



JANUARY 2008

Upcoming League Meetings

- Thursday, January 24, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, Creve Coeur
Wednesday, February 20 Legislative Luncheon, 11:30 am, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City
Thursday, February 28, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, Des Peres
Thursday, March 27, Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, Kirkwood

January 24 Meeting in Creve Coeur

The first League meeting of 2008 will be held at 7:30 pm, on Thursday, January 24 at the Creve Coeur City Hall, 300 North New Bal-las Rd., between Olive Blvd. and Ladue Rd. The location will be the upper level Council Chambers.

Program 1: Students at Westminster Christian Academy have devel-oped a program on non-smoking policies and made a presentation to

some mayors who asked that the League also provide a forum for this program.

With nearby Illinois becoming the 26th state to implement a fairly comprehensive smoking prohibition, will Missouri be far behind?

Program 2: Follow-ing the power outages in 2006, AmerenUE began to take steps to improve reliability.

Mark Nealon, Manager of Reliability Improve-ment, will outline Ameren’s new efforts.

In addition, Distribu-tion Operations Man-ager Dave Wakeman will summarize new efforts at restoring power and Roy Wiese-han, Manager Safety and Resource Manage-ment, will discuss the latest tree trimming ef-forts.

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Training Academy Has Successful 2007

Thanks to all for your support of the St. Louis County Municipal League Training Acad-emy. Since its kickoff in August of 2007, the Training Academy has held 11 training courses attended by over 350 officials. Our goal is to provide quality instruc-tors and relevant mate-rial to all municipal em-ployees. Your thoughts and ideas and welcome.

Course Highlights

In 2007 the following courses were offered:

- Managing for WOW Customer Service ;

- Collective Bargaining;
Positive Management - Managing for Results;
Strategic Communica-tions;
Sexual Harassment for Supervisors;
Customers from \$#@!;
Reel in Your Custom-ers with Service;
Investing Government Funds;
Planning & Zoning Laws;
Effective Meeting Skills; and
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Moving into the New Year, the League is

working on the 2008 course schedule. Our objective for this com-ing year is to offer courses that meet con-tinuing education re-quirements for various professionals, com-puter training courses, and a certificate pro-gram. The Training Academy will also sponsor seminars that focus on current issues suggested by League members

The League appre-ciates your support and looks forward to serv-ing you in 2008.

November Meeting Synopsis

At the November meeting the membership heard a presentation from Garry Earls, Chief Operating Officer for St. Louis County, who had been invited to discuss the new regulations for recycling that will be implemented in the County in 2008. The goal is to improve our rather mediocre recycling record.

He said that County is proposing the creation of 8 unincorporated districts for which bids would be taken for trash collection, recycling and bulky pickups. Haulers will no longer be able to charge customers a higher fee for recycling. Almost all waste can now be recycled, with the exception of Styrofoam and food, so more recycling

makes sense. Landfill costs run \$30 a ton or higher, while recycling drop off costs are near \$0. Numerous cities now have such a system in place

Mr. Earls indicated that the County will use funds from its trash tipping fee to provide recycling carts to all households in the unincorporated area. Funding will allow a similar distribution to municipal residents.

The new law also requires haulers in cities to provide recycling and bulky pickup in the base price of service. It will become effective April 15, 2008. Mr. Earls indicated that because the County licenses haulers, the companies will likely be willing to work with cities to mitigate con-

cerns about contract modifications. If haulers work constructively to implement the system, problems should be rare. No city will be penalized for failure of a hauler to offer basic service on April 15, but Mr. Earls encouraged cooperative efforts as soon as practicable and feasible in 2008.

Also at the meeting, Patrick Bonnot of the MML staff, updated the membership on negotiations with the Missouri Department of Revenue over the repayment of administrative fees by cities.

Thanks to the officials and employees of the City of Fenton, for their warm welcome as hosts of the meeting.

Park Commission Awards \$2.7 Million in Grants

The Municipal Park Grant Commission recently announced the awarding of 17 grants totaling \$2.7 million dollars for park and recreation improvements in County municipalities.

The cities and parks are:

Bel-Nor - Arlmont Pocket Park

Berkeley - Jackson Park

Chesterfield - Athletic Complex

Des Peres - Des Peres Park

Ellisville - Bluebird Park

Eureka - Drewel Park Trail

Fenton - Riverchase Recreation Center

Florissant - Ice Rink Renovation

Green Park - Green Park Road Trail

Kirkwood - Monfort Park

Manchester - Swimming Pool

Northwoods - Northwoods Park

Olivette - Indian Meadows Park

Shrewsbury - Wehner Park

University City - Ruth Park Golf

Course

Valley Park - Meramec Greenway Trail

Wildwood - Rock Hollow Trail

Including the current round, the Commission has awarded about 160 grants totaling over \$19 million to improve municipal facilities. The Commission was created in 2001 to award grants to cities from the 1/10 cent sales tax for parks and trails.

Court Rules for Cities on Overtime Law

On January 8th the Cole County Circuit Court ruled that the minimum wage and overtime requirements enacted by Proposition B in 2006 do not apply to local governments.

The decision is based on the determination that a municipality is not a "person" or a "corporation" for the purposes of the minimum wage law.

