

Bidding opens for Towne Museum

BY JEAN KAUL
Staff Reporter

The bids are in for the Towne Museum contract.

Project Coordinator Lori Shook said the museum will serve a vital purpose within the University's mission. The museum will provide a welcome center to attract prospective students. It will contain materials from the Truman community's past as well as house the Office of Admission. The construction plan is set to take nine months to a year.

"It will be easier to find admissions," Shook said. "... In my experience, this is a great idea because museums like this are not typical of other schools."

Shook said the Office of Campus Planning has until the first Saturday of February to make a recommendation to the Board of Governors on which contractor has offered the best bid. At the February meeting, the Board will decide whether to approve the plan, after which the contractor's plan again is confirmed by the planning office. Dave Rector, director of institutional research and budgets, said opening the bids will lead to a week of decision-making for the committee with input from the architects to make sure the bids are feasible.

If the board rejects the bid submitted by President Barbara Dixon and the planning committee, the University has recourse.

"If all the bids come in high, we can re-bid, but in a project like this not many options items can be cut,"



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The old fire station on Franklin Street, which housed the Truman State University bookstore for the first part of last semester, will soon be home to the Towne Museum.

Rector said.

Rector said the committee will present to Dixon, who then will personally present the plan at the Board of Governors meeting in February.

The Towne Museum project is a smaller project for the University compared with something like a residence hall renovation, Shook said.

The process begins with architects drawing up plans. Once drawings are submitted by the architect, the advertising for bids goes into area newspapers such as the Kansas City Star and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Reading the submitted bids at the public offering is important, Shook said.

"The architect runs the public offering, and the bids are read so everyone knows where they stand in the process," she said.

Not only will the museum serve the campus, it also will be accessible to the community at large.

Richard Coughlin, chief information officer and dean of libraries and

museums, said the work on the interior of the museum was given to a contractor who hired Focus Communications, a company that, along with librarians from special collections, developed the content of the exhibits and decided on the best presentation of the material.

"The committee sought input from students, faculty and also the admissions staff, as well as student ambassadors [on planning]," Coughlin said.

Coughlin said the museum will contain 20 to 22 collections, which will emphasize certain themes. Exhibits will range from subjects like Native American history in the area to rural history to changes in the University's student body over the years.

Coughlin said exhibit cases will be set aside for special collections materials owned by Truman.

The larger Kirksville community will play an important role in the development of the museum as a place of interest, Shook said. She said Kirksville area schools will tour the museum and that the Adair County Historical Society also will have exhibits within the museum. Coughlin said museum representatives will talk to community organizations who want to add other items of interest to the museum's exhibits.

Rector said the museum planners have their fingers crossed that everything goes well with the bids.

"Assuming everything goes as planned with the bids being on budget, things will start happening this winter and spring," Coughlin said.

Interior design



Mark Hardy/Index

Construction workers continue with renovations in the Quiet Lounge in the Student Union Building. Changes to this area include a mezzanine that will come out above pub-style seating and a stairwell connecting the room to the third floor.

Law enforcement updates hinge on county sales tax

Quarter-cent sales tax will appear in April on ballots in Adair County

BY MARIAH BOHANON
Staff Reporter

Come April, the fate of the Adair County Sheriff's Department is in the hands of the voters.

"If it doesn't pass, we'll have to cut back services," County Commissioner Gary Jones said of Adair County's current quarter-cent sales tax to support law enforcement. "What we'd like to do is update services. We need more deputies, some new vehicles and this could also be used for 911 services."

The tax originally was instated in 1997 to fund the expansion of the county jail, Jones said. The county will vote on whether or not to continue the tax in April, he said.

"We're not asking people to support a new tax," Jones said. "It will be a different tax, but there is no increase. It will be the same amount they're paying now."

A sunset clause was voted in place on the sales tax after it was instated, he said. The clause stated that the tax would be collected until the jail expansion payment was complete or until November 2012, Jones said. He said the county was able to finish paying for the expansion of the jail last November, but the commissioner's office decided to continue collecting the tax until the end of this quarter, March 31.

"I think a lot of people don't realize that we've got murderers and everything

else," Jones said. "The old jail was mainly a lock-up facility. This one is really like a prison, and it's very efficient."

The maintenance of the jail is important as it grows older, he said. The jail is now five years old, and the warranties on many of its appliances are expired, he said.

"We built a house down there, and we don't have the money to maintain it," Jones said.

Chairman Frank Oberle said the Law Enforcement Sales Tax Committee is working on forming a ballot for the tax continuation and gaining public support for it. The sales tax is a matter of quality of life for Adair County residents, he said.

"They could levy a tax on real estate, but the legal limit they could collect from that would still be below what they're getting right now," Oberle said.

Oberle said that if the special sales tax is discontinued, the Sheriff's Department will have to draw funds from the county's general revenue in order to cover the costs of maintaining the jail.

"Everyone knows to run a maximum security facility you need funds for law enforcement and for maintenance," Oberle said.

The committee has sent a ballot proposal to be approved by lawyers in Kansas City, he said. After gaining approval for the ballot, the committee will look at how best to educate the public on the need for the sales tax, he said.

"I believe a well-informed, educated public will make the best decision," Oberle said.

The sales tax is needed not

only for maintaining the county jail, but also for supporting the law enforcement officers, he said. The Sheriff's Department does an exceptional job and earns unacceptably low wages, he said.

"One of the committee members said it best at one of our meetings: If anybody is going to put on a bulletproof vest and serve the community, they really shouldn't have to be on food stamps," Oberle said.

Sheriff Leonard Clark said that if the sales tax is voted into continuation, he will request an increase in wages and more deputies hired from the commissioner's office. The Sheriff's Department is the lowest-paid law enforcement agency in the county, he said.

"I don't anticipate the expenses of operating the jail to ever decline," Clark said. "Everything goes up. We need money to pay for those rising prices."

The Sheriff's Department received \$350,000 in excess of the expansion fund from the sales tax last year, he said. The funding paid for the jail's maintenance and for the operation of the department, Clark said.

"A jail is expensive to operate," Clark said. "We've got three jailers per shift and three shifts a day."

Clark said he is sure the Sheriff's Department and other county offices will have to make changes if the sales tax is discontinued. The cutbacks could include necessary maintenance costs and department employees, he said.

"If that funding is lost, we'll have to find \$350,000 from somewhere," he said.

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