

Louisburg Speaks ^{KS}

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1/2¢ sales tax before voters

A 1/2 cent sales tax will be on the ballot for City of Louisburg residents to consider in the Nov. 6 election.

The City Council discussed the potential tax at a September meeting and unanimously decided to bring the issue before the voters.

If approved, the sales tax would help pay for capital improvements, which can include sidewalks or other pedestrian route improvements, street and stormwater improvements and water infrastructure improvements related to fire safety and dam improvements.

This tax, if approved, will replace a current 1/4 cent sales tax that is used for infrastructure improvements. This means sales tax in the city limits will only increase by 1/4 cent. The current 1/4 cent tax would go off the books to be replaced by the 1/2 cent tax for an actual increase of just 1/4 cent.

The 1/2 cent sales tax would generate about \$450,000 annually. If sales tax collections remain strong, this number could increase over the life of the tax.

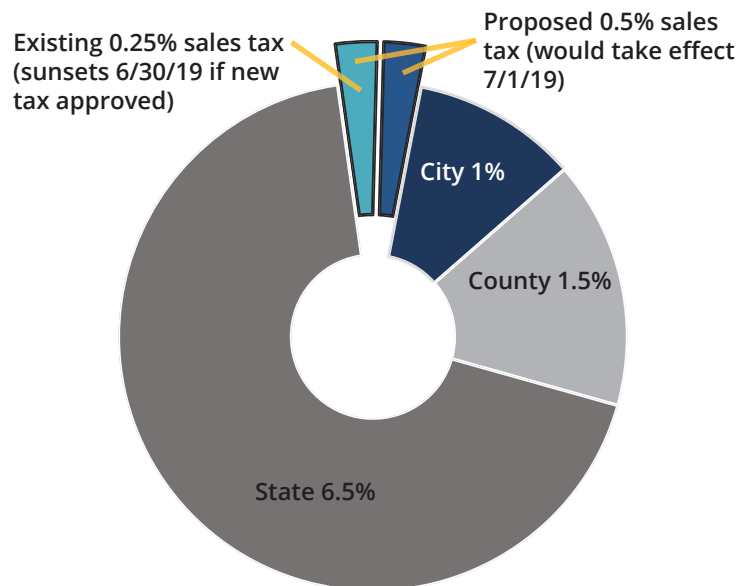
If approved, the sales tax would take effect July 1, 2019 and the current 1/4 cent tax would end June 30, 2019. The proposed tax is set to expire in 10 years.

"A big advantage to a sales tax is it is a funding source shared by everyone, unlike an increase in the mill levy that is only paid by property owners," says Pat McQueen, the City's finance director. "Non-city residents and visitors contribute to projects that benefit the entire community when they purchase goods or services inside the city limits."

WHAT IF THE TAX ISN'T APPROVED BY VOTERS?

The City may need to look at increasing the mill levy to fund projects that are already committed for completion in the next few years. City leaders estimate it would take

an additional 5 mills to fund these projects based on current valuations. The 5 mills would cover the current 1/4 cent sales tax that is set to sunset June 30, 2020, although it will expire earlier if the new sales tax is approved in the November election. It would also mean the City Council would have to make some tough decisions about what potential future projects could be funded or would have to be put on the back burner. Those 5 mills would be an additional \$115 per year in property tax on a home valued at \$200,000 or an additional \$86.25 on a \$150,000 home.



PLANNED PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED BY TAX

There are two projects that are already in the works that would be funded by this sales tax.

The City has been awarded a matching grant from the

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Fire Department

Chief Brad Seely

205 S. Metcalf Rd.

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The City of Louisburg requires building permits. Please call the Building & Zoning Department at 913-837-5811 before beginning any construction project.

Louisburg Speaks is published six times a year by the City of Louisburg for its residents. Please direct questions or comments to: jcarder@louisburgkansas.gov

It's time for Snow Buddies

With fall upon us, it's time to think once again about Snow Buddies.

This program matches senior citizens or those who may have a disability and are unable to shovel snow from their sidewalks with volunteers who are able to assist with snow shoveling.

The program also asks for volunteers to shovel a path from the front door to the sidewalk or street, if there is no sidewalk on the property.

To qualify, you must be a senior citizen or have a disability that makes it difficult to shovel snow. You must also own your home or live in a single-family residence.

