centers can develop zoning overlay districts to help encourage transit oriented development (TOD). It was presented by Al Murray of Citizens for Modern Transit.

Mr. Murray noted that TOD features mixed use areas of residential and commercial development. It helps create communities that are more densely populated with walkable neighborhoods. TOD also reduces pollution and decreases transportation costs for residents.

He said that the City of Clayton is finalizing plans for a TOD overlay for the two Metrolink stops in the City and he encouraged League members to contact CMT or Clayton for more information about development issues.

Also at the meeting the League presented a proclamation to Maplewood Mayor Mark Langston in recognition of the City's 100th anniversary. We thank the officials and staff of Maplewood for their warm welcome as hosts of the meeting.



Maplewood Mayor Mark Langston (L) accepts a 100th anniversary proclamation from President T. R. Carr.

## County/Region Study Interoperable Communications

Here in St. Louis and in many metropolitan areas, emergency personnel cannot use radios to communicate with neighboring departments. Emergency personnel also lose radio contact when more than a few miles outside their city limits.

A few metro areas, such as Minneapolis, built local systems that allow interagency communi-

cations throughout the region or state. As a result, the response to the major bridge collapse there benefited from solid communications among all emergency responders. Federal Homeland Security officials have made such systems a priority.

A recent study here showed that we not only lack interagency capability, our antiquated system

drops and delays emergency calls. The study recommended a new regional system of towers while retaining local dispatching, but with state-of-the-art radios that would all be compatible throughout the region. Costs for all agencies in St. Louis County would approach \$60 million, according to the study.

## Mark Your Calendar for Installation Dinner and Golf Tournament

Two big events for League members are scheduled in May and June. On Friday, May 30, we will hold our Annual Installation of Officer Dinner at the Norwood Hills Country Club.

Several League associate members and supporters have made generous contributions for the dinner and due to their generosity we will have the Court-

house Steps provide the after dinner entertainment. The Steps are a troupe of singing lawyers who lampoon politics at all levels. When we had them several years ago they were very well received.

Reservation information will be sent to city clerks in late April

On Thursday, June 12, the City of Florissant will host the 4th Annual League Golf Tournament be-

ginning with lunch at noon at a shot gun start at 1:00 pm. Dinner is included. It is a fun afternoon and you might see some good golf shots, unless you compete with Tim and Steve. Registration information is available on the League website under the Current Events link.

We hope you will be able to join us at both of these events.

## Legislative Update

The House completed its work on the budget in late March and sent it to the Senate. Also passed by both chambers have been numerous Consent (non-controversial) bills. Many of the priorities for the leadership are likely to be taken up prior to adjournment on May 16.

If you do not currently receive the legislative update by email and would like to, please contact our office at [staff@stlmuni.org](mailto:staff@stlmuni.org).

Some of the bills we are tracking include:

**SB 711** (Gibbons) In reassessment years, increased values (as a group) require a rollback, even if the entity is below its rate cap. In the following year, after a public hearing and written rationale, the entity may set higher rates, if it is below the cap. Estimated tax bills must also be mailed with the new assessment in the spring. Entities must provide the estimated tax rate to the County or face a 20% penalty. SB 711 passed the Senate and was heard in the House Ways & Means Committee on April 3.

**SB 858** (Rupp) - Imposes mandated costs and penalties on cities while attempting to deal with the issue of illegal aliens. The bill passed the Senate and been sent to the House. Among other provisions:

1. Cities would lose state grants if a "sanctuary" policy is adopted.
2. Police must check the immigration status of anyone arrested and report the person to the feds if there is suspicion the person is illegal. If the person cannot prove lawful presence they would stay in jail - at the city's expense.
3. All employers must use the federal work authorization

program to verify status of all new hires.

4. Anyone applying for a "public benefit" such as a business license must provide proof that the applicant is not an illegal alien or the city must refuse the license.

**SB 970** (Scott) City officials would have to file personal financial disclosure statements if the city budget exceeds \$2million, rather than the current \$1 million. Passed Senate and House Elections Committee.

