

Cuts spur sales tax proposal

Three-eighth-cent tax could benefit ambulance district

Kyle Hill
Staff Reporter

Truman students will contribute to Adair County ambulance services if a three-eighth-cent sales tax passes after the April 4 election.

The Adair County Ambulance Board decided Jan. 19 to submit a sales tax increase to county voters. If passed, the tax will replace the current property tax.

Ambulance district administrator Don Crosby said the tax is needed because of cuts in Medicare funding, which funds two-thirds of the district's budget.

"We're operating on a shoestring," Crosby said.

He said he anticipates a loss

of \$70,000 when the final year of Medicare cuts take effect. So far, two administrative positions were cut to compensate for budget losses.

"We squeezed by last year because we didn't buy new ambulances," he said.

Crosby said each ambulance in the fleet has driven at least 130,000 miles.

He said shifting to a sales tax, a method of fundraising authorized by the Missouri General Assembly, would require more people to pay.

"In some ways, the sales tax is fairer," Crosby said. "A retired person living on a fixed salary, their property tax appreciates while they don't spend much on sales tax."

Sophomore Mark Kirtland, Student Senate president, said he saw this measure as another effort aimed at making Truman students pay for county services such as ambulance service.



Courtney Robbins/Index
Sgt. Chad Whittom stands in front of an ambulance after a car hit a woman last September on campus. A proposed tax increase could benefit Adair ambulances.

"Property taxes are historically low in this county because they've continually passed those costs onto students," Kirtland said.

He said Senate will begin a campaign to register 50 students to vote in Adair County for the April election.

Crosby said the upcoming ballot, which includes a parks tax initiative, should appear attractive to Truman voters.

"The ambulance tax adds value to the community," he said. "If we don't pass it, we have to make cuts. It'd be

basic life support instead of advanced [support and] fewer paramedics available for the next emergency."

Currently, Kirksville's tax rate is 7.475 percent. If the ambulance tax and one-quarter-cent park tax both pass, the rate will increase to 8.1 percent.

Crosby said this would be a minimal change compared to what would happen if the tax does not pass. He said a bidding war for paramedics has caused a shortage of applicants.

"It used to be, 'I needed to

hire three, so I hired the first three applicants,'" Crosby said. "In November, I found out one of my paramedics was retiring in December. I just hired the replacement yesterday. The last two I thought I nailed down, they were hired elsewhere."

Information about the tax has been slow to come to voters. Kirksville City Manager Mari Macomber said she had not seen a press release.

"I read it was going to be eliminated," Macomber said. "Shift and eliminate is going two different ways."

Student experiences firearm disturbance

Julie Williams
Staff Reporter

A Truman student was one of the first to respond to a disturbance involving a gun Friday.

Erin Poettker, a senior justice systems major who interns at the Adair County Sheriff's Department, said she was participating in a ride-along Friday with Deputy Rick Torres. They received a call about a domestic disturbance from Novinger, a town 10 miles west of Kirksville. When they arrived at the scene, however, they discovered the suspect had a gun.

Poettker said that once they reached the street where the call came from, a woman came up to them and said her brother had pointed a gun at her and told her he was going to kill her.

"It was my third day on the internship, so I was kind of worried at that point," she said.

Poettker said she and Torres were the first responders, but they waited un-

til two or three other deputies and the sheriff arrived on the scene before taking any action.

"[Torres] left me in the car and said, 'If you need to get out of here, here's the keys,'" Poettker said.

She said she noticed the sheriff was wearing a bullet-proof vest and that another deputy had a shotgun. Poettker said she could not see the house because it was down a driveway and in a wooded area but expected to hear shots as she waited. Fortunately, she said, they never came. About five minutes later, she said, the deputies and sheriff brought the man back in handcuffs, put him in the back seat of the car, took him to jail, interviewed him and then put him in a cell.

Leonard Clark, Adair County sheriff, said the suspect, Alvin Shepard, surrendered as he and his deputies approached the house. Shepard is still in custody on a \$50,000 cash-only bond. He has been charged with two counts of felonious restraint, one count of un-

lawful use of a weapon and one count of domestic assault in the third degree.