Those who would like to volunteer are asked to commit for the entire winter season and to shovel any sidewalk on

the property as well as a path from the front door to the street/sidewalk. Volunteers are not expected to shovel the entire driveway.

To sign up for the program as either a volunteer or as a senior, go to the City's website at www.louisburgkansas.gov and click on the "I Want To" tab and then click on "Volunteer." Find the Snow Buddies sign-up under the Good Neighbors section.

If you are unable to sign up online, please call City Hall at 913-837-2324 or stop by and fill out a form.

The program is on a first-come, first-serve basis and is based on the number of volunteer shovelers. The City administers the program.

sales tax

(Continued from page 1)

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) to construct a bicycle/pedestrian trail along Amity from Broadway to Crestview Drive. This grant requires a local match so money for the City's share would come from this sales tax.

The County was also awarded a grant from MARC to make improvements to Metcalf Road from S. 2nd to S. 16th streets. This is a shared project with the City and requires a local match from the County and the City. The City's share would also come from this sales tax.

Both of these projects are slated to begin in 2021-22 budget years. If the tax is not approved, it could be likely the Amity Street pedestrian trail would have to be suspended. Funding for the Metcalf 2.0 project would need to be identified elsewhere in the budget, which would take away from other projects.

Sales tax funds would also be used if improvements are necessary to the dam at City Lake. The dam is set to be inspected next year and any improvements would come from this funding source.

Another project may include stormwater improvements in various parts of the community based on the results of the Master Stormwater Plan that is currently being developed. The sales tax could fund these improvements and would potentially offset the need to increase stormwater fees.

The biggest goal for this sales tax money is to fund sidewalks and trails — like Metcalf 2.0 and the Amity project — and make sidewalk connections in parts of town that are in a sidewalk dessert. The common goal will be to connect people with services.



Some examples of additional sales tax generated by the increase of the new 1/4 cent on common purchases made inside the city limits

Santa Claus to visit Louisburg

City Hall recently received a phone call from Santa Claus who told staff that he plans to visit Louisburg and the very good little girls and boys who live here.

This year Santa will help Mayor Marty Southard with a Mayor's Tree Lighting in downtown Louisburg. Santa will arrive at City Hall at 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2 and he and the Mayor will light the tree.

Santa will then visit with all children after the tree lighting until 7 p.m. inside City Hall.

Watch the City's website and Facebook page for more details.



The pool survey says:

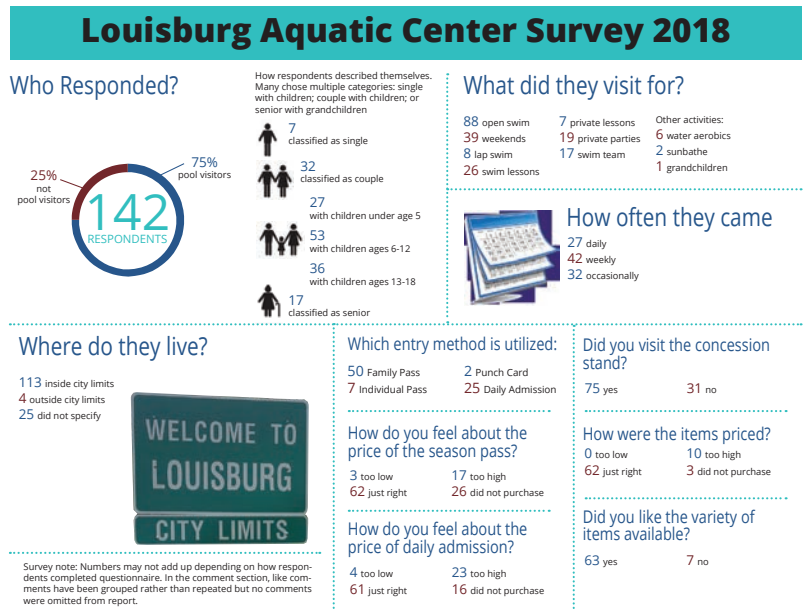
The final tallies are in and a lazy river is the most popular item requested by current pool users if improvements are made to the Louisburg Aquatic Center in the coming years.

An expanded swim area was a very close second.

Among people who don't use the pool a toddler pool ranked as the highest wish-list item.

