

WHITE SALMON VALLEY SCHOOLS BEAR NEWS

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SPECIAL PUBLICATION

District prepares to run Maintenance and Operation Levy

The White Salmon Valley School District is preparing to ask the voters to approve a two-year replacement levy on February 19, 2008. This levy money would be used to support normal operating expenses of our schools for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. Levy funds help pay for some of the fundamental tools of our educational programs such as: staffing, increased utility costs, increased fuel costs, teaching supplies, textbooks, library books, transportation, extracurricular programs, and a portion of our after-school programs.

At the December 19, 2007, School Board meeting, the Board of Directors approved the special election *replacement maintenance and operation levy* for *Tuesday, February 19, 2008*, in the amount of \$1,990,000 for the first year and \$2,055,000 for the second year of the 2-year levy. This is an increase of \$315,000 the first year and \$380,000 the second year over the current levy amount of \$1,675,000. This increase is necessary to help cover costs of inflation as well as to maintain and enhance current programs. The second year's increase of \$65,000 is to cover the revenue the school district will lose in levy equalization dollars that year. Our levy equalization funds have decreased the last two years from \$220,529 in 2006-07, to \$135,538 in 2007-08, and will decrease to \$92,000 in 2008-09, \$27,000 in 2009-10, and \$0 in 2010-11.

Our school district has faced declining enrollment since the 1996-97 school year (we believe we have finally turned the corner and are beginning to see slight increases in student enrollment) but, as a direct result of declining enrollment, we have laid off staff and have drastically cut resources that would have maintained our facilities at the optimum level.

The increase in levy dollars will be utilized for the following items (see page 4 for explanation of each item):

Cover rising costs of inflation.....	\$50,000
Increase staff at Columbia High School by 1.0 to teach upper-level mathematics.....	65,000
Add half-time employee to help maintain facilities	18,000
Increase District Curriculum Resources to purchase new, mandated mathematics curriculum.....	50,000

—continued in next column



Columbia High School has received a Bronze Medal rating in a review conducted by *U.S. News & World Report*, in its first “America’s Best High Schools” rankings in its December 10, 2007, issue.

Furniture/Desks replacement schedule	
\$7,500 each per 3 buildings	22,500
Project Open Door (Henkle Middle School’s After School Program).....	10,000
Increase Maintenance Department Budget	43,000
Increase Grounds Department Budget	12,000
Increase Kitchen Budget	10,000
Increase the School District’s Fund Balance toward expected 5% reserves	14,500
TOTAL INCREASE IN LEVY.....	\$295,000**

**These expenditures are on a fiscal year basis (Sept. – Aug.) which differs from the \$315,000 increase in levy amounts (mentioned in the second paragraph) which are on a calendar year basis (Jan. – Dec.).

District Technology Needs

After the February 19, 2008, Maintenance and Operation Levy has been certified as approved, the White Salmon Valley School District Board of Directors approved, the White Salmon Valley School District Board of Directors intends to run a Capital Projects Levy to purchase new technology throughout the school district. The district’s technology is very dilapidated and in dire need of upgrading. More information will follow in an upcoming *Bear News* brochure.

What is the amount of the replacement levy and what will it cost taxpayers?

The proposed replacement levy for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 collections would be \$1,990,000 and \$2,055,000. This amount, coupled with levy equalization dollars from the state, represents approximately 21% of the school operating budget.

The M & O levy will cost property owners approxi-

mately \$1.68 per \$1,000 assessed value for 2009-2010 and \$1.69 per \$1,000 assessed value for 2010-2011. Based on past experience, the rate per \$1,000 may go down even further as new construction continues, which would increase the school district's base assessment value. (Please note chart below).

What Are The Total School Tax Rates?

The following shows a comparison of the actual 2007 school tax rates and the projected rates with the replacement levy.

