



FEBRUARY 2007

February 15 Meeting at Clayton City Hall

Upcoming League Meetings

- Thursday, February 15, Membership Meeting, Clayton City Hall, 7:30 PM
Wednesday, February 21, Legislative Luncheon, 11:30 am, Jefferson City, Prior to MML Legislative Conference
Thursday, March 22, Membership Meeting New Bel-Ridge Village Hall, 7:30 pm

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The next League meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, February 15 at the Clayton City Hall, 10 North Bemiston Ave. (Directions: from I-170, exit at Ladue Road. Go east approximately 1 mile to Bemiston Ave. Turn right and City Hall will be the 2nd building on the left. Because there is limited on-site parking, the City has arranged for valet parking. On street parking may be available.

Program: Metro - formerly Bi-State.

Ridership is up as St. Louisans take advantage

of the new Cross County Metrolink line and seek alternatives to high gas prices.

Federal funding for mass transit has been shrinking, the sales tax less than robust, and fuel costs for busses increasing. Metro has responded with cuts and fare increases,

borrowing and postponement of debt payments.

Officials from Metro will explain options for funding and expansion, service during the I-64 reconstruction and answer questions from municipal officials.

We hope you will be able to join us.



Legislative Luncheon - February 21

League members are invited to attend a Legislative Luncheon for St. Louis County municipal officials prior to the start of the MML Conference on Wednesday, February 21 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. The luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m. in the Hotel Atrium. The cost is \$22.

The focus of the pro-

gram will be to provide an overview of issues affecting cities in St. Louis County that typically would not be covered by the MML program.

Registration materials will be sent to all member municipalities in early February.

Copies of the forms are also available on

the League's website at www.stlmuni.org under the "Current Events" link.

Because of the large number of important bills pertaining to local government, we urge all cities to be represented at the MML conference and use this opportunity to meet with your legislators.

January Meeting Synopsis

At the January meeting the membership heard a presentation from Nick Gragnani, Executive Director of the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS). This organization is related to the East-West Gateway Council of Governments. It's mission is to: 1) prepare for catastrophes by funding certain projects and 2) help the region recover from disasters.

STARRS was created in response to the Federal Urban Area Security Act. This act provides funds to assist in preparation against attacks. The plan must be

coordinated regionally. The area received approximately \$9 million per year from 2003-06 and funds have been used to enhance health resources, metropolitan medical planning and city/fire district readiness.

Mr. Gragnani noted that STARRS has several committees focusing on a variety of planning activities. Most include municipal officials. These committees make recommendations on policies which are then submitted to the STARRS advisory council, the STARRS Board, and, finally to Gateway's Board for approval.

STARRS has funded 5 heavy

rescue teams and 7 emergency response teams in the region. Other current projects include the establishment of a virtual emergency operations center available 24/7 to assist with any major incident, a hospital patient tracking system, a universal ID system for first responders, hospital mutual aid agreements and a new study on police and fire radio communications. For more information about STARRS, see their website at www.stl-starrs.org.

We would like to thank the officials and employees of the City of Olivette for hosting the meeting.

League Conference Draws Large Crowd

Nearly 100 League members attended the 3rd Annual Conference at the Sheraton Westport on January 30.

The program featured six varied sessions, including a "how to" presentation on bond financing for local projects, which was coordinated by Des Peres City Administrator Doug Harms.

Another program that featured the talents of League members was a session on ethical dilemmas for local officials, presented by Maryland Heights City Administrator Mark Levin.

similar countywide and regional plans.

Attendees learned about the impact of the County's new solid waste and recycling ordinance and grants available from representatives of the County Health Department and the Solid Waste District.

A discussion on infill housing featured representatives of the Kirkwood and Webster Groves architectural review boards along with home-builders.

And lastly, police officers from Chesterfield and Hazelwood showed how cities can utilize the untapped volunteer talent in our cities.

The featured speaker for the evening general session was Tripp Frohlichstein, President of Media Masters, who presented an interactive program on effective media relations. Tripp entertained and informed the large crowd during his 90 minute program by showing positive and negative video clips of local news interviews with local officials

The League staff fielded numerous compliments on the quality of the program which was planned by the Membership and Programs Committee. Committee members are:

Mayor Betty Humphrey, Chairman; Mayor Scott Douglass; Alderman Gordon Gosh; City Manager Amy Hamilton; Mayor Monica Huddleston; City Clerk Colleen Klos; City Administrator Bob Kuntz; Councilman Mike Lynch; City Manager Mike McDowell; Councilman Tom Schneider; and Mayor Gerry Welch, Webster Groves

Thanks to all the presenters and committee members!

"Tripp's presentation was both humorous and educational," - Florissant Councilman Tom Schneider.

"The conference programs and speakers were top-notch," - Black Jack Mayor Norm McCourt



Dave Sandel from NetLabs & Maplewood City Manager Marty Corcoran (L-R) presented a session on wireless internet.

In addition, Maplewood City Manager Marty Corcoran discussed WiFi internet systems. County speakers elaborated on



The featured speaker was Tripp Frohlichstein.

Legislative Update

The Senate has begun hearings on a number of important bills. A few of these have come out of committee. The House is working on the budget and will begin a full slate of hearings later this month. The League will continue sending weekly email and fax updates on legislative actions. Please contact our office if you would like to be added to the email list.

