



FEBRUARY 2009

February 26 League Meeting in St. Ann

Upcoming League Meetings

- Thursday, February 26, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, St. Ann City Hall
Thursday, March 26, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, Black Jack
Thursday, April 23, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, University City

The next League meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, February 26 at the St. Ann City Hall, 10405 St. Charles Rock Rd. City Hall is located about one mile east of Lindbergh Blvd. or about three miles west of I-170.

Program: The Federal

Stimulus Package is one of the of the more complex issues Congress has dealt with in recent years. The plan is likely to include billions of dollars for local governments across the country to upgrade public facilities and put workers back on the job.

Our speaker will present an update on what the stimulus package contains and a possible time frame for decisions about which local projects may be funded. (See article below about the submittal of projects.)

Green Sales Tax Holiday Opt In Ordinance

In 2008 the General Assembly passed legislation to establish a sales tax holiday on energy efficient appliances in late April of each year. The bill did not include local sales taxes in the holiday but does allow for local governments to participate in the holiday by passing an ordinance to

“opt in”.

Municipal Attorney Kevin O’Keefe has drafted a model ordinance for cities to use for this purpose. It is available on the League website under the Model Ordinances link.

If you want to continue to have local sales taxes collected there is

no action required.

If you would prefer that local sales taxes not be collected on these items during the April 19-25 holiday, you must pass an ordinance and mail it to the Department of Revenue by March 5.

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Federal Stimulus Update

Both St. Louis County and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments have accepted local projects for submittal for federal stimulus funds. Gateway is focusing on road, bridge and transportation enhancement projects that parallel its annual call for fed-

eral transportation projects. These were due February 13 and will be evaluated, scored and sent to federal officials.

Cities and other entities were also invited to act pro-actively to outline projects that could be included in a master list created by

the County. Until the stimulus package is finalized, it is hard to know what projects will be eligible, but pre-planning could give those forward thinkers a leg-up once federal rules are known.

(Continued on page 2)

January Meeting Synopsis

At the January meeting the membership heard a presentation on the new reassessment law from Eugene Leung, Director of Revenue for St. Louis County. Mr. Leung indicated that the compressed timeline for reassessment will require an additional \$1 million cost to the County.

The law requires the assessor to provide preliminary property values by March 1 and initial assessed valuations to taxing districts by March 15. **All taxing entities are required to provide initial tax rates for each tax levy to the County by April**

8 along with a contact name or face a 20% reduction in property tax revenues. The County is then required to provide both reassessed value and a projected tax liability to taxpayers by May 15.

Mr. Leung said that normal appeals processes had also been pushed back one month. Taxing entities will be required to file final rates with the County by October 1, rather than the current September 1. Tax bills will be mailed in November instead of October.

Also on the agenda was a discussion of a proposed sales tax for interoperable communica-

tions. The County Emergency Communications Commission has requested that the County Council place a 1/10 cent sales tax on the August 2009 ballot, to fund construction and operations of the system. A county-wide tax would allow public safety providers to avoid significant costs required to narrow band existing radio systems as required by the end of 2012. In addition, narrow banding does not add interoperability, which could be achieved through the sales tax. A campaign will begin to try to raise private funds for an advocacy campaign.

Curtis Heinz Law Firm Conducts P&Z Seminar

Approximately 80 local officials attended a League seminar on planning and zoning that was held at the Brentwood Recreation Center. The program was conducted by attorneys from the law firm Curtis, Heinz, Garrett & O'Keefe.

Kevin O'Keefe opened the session with an overview of planning and zoning laws. The attendees then broke into two groups

with one focusing on the role of planning and zoning commissioners. This was facilitated by Ken Heinz and Steve Garrett. The second relating to the board of adjustment had Carl Lumley as the speaker.

We greatly appreciate the time and expertise of our presenters to help our members better understand their roles.



Attorney Kevin O'Keefe confers with and attendee at the Seminar.

Federal Stimulus Update (continued)

Some believe that MoDOT could receive up to \$600 million, with approximately \$175 to \$200 million for the St. Louis region. One of the main MoDOT projects under consideration is the extension of Highway 141 from Olive Blvd. south to I-64.

In other categories, local buildings and other similar submittals will also be under consideration for federal funds. Those that have the potential for the greatest amount of job creation, serve the most people, have multiple benefits, can be started soon, etc. stand the best chance of funding - assuming there is a local project component to the stimulus plan.

The League staff will continue to monitor the process and keep all of our members informed about how the package will be implemented and any other requirements that cities may have to comply with the new law.

Winning Women Awards

Winning Women is accepting applications for the 2nd annual Women Influencing Regional Economic Development Awards. The awards were established to honor and recognize women in three areas: entrepreneur, executive and public service.