			<u>Actual</u>			<u>Est.</u>	<u>Projected</u>	
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
M& O Levy	\$2.55	\$2.51	\$2.27	\$2.17	\$2.35	\$2.26	\$1.68	\$1.69
Bond	<u>\$0.56</u>	<u>\$0.54</u>	<u>\$0.42</u>	<u>\$0.44</u>	<u>\$0.30</u>	<u>\$0.43</u>	<u>\$0.28</u>	<u>\$0.28</u>
Total	\$3.11	\$3.05	\$2.69	\$2.61	\$2.65	\$2.69	\$1.96	\$1.97

Maintenance and Operation Levy – Questions & Answers

Q. The February election is a maintenance and operation levy proposal. What is the difference between a maintenance and operation levy and a bond issue?

A. Maintenance and operation levy funds are used to pay daily expenses of the school district. Among these operating expenses are salaries and benefits for new and existing professional and support staff, educational supplies and materials, general maintenance and upkeep of facilities, and utility and fuel costs. Bond issues, like the one passed last February, provide for new construction and/or renovation of existing facilities. A good way to remember the difference is to recall the saying, “*Bonds are for building, levies are for learning*”.

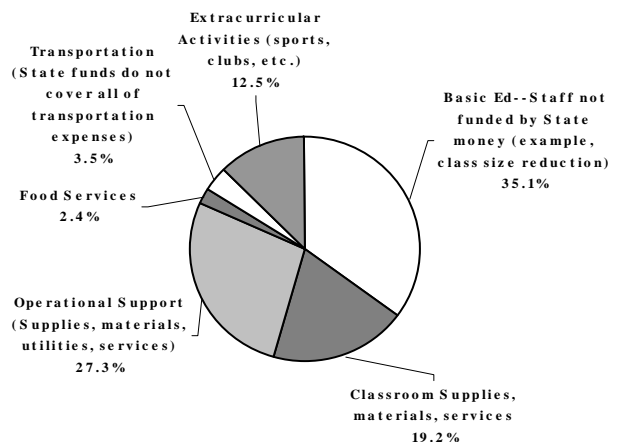
Q. What are the voter-approved requirements for the levy?

A. In the last November general election, voters approved EHJR 4204, the Simple Majority Constitutional Amendment. All levies now need 50% + 1 vote for approval. Prior to the passage of this amendment levies needed the super majority of 60% for approval.

Q. Is there a special tax exemption for senior citizens?

A. **YES.** For information about your status, please contact White Salmon Senior Citizens (Pioneer

Where does the levy money go?



Center) at 493-3068 or the office of the Klickitat County Assessor for details at 1-800-764-2245.

Q. When must I register to vote?

A. If you are already registered but need to make changes, the deadline is January 18, 2008. If you are new to the State of Washington, the deadline is February 4, 2008. If you have questions about registering to vote please contact the Klickitat County Auditor's Office at 1-800-583-8050 or the Skamania County Auditor's Office at 509-427-3730.

Q. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

A. You may contact Dale Palmer, Superintendent of the White Salmon Valley School District at 509-493-1500.

Total Levy Amount Per Home Value

Assessed Valuations	Actual			Estimated			Proposed	
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
\$100,000	\$311	\$305	\$270	\$261	\$265	\$269	\$196	\$197
\$150,000	\$467	\$458	\$404	\$391	\$397	\$403	\$294	\$296
\$200,000	\$623	\$611	\$539	\$522	\$530	\$538	\$392	\$394
\$250,000	\$778	\$763	\$675	\$652	\$662	\$672	\$490	\$493
\$300,000	\$934	\$916	\$809	\$782	\$794	\$807	\$588	\$591
\$350,000	\$1,089	\$1,069	\$943	\$913	\$927	\$941	\$686	\$690
\$400,000	\$1,245	\$1,221	\$1,078	\$1,043	\$1,059	\$1,075	\$784	\$788
\$500,000	\$1,556	\$1,527	\$1,348	\$1,304	\$1,324	\$1,344	\$980	\$985
\$750,000	\$2,335	\$2,290	\$2,021	\$1,956	\$1,986	\$2,017	\$1,470	\$1,478

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SCHOOL TAX RATES

Total Tax Rates With Replacement Levy

2009-2010 (proposed rate \$1.96/\$1,000)

2010-2011 (proposed rate \$1.97/\$1,000)

These rates are based on per \$1,000 of assessed property value.
(Please refer to the chart above to determine how this proposed replacement levy would affect your property taxes)

Current School Tax Rates

2007-2008 (actual rate \$2.65/\$1,000)

2008-2009 (estimated rate \$2.69/\$1,000)

70%

Seventy percent of this levy will be used directly for the classroom. According to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction "School District Financial Reporting Summary", White Salmon uses its revenue very effectively; we are the third most efficient in the state.