The major bills for local governments are:

Overtime Provisions: SCS SB 255 (Loudon) is a combination of three bills filed on the subject and was heard in committee and voted out the same day. It simply clarifies that the 2006 system for overtime for police/fire/EMS is lawful for use in the future. There is agreement to fast-track the bill. Thanks to Senators Loudon, Gross and Griesheimer for their assistance! (Support)

AT&T Video: SB 284 (Griesheimer) is completely new, quite complicated, and based on a compromise reached by AT&T and the cable industry, which hurts cities and citizens. It strips cities of local control over franchises or agreements for no apparent reason. Cities are signing AT&T agreements even though the TV service has not been rolled out. Cities are not a barrier. The legislature is moving the bill quickly with limited time for individual testimony, as if there is a problem that needs to be solved. It does retain the 5% fee on cable and video services.

The League recommends that:

1. The St. Louis County area be exempted since cities are signing agreements with AT&T;
2. New wired TV companies eventually serve most parts of a city so citizens receive the benefits of competition;
3. TV over the internet be subject

- to the same fees as other wired TV;
4. Cities have some control over lawn boxes (the size of dumpsters);
5. Customer service standards should be included;
6. Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels should continue to receive full support;
7. Emergency alerts be available to all viewers, not just those in cities where a majority of residents use a service;
8. State issued franchises face renewal every 15 years or so to ensure quality service;
9. Audits done by cities or by industry be subject to the same rules;
10. Indemnification of cities be simple and clear, not subject to damaging qualifications. (Oppose)

Telecommunications Taxes: SB 209 (Griesheimer) and HB 165 (Cooper) are quite similar to the statute thrown out by the Supreme Court. It still dismisses back taxes simply because the industry asked for it. Wouldn't it be nice if we could all skip our taxes and when challenged in court, ask the legislature to forgive the taxes? Great way to force the tax burden on to others and reward questionable behavior.

The bill does say that all cell phones would be subject to the gross receipts tax (just as the courts have said) but then forces a roll back of gross receipts taxes on cell and land phones, followed by a cap. This again forces the tax burden onto others.

The League advocates that local officials continue to determine the mix of taxes in each city with citizen involvement as required by the Hancock Amendment.

SB 209 was heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on January 29 and HB 165 has been assigned to the House Ways & Means Committee (Oppose)

TIF Restrictions: SB 176 (Green) would limit retail TIFs to low and moderate income areas and add a restrictive definition of blight. (Oppose)

HB 103 (Portwood) adds a lengthy

definition of blight, requires a super majority for proposals opposed by the TIF commission and sends all property taxes to school districts in residential TIFs unless the district representatives on the commission support the TIF. It has been assigned to the Economic Development Committee.

SB 20 (Griesheimer) requires a super majority for residential TIFs in greenfields, requires voter approval or super majority for TIFs opposed by TIF commission, allows a referendum on TIF projects and prohibits greenfield TIFs in the St. Louis area. It was heard in the Local Government Committee on January 31.

SB 225 (Stuoffer) bans TIF in 100 year flood plain at request of hunters. (Oppose)

Countywide Sales Tax: HB 356 (Avery) would end the sharing of sales tax from the "A" cities to the "B" cities and County in 2008. It has been assigned to the Local Government Committee.

Predatory Lending Prohibition: SB 74 (Coleman) would prohibit flipping of home loans and limit high cost loans. It has been assigned to the Government Organization Committee. (Support)

Red Light Camera Regulations: SB 192 (Crowell) would allow cities to use cameras but prohibits companies from receiving a percentage of fines. It has been assigned to the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.

Your contacts with legislators will be extremely important as these bills come up for consideration. Companies such as AT&T have much influence in Jefferson City. Your voice needs to be heard in order to both promote and protect municipal interests.

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

Plan to attend our membership meeting on February 15 in Clayton and our Legislative Luncheon on February 21 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

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www.stlmuni.org*

Nominees Sought for Westfall Award

In 2005 the League's Executive Board established an award to commemorate the life of former County Executive Buzz Westfall by recognizing a local government official, city or program in St. Louis City or County for effective leadership and commitment to quality services. The Buzz Westfall Award for Excellence in Local Government will be presented at the League's Annual Installation Dinner on May 19.

Nominations must be 350 words or less on a single sheet of paper. They should be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the League office at the address below.

A committee appointed by the League Board will review the nominations and make the final decision on the award winner.

The deadline for receiving nominations is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 30, 2007.

AWARD CRITERIA (Nominations

need not meet all 6 criteria)

1. Project or Program is regional or multi-jurisdictional in nature, based on thoughtful planning and management of urban resources.
2. Project or Program shows significant community impact with demonstrated or measurable results.
3. Project or Program involves successful public, private, non-profit partnering.
4. Nominee upholds grass roots or family values, with a particular commitment to youth.
5. Nominee demonstrates honest and effective leadership.
6. Impact is recent (last three years), innovative, and likely to continue or influence future events positively.

Please send nominations to:

- Mail: St. Louis County Municipal League, 121 S. Meramec Ave., Clayton, 63105
- E-Mail: staff@stlmuni.org
- Fax: 314-726-1520

Public Works Class

Bhasin Associates is offering a 2 hour course entitled "Enhancing Street Maintenance Skills" for public works crews. It covers the fundamentals of street maintenance repair work and helps show the correct methods, materials and skills to provide high quality results.

The course takes place in a small group setting at a convenient location for the city crew and the employer. Discussion is based on examples of public works projects.

Contact Vijay Bhasin at 314-921-9090 or bhasinassociates@hotmail.com.