There were 142 persons who responded to the survey with most of those living inside the city limits. Most of those surveyed described themselves as a family with children in the 6-12 age group being the most common.

To see the complete results as well as comments by those filling out the survey, check out the homepage of the city's website.



Political commercials like a tennis match

It was a rare night; I did not have any meetings or anything else competing for my time. I discovered there was no Royals game to watch, so I tried to watch some mindless program that did not take much effort or thinking.

I quickly realized that every commercial was for a politician running for an office of some sort. Usually the commercials would tell me what the opponent had done wrong and why I should not vote for that candidate. Very few times the commercials would give the positive attributes of a particular candidate. Since we live so close to state line, we get the joy of hearing political commercials for candidates from both Kansas and Missouri.

After watching the back and forth of all these commercials for over an hour, I felt like I was at a tennis match. I am not sure any of the commercials clarified

who deserves my vote Nov. 6.

I have always known how important it is to vote and that it makes a difference in our world. I would like to send out a huge thank you to my constitution teacher in high school many years ago. He shared a quote with the class from Abraham Lincoln that is very true today about why we all do — or should — vote.

Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters. — Abraham Lincoln



Getting to know....

Fire Department changes

Louisburg said good-bye to its longtime Fire Chief Paul Richards in September. Chief Richards retired after decades of service to the community.

Richards began his career in Louisburg as a volunteer, where he served from 1969-1988. In 1988, the City Council named Richards fire chief. His retirement capped a 49-year career in fire fighting.

Chiefie, as he is known to many throughout Louisburg, really got his start in the fire fighting business when he was 6 years old. He said the fire siren was located on the old water tower and when it would sound, he would race to the station which was close to his home. The station was located between the current City Hall and Fox Hall, and Richards said he would have the doors open by the time the fire crew arrived.

"As I got older ... I'd have the truck running when they got there."

"Way back when it was all fire calls," Richards said, "and then things began to evolve." That's when the fire department started responding to medical calls and accidents.

"I met people at their lowest times and helped them," that's what Richards remembers most about being a part of the fire community for so many years. And it's the crew he served with that kept him in Louisburg.

"You have to be half crazy (to be a firefighter). You are running in and they are running out or that's my opinion" Richards said.

"I've seen a lot but I wouldn't trade it for anything," says Richards.

Even though it's been almost 50 years since Richards first started with the fire department some things haven't changed.

It was in 1969, when he was a sophomore, that he was finally allowed to become an official volunteer with



Mayor Marty Southard, right, presents outgoing Fire Chief Paul Richards with a plaque recognizing his years of service to the community in a ceremony for family and city staff at City Hall in September.

the station. When the fire whistle would sound, he was allowed to leave school to go on a call.

"They had the same problem then they have today and that's daytime people" to be volunteers, he said.

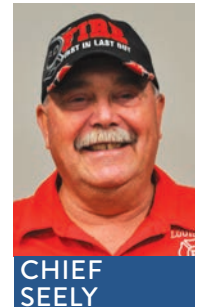
That's why the fire department is currently seeking more volunteers, according to the new Chief Brad Seely.

Seely has served the Louisburg Fire Department for 44 years and like Richards, got his start while he was still in high school.

Seely said the average age of a Louisburg firefighter is about 40 years old.

Seely said the fire department is looking for volunteers as several of the crew have retired in the past few years or are approaching retirement. Seely said the fire department provides all the training in-house.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with the Louisburg Fire Department please send or drop off a resume and cover letter or letter of interest in care of: Fire Department, Louisburg City Hall, 215 S. Broadway, Louisburg, KS 66053.



CALENDAR & REMINDERS

- Halloween on Broadway — 5-7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27 Downtown Louisburg.
- Change your Clock - Change your Batteries — It's time to "fall back" and move your clock back one hour as Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 4. It's also a good reminder to change the batteries in your smoke detector.
- Election Day — Tuesday, Nov. 6. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voting location: Louisburg United Methodist Church, 249 N. Metcalf.
- Santa Claus comes to Louisburg from 5-7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2 at City Hall. Watch the City's website and Facebook page for more details.
- Doing work on your home in the old part of Louisburg? Money is still available in the Facade of Louisburg Improvement Program. Information and applications are available on the homepage on the City's website.