



FEBRUARY 2008

February 28 Meeting in Des Peres

Upcoming League Events

- Wednesday, February 20 Legislative Luncheon, 11:30 am, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City
• Thursday, February 28, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, The Lodge Des Peres
• Thursday, March 27, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, Site TBD
• Thursday, April 24, Membership Meeting, Hazelwood
• Friday, May 30, Installation Dinner, Norwood Hills
• Thursday, June 12, Golf Tournament, Golf Club of Florissant

The next League meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 28 at the Lodge Des Peres, 1050 Des Peres Rd., just west of I-270. (Directions: from I-270 exit onto westbound Manchester Rd. Then exit on the right onto Des Peres Rd. At the bottom of the loop ramp go right (south) under Manchester Rd. The Lodge will be the first building on the left.)

Program: Recently the Danforth Foundation, along with St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, proposed that the region consider supporting plans to reinvent a part of the Arch grounds to capitalize on its location by creating attractions for residents and tourists. The original plan called for more attractions and buildings on the site.

The Foundation

notes that many visitors to the Arch grounds simply leave after visiting the monument because there is nothing else around.

Peter Sortino, President of the Foundation, will attend to discuss the proposal, which would require Congressional approval to allow the transfer of parkland. The membership may be asked to formally endorse the plan.

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League Hosts Prayer Service for Kirkwood Victims

On Saturday, February 9, the League hosted a Prayer Service for Kirkwood Mayor Mike Swoboda and the victims of the recent tragic shooting. Over 80 members attended along with Kirkwood officials and Mayor Swoboda's family.

League President T.R Carr asked Hazelwood's police chaplain, Pastor Dave Greiner, to conduct the service.

Pastor Greiner offered comforting words to all and reminded the local officials in attendance that "you occupy your

positions for a specific purpose. Now is not the time to resign. Now is not the time to run or quit."

Kirkwood Councilman Tim Griffin thanked all who attended. He said that Mayor Swoboda would want everyone to "continue because what we do is important in the communities we live. We're not important. What we do is important."

Mayor Swoboda's wife and family also offered their thanks for

the prayers and support of the membership.

The League Board and staff would also like to thank all who were able to come to the service. The outpouring of support from the local government family in St. Louis County and around the State is very gratifying as we all try to deal with the loss of our friends and colleagues and pray for Mayor Swoboda's recovery.

January Meeting Synopsis

At the January 24 League meeting the membership heard presentations from students from Westminster School and officials from Ameren UE.

The students attended the meeting to discuss how smoking is detrimental to public health and urged local leaders to consider supporting their efforts to ensure a smoke free environment. The group presented a video which highlighted their concerns. The students also presented a report card on Missouri's efforts to limit smoking and the state did not fare well.

Representatives of Ameren reviewed the company's \$1 billion plan to help reduce power outages by increasing tree trim-

ming near power lines and burying lines in the most problematic areas. Vice President Richard Mark noted that Ameren will be spending \$250 million over the next three years on tree trimming.

Ray Wiesehan provided further details, indicating that Ameren trimmed over 1500 miles of trees in 2007. Ameren will be trimming all branches above lines, not just those close to the lines. Exceptions for huge limbs that might result in killing a tree, if removed, will be considered. He also indicated that Ameren will be spending \$86 million for utility pole inspections and replacements, with each pole to be inspected every four years.

Mark Nealon then discussed how Ameren selects areas for undergrounding power lines. He noted that the number of recent outages is a major factor, along with the number of homes affected. He indicated that \$300 million has been allocated statewide by Ameren, with \$120 million in St. Louis County and \$30 million in St. Louis City. He said that 150 miles of projects are planned.

The League appreciates Ameren's generous sponsorship of the meeting and the warm welcome from Mayor Harold Dielmann and the officials and employees of Creve Coeur who served as hosts.

Changes Proposed for County Aquatic Facilities Code

The following article was prepared by Susan Trautman, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Des Peres.

Last summer area municipalities joined together in requesting that St. Louis County update the Health Code for Aquatic Facilities. County Executive Charlie Dooley and Garry Earls, Chief Operating Officer for the County, listened and supported these efforts.

As a result the St. Louis County Aquatic Advisory Committee was reconvened to work closely with the Health Department in rewriting the aquatic code. The hard working group that included several municipal park directors met every week and the result is a draft aquatic code that is user friendly and in keeping with today's technology, while addressing the health and safety of the public.

A public hearing will be held

on February 20, 6:30-8:00 p.m. on the 10th floor of the World Trade Center, 121 S. Meramec Ave. in Clayton. The intent is to institute the updated code by May 1, 2008.

Every city operating a swimming pool should be aware that there are major changes proposed in the code. For a copy of the proposed aquatic code go to the County's website, www.stlouisco.com and look under *Public Water Recreation Facilities Proposed Rules and Regulations*. All cities are encouraged to become familiar with the proposed aquatic code and participate in the public hearing process. Those with older facilities needing upgrades should examine it closely.

The following summarizes major code changes.

Grandfather Clause – The proposed code allows replacements and repairs to some sections of swimming pool facilities without requiring other sections to be up-

graded as long as there is no hazard to public health. New construction or major alterations must comply with the code.

Diving Pool Depths - Diving pools shall conform to the minimum water depths, areas and other dimensions as defined by the governing body, with proper signage.

