



AUGUST 2009

Upcoming League Meetings

Thursday, September 24 - Membership Meeting, 7:30 PM, Florissant Nature Lodge in Sunset Park

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Setting Property Tax Rates After HB 148 Veto

SB 711, enacted in 2008 contained conflicting provisions about when local governments in charter counties should set property tax rates. One part of the bill set the date as September 1 while another listed October 1.

Governor Jay Nixon vetoed HB 148 this year so the old conflicting language still applies.

For this reason, the League requested a legal

opinion from Stephanie Karr at the Curtis, Heinz, Garrett and O'Keefe law firm. Ms. Karr recommends that cities set tax rates by September 1 to avoid any confusion. If rates are not set on time, by law cities might have to accept a rate of zero.

Ms. Karr notes that the County Board of Equalization and State Tax Commission will be working into September,

on appeals so adjustments may be made in 2010. If appeals result in lower tax collections, state law allows cities to recoup lost revenue from 2009 when setting tax rates in 2010.

A copy of the legal opinion has been sent to every member municipality. It is also on the League website, www.stlmuni.org, under the Current Events link.

Proposition E-911 on November Ballot

To better protect citizens, the County Council placed on the November ballot a 1/10 cent sales tax proposal to fund an interoperable emergency communications system. This would help public safety providers meet a federal deadline of December 2012 for narrowbanding radio systems and also allow for full interoperability among all police and fire services.

Without this, each jurisdiction will be required to fund its own narrow band system, but the inability to communicate with surrounding police and fire departments will still cause delays and

further endanger lives.

To add to the urgency, regional leaders have reserved powerful frequencies in the 800 spectrum, but if we fail to build a new system, other areas of the U.S. that are complying could take the frequencies from us.

The tax would also allow us to improve emergency sirens and pinpoint 911 calls from cell phones, which are now 2/3 of all calls.

Mayor Gerry Welch of Webster Groves is heading the education effort and several local elected and appointed officials have volun-

teered to assist. This group will not be advocating for the tax, but will be providing factual information about the systems.

Former Town & Country Mayor and County Councilman Skip Mange is chairing a group that is promoting passage of the tax. Local business associations are being courted to help fund this important effort.

Contact the League office if you would like to help with the effort.

St. Louis City, Jefferson and St. Charles Counties have passed the ballot measure.

## Park Commission Grant Applications Available in Late August

The Municipal Park Grant Commission will soon begin the application process to allocate \$3 million in funds.

Pre-application meeting sites and times will be sent to all municipalities. Applications

will be posted on the website [www.muniparkgrants.org](http://www.muniparkgrants.org) and are due at the League office by Friday, October 30.

Please call the League office at 314-726-4747 with questions.

In related news, mayors in the

2nd County Council district recently met and appointed Maureen Jaggard of St. Ann to the Commission. She replaces Tom Jackson of Hazelwood who did not seek re-appointment.

## Kirkwood Team Tops Golf Tournament

The 2009 League Golf Tournament had 14 foursomes and a new winning team as well. The group from Kirkwood emerged as champions.

We appreciate the invitation from Mayor Robert Lowery, Councilman Tom Schneider and the officials and staff of the City of Florissant and the Golf Club for hosting this tournament and their willingness to make this an annual event for the League membership. An enjoyable time was had by all.

A special thank you goes out to Florissant Councilmember Karen McKay who personally contributed attendance gifts for each participant. They were very much appreciated.



L-R Todd Rehg, John Adams, Chris Phlasterer and Kevin Campe of Kirkwood claimed the lowest score at the League Golf tournament June 11.

## League Continues to Seek Recycling Cart Funding

As many of you know, we have been working with the County Department of Health and the St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste District to purchase recycling carts for the municipalities which have ordinances that comply with the newer County minimum level of service (essentially single stream recycling available to all residents and built into basic costs).

In 2008, municipalities throughout the area expressed an interest in receiving recycling carts for single stream recycling. Dr. Dolores Gunn, Director of the County Department of Health, and her staff worked to grant the requests of 9 municipalities in April. Roughly 7,378 recycling carts were distributed in the first round of this program.

As our communities became aware of the benefits of recycling and hauling contracts came up for renewal, the second round of the cart program received requests totaling over \$1 million! We were able to secure \$820,120 from St. Louis County. This will help to roll out about 22,934 more carts among 15 different municipalities.

The League does not want to stop there. As contracts are updated and citizens see other communities with larger, 64-95 gallon carts, the demand increases. We will continue to seek appropriations from the County Council and the Solid Waste District to meet citizen demands.

Granting larger recycling carts is just half the battle. It is

crucial to educate citizens on how and why they should recycle. The League, the District, and DOH are committed to this effort and can provide a variety of information. To compliment the cart program, the League has educational DVDs that are available to our members showing the benefits of recycling. It is also on the League website under the Current Events link.

