



APRIL 2009

April 23 League Meeting in University City

Upcoming League Meetings

- Thursday, April 23, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, University City
Thursday, April 30, Newly Elected Officials Seminar, 4:30 pm Sheraton Westport
Friday, May 29, Installation Dinner, Marriott West
Thursday, June 11, Golf Tournament, Florissant

The next membership meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, April 23 at the City Hall in University City, 6801 Delmar Blvd. City Hall is located approximately 2.5 miles east of I-170 at the west end of the University City Loop.

Program: For the first time since 1966, the St. Louis Cardinals will be hosting the Major League Baseball All Star

Game on July 14. A number of fun events are planned for families during the weekend and the days leading up to the game.

Ron Watermon, All Star Game Coordinator for the Cardinals, will attend the meeting to discuss what types of events will be held and how the community can participate in the festivities.

The main order of business will be the election of officers and Board members for the 2009-2010 year. The report of the Nominating Committee will be mailed or emailed prior to the meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Innovation Awards Applications Due April 24

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As announced in the March Newsletter, applications are being accepted for the 1st Annual St. Louis County Municipal League Innovation Awards. The purpose of the Awards program is to highlight municipal projects that solve city problems creatively.

Projects will be judged by a panel appointed by the League Board.

The Application has been sent to all member municipalities and is available on the League's website, www.stlmuni.org under the Current Events link.

Please return applications to the League office by Friday, April 24, 2009 by email, fax (314-726-1520) or mail.

Winners will be recognized at the Annual Installation Dinner.

Mark Your Calendar

The League's Annual Installation of Officers Dinner will be held on Friday, May 29 at the Marriott West in Town & Country. Registration materials will be sent to

municipal clerks in late April.

On Thursday, June 11 the City of Florissant will again host our Annual Golf Tournament. The registration information

for this event is on the League website www.stlmuni.org under the Current Events link. Sign up your group today!

## February Meeting Synopsis

At the March meeting the membership heard a presentation on statewide transportation planning from Susan Stauder, representing the Missouri Transportation Alliance.

Ms. Stauder, who is a Vice President at the St. Louis RCGA, is a director of the Alliance from MoDOT District 6, the St. Louis area. The Alliance also includes transit representatives, the Auto Association and the Missouri Farm Bureau.

Ms. Stauder indicated that Missouri is facing a transporta-

tion funding shortage and the Alliance is promoting a statewide dialogue on how best to define and meet our future needs. Alliance members believe that any future transportation funding proposal will require a grass roots effort to secure passage, rather than a plan that is handed down from government leaders.

She said that the federal stimulus funds received by Missouri have delayed a funding crisis by one or two years. After the stimulus funds have been allocated, state dollars will be tight and few

major transportation initiatives will be undertaken.

Ms. Stauder urged League members to take an active role in the issue of transportation planning to ensure that the needs of the urban area are presented, including both roads and transit.

We would like to thank Mayor Norm McCourt and the officials and employees of the City of Black Jack for hosting the meeting.

## Newly Elected Officials Seminar Set for April 30

The League will hold its Annual Seminar for Newly Elected Officials at 4:30 pm on Thursday, April 30 at the Sheraton Plaza Tower Hotel (not the chalet) at Westport Plaza in Maryland Heights. The cost is \$60, 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 from the Curtis, Heinz, Garrett and O'Keefe law firm.

While the program is designed for new officials, experienced officials are welcome as well. The

deadline for reservations and cancellations is Monday, April 27.

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

## Navigating the Fiscal Crisis: Tested Strategies for Local Leaders

Recently the International City Management Association commissioned a white paper by the Academic Network of the National Alliance. The focus was to determine how local governments have responded to past economic downturns and offer guidance on how to survive and become stronger during times of fiscal stress.

The paper points out that local officials will be looked to by the general public for leadership and vision which will be key to sustaining local governments through this crisis.

The report highlights the fiscal dimensions of the economic crisis and notes what worked in

previous cutback efforts. Initial thoughts might be to introduce across-the-board cuts, but research shows that other approaches may be more effective in sustaining local government when faced with a serious and prolonged downturn. Suggested actions are listed.

The report also promotes innovative and creative solutions to address the economic downturn. If resources are not sufficient, cutbacks will be needed. For this reason, local governments must have the flexibility to suspend practices that are no longer adequate. The white paper also proposes actions local leaders might take to promote constructive

change.

A long term perspective, rather than a short term reactive stance, will be essential to effective crisis management. By inviting citizens to discuss the core mission, purpose and highest priorities of the city, elected officials will create a partnership with citizens.

The report also notes that local governments are important economic agents which buy goods and services. Several strategies are proposed that can help mitigate fiscal stress or mildly stimulate the local economy.

To see the full report, please go to [www.transformgov.org](http://www.transformgov.org).

## 2009 Bills of Municipal Interest

Most of the main bills that will be priorities for the legislature have had hearings and are being debated on the floor. Some of the bills we have listed in previous months have not had hearings and have been dropped from the update. Other bills have been amended to include municipal issues so we have added a description of the most recent version.

If any of our municipal officials would like to receive this email update, along with meeting notices and newsletters, please contact our office at 314-726-4747 or by email at [staff@stlmuni.org](mailto:staff@stlmuni.org).