Poettker said she did panic during the chain of events but also considers herself lucky to have gotten to see what really goes on in this line of work.

"This is what I want to do for a living, and experiencing this was like, 'Wow, this is what really happens in real life,'" she said.

Matt Eichor, director of justice systems, said experiencing events such as this one sometimes occurs during a student's internship.

"It's not what I'll call a regular occurrence, but that's really just part of the activities that a student might be part of," Eichor said.

He said Poettker never was in any danger, and students from this division usually don't experience this type of occurrence. But Eichor said this is not the first time he remembers an intern having an experience like Poettker's.

Clark also said he remembers interns who have seen similar events in

the past, and he thinks it probably was exciting for Poettker to witness.

"Every day is not like that," he said. He said student interns wear bullet-proof vests as a precaution. Poettker said wearing a vest is a policy the department follows, but she wasn't wearing one Friday because they initially were unaware weapons were involved.

"She's here to learn and observe," Clark said. "We have to be very safety conscious with her also."

Poettker said although her third day as an intern was pretty exciting, every day is different. She said so far the job has varied from serving papers and responding to an accident to sitting in on drug court and doing ride-alongs. She also said she shadows a variety of people at the sheriff's department rather than spending time with just one person.

Eichor said justice systems interns also can be involved in probation, parole and corrections, and they intern at both State and Federal agencies.

NEWS | In Brief

Council candidate withdraws from race

Justin W. Peterson has withdrawn from the City Council race because of an illness in the family, City Clerk Vickie Brumbaugh said. Because he withdrew before the certification date, his name will not appear on the ballot in April.

Council allows tax increase onto ballot

The City Council passed Monday the motion to place the proposed parks and recreation sales tax on the ballot. Citizens will vote on the issue, which proposes a sales tax increase from 7.475 percent to 7.725 percent, April 4.

Man who made bomb threat sentenced

Michael R. Lavender, 35, of Kirksville, was sentenced to three years in the Missouri Department of Corrections after pleading guilty to making a false bomb report. He called in a bomb threat to the Kirksville Wal-Mart on March 22, 2005. The store had to be evacuated and closed temporarily, according to an Adair County Prosecuting Attorney press release.

Student Senate | In Brief

- Senate approved a motion for \$50 to engrave a plaque honoring Lynn Rose, assistant professor of history, 2005 Educator of the Year.
- Senate approved a motion for \$200 for publicity materials for the 2006 Educator of the Year award.
- Senate approved a motion for \$499 for a new printer/scanner/copier/fax machine.
- Senate approved a motion for \$1,630 for expenses related to Storm the Capitol.
- Senate approved a motion by external affairs chairwoman sophomore Mindy Maness requiring all executive committee members and voting senators to participate in Storm the Capitol.
- Senate passed a resolution endorsing Senate's vision document "Truman Tomorrow: Arête." Senate approved motions for \$750 to print the document and for \$250 to publicize the document.
- Senate passed a resolution formally acknowledging the University's disassociation with the former Student Association of Missouri.

DPS | Reports

- 1/23 Report of property damage at Pershing Natatorium.
- 1/22 Sophomore Joseph Stauber was issued a Missouri Uniform Complaint and Summons for minor in possession of intoxicants.
- 1/21 Freshmen Natalie Martin, Lauren Burkhardt, Blaine Ulmer and Nicole Horton were issued a Missouri Uniform Complaint and Summons for minor in possession of intoxicants.
- 1/21 Senior Jason Belsher was arrested on an outstanding warrant.
- 1/20 Freshmen Brittany Cummings, Ellen Weber, Andrew Madras, Jonathan Cobb, Danielle Larson and Colleen Rafferty and Sophomores Megan Smith and Amanda Boyle were issued Missouri Uniform Complaint and Summons for minor in possession of intoxicants.
- 1/20 Report of theft from Missouri Hall cafeteria.
- 1/17 Freshman Brian Hawkins was issued a Missouri Uniform Complaint and Summons for minor in possession of intoxicants.



The fact is a large majority of students do only a small portion of the drinking that takes place at Truman.

Based on 2005 CORE Survey data of 555 Truman students.
<http://mostdogs.truman.edu>

Student Public Health Association