The nomination form is available at www.winningwomen.net and the deadline for nominations is March 2. Awardees will be honored at a dinner at the Missouri History Museum on April 29. Additional information is available on the website.

2009 Bills of Municipal Interest

In previous years we have provided a legislative update in every newsletter to try to keep our members apprised of significant actions in Jefferson City. However, because the Newsletter only comes out once per month and some do not receive it for up to two weeks after it is completed, we feel it best to provide you with a list of important bills each month but focus on our weekly email update to give you the latest actions by the legislature.

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.

Bills we are tracking this year include:

SB 19 (Bray) – Streamlined sales tax act that would help taxing entities receive sales taxes from out-of-state sellers, including internet sales. Local taxes would go to the city where items are delivered, not where they are purchased.

SB 20 (Days) – Payday loan restrictions. Prohibits lenders from renewing loans of \$500 or less and limits interest rates to 15% for the first month and 3% per month thereafter.

SB 102 (Green) – Mandatory bidding procedures for political subdivisions which have not adopted regulations.

SB 174 (Griesheimer) – Property tax rates. Corrects errors in SB 711 from 2008. The bill is necessary to avoid property tax rate rollbacks in many political subdivisions. (Support)

SB 211 (Lembke) – Prohibits the use of red light cameras. (Oppose)

SB 309 (Bray) – Bans smoking in public places. (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. (Oppose)

HOUSE BILLS:

HB 68 (Bivins) - A taxpayer 65 years of age or older who has lived in his or her home for at least two years may file a claim with the county assessor for a reduction of \$5,000 from the appraised value of the home. The amount of the reduction increases \$5,000 annually until the reduction is \$50,000. The state would reimburse lost revenue by political subdivisions.

HB 102 (Wildberger) - Limits the increase in the assessed value of homestead property owned by a senior to the same percentage as the increase in the federal Consumer Price Index in each reassessment cycle. The tax rate imposed upon the homestead property cannot increase until the eligible owner sells the property. Political subdivisions will be reimbursed by the state for lost revenue.

HB 108 (Bivins) – All closed meetings must be taped verbatim and kept for 18 months so they could be used in court to prove a violation of the Sunshine Law (Oppose)

HB 150 (Still) – Payday loan restrictions. Similar to SB 20 (Support)

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

HB 316 (Jones, 89) - Would require public comment periods at all public meetings and five busi-

ness 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. (Oppose)

HB 329 (Kraus) – Exempts seniors from property assessment increases. State to replace lost revenue.

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

HB 353 (Dusenberg) – Exempts seniors from property taxes beginning in 2010. State to replace lost revenue.

HJR 5 (Fallert) – Constitutional amendment to ban smoking in public places (Support)

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

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

HB 541 (Kraus) – Traffic camera fines would go to schools. (Oppose)

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

HJR 22 (Davis) – Constitutional amendment to limit property taxes to 1% of property value and allow political subdivisions which have lower revenue due to decreased assessed values to levy a sales tax to replace lost revenue, subject to voter approval. (Oppose)

HJR 24 & 25 (Harris) – restricts eminent domain. (Oppose)

St. Louis County Municipal League
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Please join us at the next membership meeting on February 26 in St. Ann.

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www.stlmuni.org*

Recession Tips for Cities

From *Governing* Magazine, February 2, 2009

Main streets across the nation are being hit by dried-up tax revenues and state budget cuts that have amounted to more than \$50 billion so far. A new report, *Navigating the Fiscal Crisis: Tested Strategies for Local Government Leaders* (online at <http://www.transformgov.org/FiscalCrisis.aspx?id=2128>), digs into past crises for proven actions local governments can apply to today's recession.

The report not only identifies past strategies local leaders employed, but offers guiding principles every local leader should implement. They include maintaining spending; avoiding across-the-board cuts and hiring freezes; drawing on organizations and the community for ideas and support; and leading inclusively by encouraging creativity and engagement at all levels of the organization. The report is part of a year-long project between the International City/County Management Association and the Alliance for Innovation, and includes a wiki for local government employees to share their ideas on weathering this crisis.

Immigration Law Update

After January 1, 2009, the new Missouri Immigration Law requires contractor affidavits. Section 285.530.2 RSMo requires a political subdivision as a condition of a contract or grant in excess of \$5,000 awarded after January 1, 2009, to require the business entity to affirm by sworn affidavit and provision of documentation that the business entity has enrolled and participated in a federal work authorization program with respect to its employees who work in connection with the contracted services and to sign an affidavit affirming that it does not knowingly employ any person who is an unauthorized alien in connection with the contract. You should include in your bid specifications and contracts a statement that an affidavit will be required as a condition of the contract prior to or at the time of execution that the company has such a program, has provided documentation for the program, and that it will not employ unauthorized aliens in connection with the work. Note: You may obtain a model affidavit from the MML Web site, www.mocities.com