Bills we are tracking this year include:

**SS SB 7 (Griesheimer)** – Is a Senate Substitute that has become an omnibus local government bill. It contains clarifying language for collection of the sales tax for interoperable communications, which the League supports. However, it also contains authority for fire districts sales taxes of up to one percent, which would seem to increase the salaries already at the top without helping lower paid municipal police or firefighters. The bill is pending in the Senate.

**SB 58 (Stouffer)** - Amended to require positive ID of drivers running red light cameras. Passed the House and assigned to Senate Transportation Committee.

**SB 66 (Scott)** - Requires financial interest statements from officials in jurisdictions with a budget over \$2 million. The current budget amount is \$1 million. Awaiting final passage in the House. (Support)

**SB 174 (Griesheimer)** – Property tax rates. Corrects errors in SB 711 from 2008. Pending in the Senate. (Support)

**SB 489 (Dempsey)** - Authorizes a 2.5% hotel tax for 4th class cities. Pending in Senate. (Support)

**SJR 4 (Cunningham)** – Reassessment would only occur upon property sale and the growth in assessment would be limited to the amount of the CPI. Pending in Senate. (Oppose)

### HOUSE BILLS:

**HB 87 (Wallace) & HB 112 (Munzlinger)** - Exempts school buses from state gas taxes, reducing money to cities. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 241 (Yates)** – Imposes numerous regulations on the use of red light cameras and designates fines to schools. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 316 (Jones, 89)** - Would require public comment periods at all public meetings and five business days notice - instead of the current 24 hours - for governmental bodies to meet on issues such as tax increases, TIF projects, zoning and eminent domain. Governments would be barred from taking a vote on such issues for 30 days if they don't give enough notice. It increases fine to \$8000 for purposeful violations. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 334 (Burnett)** – Increases municipal court fines to \$1000. Pending in House. (Support)

**HB 353 (Dusenber)** – Exempts seniors from property taxes beginning in 2010. State could (but unlikely to) replace lost revenue. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 382 (Cox)** - Requires licensing of mortgage bankers to help reduce foreclosures. Passed House and assigned to Senate Financial & Governmental Organization Committee. (Support)

**HB 472 (Low)** – Allows loans to cities, businesses and citizens for green initiatives and renewable energy. Pending in House. (Support)

**HB 591 (Sutherland)** – Citizens could petition for a vote to lower property tax ceiling. Must be approved by 60 percent of voters. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 664 (Smith 150)** – Phases out personal property taxes on vehicles. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 707 (Wilson)** - Amended to authorize a one cent sales tax for St. Louis County fire districts. Pending in House. (Oppose)

**HB 789 (Corcoran)** – Allows surplus sewer lateral funds to be allocated to other budget categories. Pending in House

**HB 952 (Sutherland)** - State sales tax holiday for month of July. Cities could opt in. Pending in House.

**HB 958 (Smith)** - Amended to authorize a one cent sales tax for St. Louis County fire districts. Pending in House (Oppose)

**HJR 16 (Kingery)** – Constitutional amendment to extend legislative term limits from 8 to 16 years. Pending in House. (Support)

**HJR 23 (Icet)** – Taxpayers bill of rights which would limit state spending to very low levels. Passed House and assigned to Senate Ways & Means Committee. (Oppose)

St. Louis County Municipal League  
121 S. Meramec Ave.  
Clayton, MO 63105

Please join us at the next membership meeting on April 23 in University City.

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[www.stlmuni.org](http://www.stlmuni.org)*

## Hazardous Waste Collection Events

The St. Louis County Department of Health will be holding three household hazardous waste collections in late spring. Each collection runs from 8 am to 3 pm. There is no charge. The dates and locations are:

- Saturday, May 9 - 800 Maryville Center Dr. at Highway 40;
- Saturday, May 16 - St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, 1-270 at W. Florissant Ave.;
- Saturday, June 6 - South County Mall

Items that will be collected include leftover household chemicals such as paints, stains, auto fluids, fuels, lawn and garden products, fluorescent lamps, and rechargeable batteries.

In late April see the website [www.recyclesaintlouis.com](http://www.recyclesaintlouis.com) for more information.

## MSD Surveys Residents and Cities on Stormwater Concerns

The Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District has recently completed a survey of nearly 2500 customers from throughout St. Louis City and County. The goal was to determine the perceived severity of stormwater related problems and to solicit input on the public's top priorities for stormwater related investment. Residents reported that standing water in yards (44%) was their top concern, followed by flooding on major streets (43%), soil erosion in yards (39%), basement flooding (33%), and flooding of neighborhood streets (27%). MSD Executive Director Jeff Theerman recently met with the League Board to discuss these findings and plans for the use of funds from the new impervious surface charge that generates about \$20 million annually. Mr. Theerman noted that this amount is not significant when compared to the total amount of stormwater needs in the District.

He also indicated that the next step in MSD's efforts to assess the severity of stormwater related problems will be to send a survey to each mayor or board chairmen in the County for feedback. We urge each municipality to ensure that staff responds promptly to help MSD plan for our future stormwater needs.