The League is now working with the County and the District to secure the balance of funding needed. We estimate that nearly \$1.5 million will be necessary to fund the remaining demand for carts.

Municipal officials should contact County Council members to thank them for their past and future support.

## Legislature Revises TIF, TDD Laws Effective August 28

HB 191, dealing with economic development, contains important new conditions that can be found in a Gilmore Bell legal update on the MML website ([www.mocities.com](http://www.mocities.com)). These include:

### TIF Requirements:

Failure to file annual TIF reports with the Department of Economic Development will prohibit cities from implementing any new TIF project for 5 years.

For TIFS that have not previously been reported, the dead-

line may be August 28.

### TDD Requirements

TDD boards of directors will face a fine of up to \$500 per day for failure to file annual financial reports.

Also, the Missouri Department of Revenue will begin collecting TDD sales taxes, rather than collection by the TDD. The legislation does not clarify if existing, new, or both sales taxes are subject to DOR collections.

DOR will begin collecting TDD sales taxes on the first day of the second calendar quarter after notifi-

cation. Many officials have concerns that DOR will not have correct addresses for TDD businesses and revenue collections may be problematic. There appears to be no penalty if the TDD board does not notify DOR of the need to collect an existing tax and continues its own collection.

Contact your attorney for clarification.

## CDBG Funds Can Help Prevent Foreclosures

The City of St. Louis allocated \$500,000 to establish a fund to help prevent some foreclosures. Over 1000 people applied and 200 have been given aid so far which averaged \$1000 when counselors worked out remedies with lenders. Foreclosures are extremely costly to many communities for the following reasons:

- Other home values fall if many vacancies exist;
- Values fall further if the vacancies are unsightly or

cause others to move;

- Next year's census may be lower and cause a loss of per capita revenue for your community until the next census in 2020.
- Municipal funds and staff time may have to be spent on code enforcement and crime.

Given these and other problems, foreclosure prevention makes sense. The County Office of Community Development will allow cities to amend agreements to provide foreclosure prevention

services.

The League urges cities that are negatively affected by foreclosures to add this tool to your stabilization efforts. St. Louis County has pledged \$150,000 of its CDBG funds for foreclosure help in UNincorporated areas. Now cities have the chance to do the same for municipal residents. Please consider contacting your CDBG representative to set aside funds for this purpose.

## Gateway Seeks City Hazard Mitigation Resolutions

East-West Gateway has developed a draft of a regional All Hazard Mitigation Plan as a requirement of federal law. The next step in finalizing the process and obtaining approval is for all communities who desire to participate in the plan to adopt the plan by resolution. Sample copies of the resolution were recently mailed to each city.

Current law requires that local governments applying for federal funds to mitigate the effects of natural disasters have a FEMA approved plan in place. This document will help cities meet that requirement.

In addition to it being a requirement for FEMA assistance, it is designed to raise awareness and prevent the loss of life and minimize property loss in the region.

EW Gateway has requested that the approved resolutions from each municipality be returned by September 4, 2009. For more information, contact Steve Nagle at 314-421-4220.

The plan is available at [ewgateway.org/download](http://ewgateway.org/download) All Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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The first meeting of the fall will be held on  
September 24 at Sunset Park in Florissant.

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## East-West Gateway Initiates Renewing the Region Study

The East West Gateway Council of Governments has begun a year-long initiative about the future of the metropolitan area entitled Renewing the Region. The purpose is to develop broad goals to help guide regional transportation planning and policy decisions.

There seems to be an undercurrent that suggests that the region has been slowly drifting downward. Sprawl has been mentioned as an issue.

The Gateway website ([www.ewgateway.org](http://www.ewgateway.org)) hints that the solution may be more regional planning powers. Without saying it, this could mean less local authority.

The League has long con-

tended that regional transportation funding has fueled outward development, and poorly reinforced existing neighborhoods. In fact, the Gateway "Issues in Brief" paper notes that between 1970 and 2000, the region experienced a 64% increase in the urbanized land area but only a 4% rise in population. Quite a bit of this shift has been supported by votes at Gateway to fund major new roads in developing areas.

The reaction by many established communities has been to battle the loss of assets by offering incentives. Some at Gateway have opposed these incentives claiming that they produce too few jobs and little overall tax benefits. The negative reports leave out key

information about community revitalization benefits and other data.

So where will "Renewing the Region" take us? Will it be impartial and fact-based so we have a good chance of making the region more competitive? Will it claim the region is "fragmented" or will it allow for discussion of the costs/benefits of decentralized versus centralized government?

The League has long believed that with wise leadership, it is possible to have both strong local governments and a strong region. We hope the Gateway effort will be fair and lead us in a direction that makes a difference.