What is a Maintenance & Operation Levy (M & O Levy)?

The M & O levy funds are the difference between state allocations for school funding and the actual cost of operating our schools. As state support for school operations continues to shrink (now down to 79%), local levy funds are required to pay for essential services and programs. The February 19 levy is not an additional tax but *replaces the levy* that expires next year.

- The last M & O levy that was approved in February of 2006 expires in December of 2008. This levy would replace it, beginning in the spring of 2009.
- This proposed M & O levy would help to maintain the current level of teachers and programs within the district.
- This proposed M & O levy provides approximately 21% of the operating budget (including levy equalization dollars).
- Approval of this replacement levy will generate approximately \$92,000 in the first year and \$27,000 in the second year from the state levy equalization monies. Non-approval

will result in a loss of these funds.

- The state authorizes school districts to levy up to 24% of the district's levy base. Our school board of directors has chosen to keep the actual levy amount lower at 21% of the levy base.

We welcome your questions:

Dale Palmer, Superintendent, 493-1500

Board Members:

Kristie Hurn, 493-8448

Jeff Cooper, 493-4136

Kris Kreps, 493-3179

Tom Stevenson, 541-490-5110

Paul Mosbrucker, 493-4712

Where will the increased levy dollars be spent?

	Each year, for 2 years
Cover rising costs of inflation	\$50,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel costs have increased significantly • Goods and services have increased as a result of fuel increases • It simply costs more each year to do business 	
Increase staff at Columbia High School by 1.0 to teach upper-level mathematics	65,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Board of Education is mandating that beginning with students of the graduating class of 2012 (next year's freshmen), students take 3 credits of mathematics to graduate from high school • The State of Washington will expect local communities to pay the cost of the increased staff needed to meet this requirement 	
Increase staff for helping to maintain our facilities by .5	18,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add an additional half time, nine-month employee to assist with grounds upkeep such as mowing, weed eating, irrigation, etc. 	
Increase District Curriculum Resources to purchase new, mandated math curriculum	50,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Washington requiring new textbook adoption in mathematics • State will expect local communities to pay the cost of new curriculum 	
Furniture/Desks replacement schedule \$7,500 each per 3 buildings	22,500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student desks have not been replaced for many, many years • The district will allot \$7,500 for each building each year to put the district back on a regular replacement schedule 	
Project Open Door (Henkle Middle School's After School Program)	10,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental funds to assist in continuation of this excellent program for students 	
Increase Maintenance Department Budget	43,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle school heater repairs (\$10,000) • Repair and seal high school BACK parking lot (\$24,000) • Replace 6 lunch tables (\$8,000) • Replace one wet-dry vacuum (\$1,000) • Re-side middle school portables (\$1,700) • Paint district portables & trim & railing at Whitson (\$27,000) • Replace one auto scrubber (\$9,300) • Paint classrooms (\$7,000) 	
Increase Grounds Department Budget	12,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover increased costs of fertilizer, field paint, fuel, etc. (\$5,000) • Sand for fields (\$2,800) • Tree trimming and/or removal for student safety (\$3,500) • New fence to replace Whitson's perimeter fencing (\$9,000) • Irrigation system for CHS grounds by ag./woodshop building (\$3,500) • Replace irrigation system for CHS baseball field (\$2,500) 	
Increase Kitchen Budget	10,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace 2 Hot holding units, one-half size (\$5,280) • Replace electric can opener (\$562) • Replace Cool Keeper Transport unit (\$330) • Replace electric Food Slicer (\$2,142) • Replace Steam and Hold Steamer (\$6,118) • Replace one small milk cooler (\$1,725) • Replace one full size Hot Holding unit (\$2,300) • Replace commercial micro wave oven (\$488) 	
Increase the School District's Fund Balance toward expected 5% reserves	<u>14,500</u>
TOTAL INCREASE IN LEVY	\$295,000**



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