Case law indicates that for this new law to apply to cities, the ballot language must specifically say so and not merely refer to "persons" or "groups of persons".

Congratulations to attorneys Paul Martin and Kevin O'Keefe for their excellent work on behalf of cities and local governments statewide.

Mark Your Calendar

For those attending the MML Legislative Conference in February, we hope you will also attend the County League's Annual Legislative Luncheon on Wednesday, February 20.

We will have a speaker to discuss a topic of particular importance to St. Louis area officials. Registration information will be sent to city clerks soon.

Legislature Convenes - Numerous Bills Prefiled

The General Assembly convened on January 9 and a number of bills of municipal interest were prefiled in December. In mid-January the League will begin 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 will be tracking include:

SB 711 (Gibbons) - mandates greater rollbacks by political subdivisions in reassessment years.

SB 782 (Loudon & Kennedy) - would reinstate the overtime pay exemption for public safety employees. The Department of Labor ruled last year that the voter approved increase to the minimum wage also eliminated the special rules for public safety employees. This requires cities to pay overtime or adjust wages or hours to reduce overtime. Since this ruling many cities have had to pay thousands of dollars in unbudgeted overtime. This is a

top legislative priority for the League.

SB 892 (Green) - Requires cities which authorize red light cameras to install a device to count down the time remaining before the light turns red.

SJR 33 (Ridgeway) - Property would only be reassessed upon sale.

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 assessed valuation.

HB 1376 (Portwood) - Fines collected from red light cameras would go to schools.

HB 1377 (Portwood) - Phases out property taxes on motor vehicles.

HB 1378 (Portwood) - Allows citizen petitions to submit TIF projects to a public vote.

HB 1424 (St. Onge) - reinstates the overtime pay exemption (see SB 782).

HB 1439 (Roorda) - reinstates the overtime exemption (see SB 782).

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

HB 1471 (J. Cunningham) - freezes property tax payments.

HJR 42 (Davis) - freezes property tax payments and assessments.

HJR 43 (Portwood) - requires the current property tax rate, rather than the maximum rate, to be rolled back following reassessment.

There have also been several bills introduced to freeze property tax payments for seniors or to increase the income levels for the homestead programs to help more seniors to be able to afford their property tax bills. The League is supportive of these bills if there are provisions for the State to make up for any lost revenue to cities.

Congratulations To . . .

Chairwoman Mollie Bradford of Velda Village Hills, Paul Wojciehowski, Public Works Director for Clayton, and to the City of University City and U. City in Bloom. All were recognized with awards at East-West Gateway's annual meeting.

Chairman Bradford made it her personal commitment to find the funding and make possible the Village's first park. She also started a neighborhood clean-up campaign, which she personally leads after every severe storm to make sure no one is left in need.

Mr. Wojciehowski has worked in the region for 20 years, using his planning and engineering skills in Clayton, at MoDOT, and in the private sector. He was instrumental in completing the "Share the Road" sign project to aid bicyclists. He is also a planning commissioner and former Councilman in Wildwood.

U. City in Bloom takes care of more than 200 plant beds in 90 locations throughout University City. The efforts of its 200 volunteers have helped stabilize and provide security in the U. City loop, greatly contributing to its resurgence during the last 20 years.

We would also like to congratulate Municipal Attorney Kevin O'Keefe of the Curtis, Heinz, Garrett & O'Keefe law firm, who was selected by his peers for inclusion the *The Best Lawyers in America 2008* in the field of Municipal Law. Kevin serves as city attorney for several county municipalities. He also graciously lends his expertise to the League and our members through training courses, seminars and legal research.

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

Plan to attend our membership meeting on
January 24 meeting in Creve Coeur.

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Sprint/Nextel and AT&T Join Phone Settlements

Two more cell phone companies, AT&T and Sprint/Nextel, have settled their lawsuits with cities and St. Louis County over the payment of gross receipts taxes. Cities will again receive a mailing with details similar to the mailing regarding the recent Verizon and U.S Cellular settlements.

Between the negotiations with the legislature and the attorneys involved in the litigation over the last 2 years, it became clear that the companies were seeking some certainty regarding the past tax liability and cities were seeking a fair settlement and equitable, stable telecom revenue, especially in light of people dropping land line service or finding less expensive service due to competition. The settlements address all these interests. Now,

all companies will pay equal phone taxes, adding fairness to the system. Cities retain local control over budget issues and companies remove the cloud over their taxes.

Because of the sputtering economy and various other impacts, like internet purchases, tax exempt items and so on, local government revenues have stagnated. The settlements allow cities to make up a portion of the lost telecom revenues and we might be better equipped to make ends meet.

Many members have set aside some of the settlement funds to build League activities that focus on preserving the settlement and revenue stability. A committee recommends that the League promote increased government

relations with legislators, complete more detailed recommendations to solve economic challenges facing cities, and assist city finance staff to develop tools for improving municipal revenues.

This new League activity will be separate from other functions and involve more direct advice from members. We will focus on government relations and CPA consultation to protect revenue sources, allowing each city to continue to control the types of revenues and services that your citizens have supported for years. Too often, these are eroded by special interests which try to shift the tax burden to others and avoid fair share principles of taxation.