**SB 1007** (Loudon) - Reinstates overtime pay exemption and eliminate indexing of minimum wage as tied to the CPI. Perfection Calendar.

**SB 1116** (Days) - Authorizes \$20 million in stormwater bonds for metro areas. Passed Senate.

**SB 1201** (Griesheimer) - Requires TDD funds to be used only for transportation purposes and not on project amenities. Local Government Committee.

**SB 1206** (Goodman) - Requires public meetings to be posted 72 hours in advance, rather than 24. Heard in Local Government Committee March 26.

**SB 1276** (Griesheimer) - TIF bill would correct the unconstitutional definitions in the 2007 law and remove language for a local TIF commission. It is aimed at correcting defects, not policy issues. Assigned to Local Government Committee.

**SJR 42** (Griesheimer) Would allow the legislature to enact special laws for any political subdivision. The Constitution states that a law shall apply to all cities and counties of the same class, but some loopholes exist so special laws are passed. Some are struck down by the courts. This proposal would allow the legislature to pass spe-

cial laws, some of which could be beneficial, some detrimental. Local Government Committee.

**SJR 48 and SB 1217** (Stouffer) Would authorize a 1% sales tax for rebuilding I-70 and I-44. Transportation Committee.

**HB 1321** (Sutherland) - Increases circuit breaker income levels to help seniors with property taxes. On House Perfection Calendar.

**HB 1440** (Roorda) - Requires elected officials to complete a Sunshine Law training course. Passed Government Affairs Committee March 6.

**HB 1779** (Emery) - Focuses on deregulation of services provided by telephone companies and companies selling VOIP (internet phone calls). Passed the House and heard in the Senate Commerce Committee on April 3.

**HB 2079** (Stream) - Property tax rollback after reassessment, similar to SB 711. Heard in Ways & Means Committee on February 21.

**HB 2250** (Sutherland) - State and LOCAL sales tax exemption on purchases up to \$600 on June 27-29, 2008. Passed by Ways & Means Committee on March 13.

**HJR 43** (Portwood) - Constitutional amendment that is similar to SB 711 related to property tax rates after reassessment. Passed House April 1.

**HJR 70** (Icet) - Taxpayers bill of rights that limits state spending, particularly education and health care. Perfected by the House on April 8.

St. Louis County Municipal League  
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We hope to see you at our April 24 meeting  
in Hazelwood.

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## County Aquatic Code

For the last several months a committee of local park professionals, led by Des Peres Parks Director Susan Trautman, worked with the County Health Department to develop new guidelines for recreational water facilities. The goal was to create a code that would continue the safe usage of the pools and water parks while avoiding costly new regulations for facility owners. Details of the rules were presented in last month's newsletter.

The group met this challenge and the Health Department has asked the County Council to pass legislation to implement the changes. This should be completed before the beginning of the pool season. We appreciate the work of Ms. Trautman's group to help craft workable guidelines.

## MSD Stormwater Inlets

MSD has recently instituted a policy to require that when a roadway is rebuilt the stormwater inlets must have new sand filters installed to help reduce pollution in the stormwater. Several cities have road projects that were approved for federal funding and at the League's request, these projects have been grandfathered so that the costly new filters will not be required.

MSD has also indicated that cities should be required to clean these filters regularly although most lack the proper equipment to do so. Meetings will be held with MSD staff to discuss this issue to try to reach a workable solution on sewer filters. We appreciate MSD's efforts to study practical solutions on this issue.

## Stormwater

MSD has also begun billing stormwater charges based on a new impervious rate. The initial rate of \$0.12 per 100 square feet of impervious area will increase to \$0.29 per 100 square feet by 2014. At first, MSD will rollout the basic level of services required to properly maintain the existing stormwater system.

As the rate is fully implemented, MSD will offer a set of additional services not directly related to maintenance of the existing system. Municipalities will have a role in the development of these additional stormwater services. Please expect communications from MSD in the coming weeks. Municipal input will be important! If you have questions, contact Lance LeComb at (314) 768-6237.