Starting Platforms for Competitive Swimming Need 5-Foot Depth All pools including existing pools must comply.

Perimeter Overflows/Gutters Perimeter overflows or other acceptable surface skimming systems shall be required on all pools. This change will substantially reduce new construction cost and eliminate the need for a variance from gutters for many of the new water parks.

Entrapment Issues of the Graeme-Baker Pool Safety Act

Existing facilities shall have
(continued on page 4)

Legislative Update

Most of the work in the legislature is now focusing on committee hearings. House and Senate leaders will begin to allow a few bills out of committee and these will help determine the major issues for the session.

In mid-January the League began sending weekly email and fax updates on legislative actions. If you do not currently receive the legislative update by email and would like to, please contact our office.

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, the entity has more flexibility to set higher rates, if it is below the cap. Estimated tax bills must also be mailed with the new assessment in spring. The bill was passed by the Ways & Means Committee on February 4.

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

HB 1349 (Portwood) revises the definition of "tax rate ceiling" to the tax rate used by the taxing authority in the preceding year and limits the revenue received from a voter-approved tax rate increase to the amount determined by applying the levy increase to the prior year's as-

essed valuation. Ways & Means Committee.

HB 1376 (Portwood) fines collected from red light cameras would go to schools. Not yet assigned to committee.

HB 1377 (Portwood) phases out property taxes on motor vehicles. Ways & Means Committee.

HB 1378 (Portwood) allows citizen petitions to submit TIF projects to a 2/3 council vote. Economic Development Committee.

HB 1424 (St. Onge) reinstates the overtime pay exemption (see SB 782). Heard in the Workforce Development Committee on February 5

HB 1440 (Roorda) requires elected officials to complete a Sunshine Law training course. Government Affairs Committee.

HB 1598 (Sater) enacts a sales tax exemption for over-the-counter drugs. However, an MML sponsored amendment would apply the exemption only to those drugs when prescribed by a doctor. Passed by the Ways and Means Committee on February 7.

HB 1663 (Young) changes the standard for violations of the Sunshine Law from "knowingly" to "negligently", which would make it easier for officials to be sued for up to \$1000. Not yet assigned.

HB 1768 (Wildberger) requires cities to pay the difference between the salary and workers comp benefits to public safety workers after a traumatic job-related injury. Not yet assigned.

HB 1779 (Emery) Focuses on deregulation of services provided by telephone companies and companies selling VOIP (phone calls over the internet). Taxation references were left out of the bill. Amendments are being drafted to clarify that VOIP providers are the same as telcoms and cable com-

panies. Heard in Utilities Committee January 30.

HB 1789 (Lembke) Would prevent St. Louis County from instituting its proposed solid waste and recycling program in the unincorporated area. Not yet assigned.

HB 1853 (Bivins) requires closed meetings to be tape recorded. Not yet assigned.

HB 1865 (Curls) requires TIF project with a residential component to contribute 16% of the TIF amount to an affordable housing trust fund or provide 8% of the housing created for low income residents. Not yet assigned.

HJR 61 & 62 (Harris) prohibits eminent domain to redevelop blighted areas. Not yet assigned.

Numerous House bills have been filed to limit property assessments and tax rates. We will continue to monitor them as well as SB 711.

TIF - The League promoted discussion on the new, defective TIF statute. It appears that most can live with attorneys' recommendations to make only technical corrections so that barriers to use of TIF bonds can be removed.

The latest law changes the make-up of the TIF commission to 6 from the county, 3 from cities, 2 from schools, and 1 from all other taxing entities. It also requires cities to secure a 2/3 vote of the council to override a "no" vote TIF commission

These provisions would remain if the compromise approach is adopted.

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

The February 28 meeting will be held at the
Lodge Des Peres.

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Aquatic Facilities Code (continued)

(continued from page 2)
the suction outlet systems serving the pool, spa, or water recreation attraction that does not constitute an entrapment hazard, meeting all requirements of section 2.13 of the code. All existing spas, pools, and/or water recreation attractions shall **comply by December 20, 2008** in accordance with federal law.

Disinfection Systems – All pools (existing and new) shall be equipped with disinfectant **and PH control feeders**.

Required Operator Certification – All pools, spas and water recreation attractions must be maintained by a properly trained operator certified by May 1, 2010.

In addition, there are new sections in the code relating to Ultra-violet Light Disinfection Systems

and Saline Chlorination Systems. Updates on required warning signs and the operation of wave pools, leisure rivers, spas, wading pools, and slides have also been added to the code.

Sections of the code for all pools or requiring compliance dates are so noted. Otherwise, changes in the code are subject to the grandfather clause and compliance is only required during new construction or major alterations.

We thank County leaders for working with the cities to create a code that will protect our citizens and properly regulate all the new types of facilities demanded by the public.

AT&T Video Cabinets

The Post-Dispatch recently reported that AT&T is replacing backup batteries in 17,000 street-side cabinets after four of them exploded or burst into flames in other parts of the Country. Some of those that will be replaced are in the St. Louis area.

The batteries provide backup power for U-verse, the TV service AT&T is rolling out in its 22-state territory. No one was hurt by the fires, but there was some property damage.

Customers' service should not be affected during the replacement program because the batteries are not installed in people's homes. The refrigerator size boxes are usually located in the right-of-way and, in some cases, can be close to homes.