



The Sinclair station being built at Fourth and W. Normal streets will be a fuel-card-only system, and will not include a convenience store.

Jackson Groves/Index

Sinclair station will open near West Campus Suites

BY CAITLIN DEAN
Staff Reporter

Kum & Go soon will have competition as the gas station closest to campus. Kirksville citizen Charles Morris plans to open a Sinclair pump at Fourth and W. Normal streets.

"It's going to be a fuel card system," Morris said. "There's no attendant, no cash. It'll be strictly credit card."

Morris has previous experience in the oil industry. He has worked as a distributor and opened his first station March 15, 1966.

"At one time I owned two [stations] of my own, and I supplied three others," Morris said.

The idea to open the station came about a year and a half ago when Morris spoke with one of his employees. Their dream quickly has become a reality.

"We done some dirt work back in early spring, but the actual concrete laying was probably about two months ago," Morris said. "We're hoping [to open in] the latter part of November, depends on the weather. I'd say we're somewhere around 40 percent complete right now."

Morris said he selected this location because he already owned the property but that he hopes for excellent business.

"It's a good location by the college and hospital," Morris said. "I think it'll be a good thing for everybody."

This is Morris' first experience working with Sinclair, but he said he is satisfied with his selection.

"They've got a tremendous credit card program," Morris said. "That's why I decided to go with them."

The station will provide premium unleaded fuel, regular unleaded fuel and 10 percent ethanol.

"I'll try to be competitive with everybody," Morris said. "I don't intend to have the highest [prices], I don't intend to have the cheapest. I intend to be competitive. We'll have good quality fuel."

Brad Selby, the codes and planning director for the city, said the Sinclair pump will benefit Kirksville.

"It will give just a little bit more of an opportunity for people to gas up in that part of town," Selby said. "It's a convenient location. It's on a good street. It's just another business opportunity for the city."

As a new business, the pump adds competition for the Kirksville Kum & Go, located on South Franklin, which has been in operation since the late '80s. However, senior Tom Trainor, Kum & Go sales manager, said he is not concerned about losing profits.

"If it were an actual convenience store, that might affect our business a little bit," Trainor said. "Gas is such a small percentage of our overall sales that ... it won't affect our business hardly at all."

This will provide Kum & Go with

healthy competition, as do the Westport and Party Mart stores, Trainor said.

Kum & Go marketing techniques in response to the new pump will depend on how much effort Sinclair puts into what they do, Trainor said.

"If they're making a big push to get customers, then we'll compete with them to the best of our ability."

Truman students feed the popularity of Kum & Go, but some students said they think the location of the new station might attract students, particularly if prices are lower.

"Kum & Go is in the middle of campus so they can raise their prices," freshman Matt Palozola said. "People pay more for convenience."

Palozola said he hopes the new pump will drive down prices at Kum & Go and other local gas retailers.

"Generally, Sinclair is a really good competitor, and they keep their prices lower, so that'll in turn probably get Kum & Go to get their prices lower," Palozola said.

Palozola said he weighs the differences of convenience and cost and even travels farther for a better price for certain products, including fuel.

"I know a lot of people go to Kum & Go, but I usually go to Murph USA in front of Wal-Mart," Palozola said. "Generally it's cheaper from what I've found, so I feel better when I go to Wal-Mart whenever I need gas."

Fire department to purchase new aerial truck

BY JASON QUALLS
for the Index

The Kirksville Fire Department plans to purchase a fire engine in the next six months with revenue from a quarter-cent sales tax that voters renewed in April.

The capital improvement sales tax pays for capital projects citywide, including parks and recreation, the airport and other municipal services. The next project the Kirksville City Council decided to fund is a long-term fire truck replacement plan. The department will receive an extra \$100,000 yearly to go toward payment for new fire engines.

Kirksville fire chief Randy Behrens said the department needed a new fire engine for several years because Kirksville now has many buildings that its current aerial truck cannot reach.

"We have a 75-foot elevated platform that just doesn't give us the reach that we need," Behrens said, adding that some of the buildings the truck cannot reach include Northeast Regional Medical Center

and Centennial Hall.

The department purchased the old engine in 1976.

Behrens said he implemented a truck committee shortly after voters passed the sales tax increase in April. This week, the five-member committee considered 100-foot aerial trucks to fulfill its need. He said city budget limitations meant that completing payments for a new truck might take too long to be in the city's best interest.

"We put bids out for a new one, and the cost was around \$800,000," Behrens said.

At that price, the city would be paying for the truck for nearly 10 years.

But the department has plans to purchase more than one truck with this new revenue increase. Pumpers, which are the trucks seen around the city the most on a daily basis, experience more wear and tear than an aerial truck. Behrens said that is the reason it would be important for the department to replace the city's three pumpers more frequently than the aerial truck.

"I thought if we could buy [a used

aerial truck] for \$300,000 — somewhere in that range — we could purchase pumpers a little quicker," Behrens said.

Kirksville city manager Mari Macomber said the city would benefit from buying a used aerial fire engine.

"There's a need to meet a service, and there's a need to be fiscally responsible, and balancing the two," Macomber said. "I commend the department for stepping back and saying, 'You know, we'd really like to buy new, but we need to be smart about it.'"

City financial director Laura Guy said that just because the city is buying a new truck does not mean the city has more money.

"All of a sudden it looks like we have a lot of money, we don't," Guy said. "It's just that we need to allocate to different projects."

Guy added that the city previously used the quarter-cent sales tax on city projects, including purchasing the property that was formerly the Standard Register Building, which the city had com-

pletely paid off by September.

Behrens said that in addition to the city's financial limitations, buying a new truck would mean a later arrival date for the truck itself.

"We wouldn't have it until next October," Behrens said. "I think we're actually ahead of the game replacing it now than we were [when looking for new trucks]."

The sooner the department purchases the aerial truck, the sooner it will be able to make plans for future purchases. Guy said this long-term purchasing plan might go through changes in the future.

"[The fire truck plan] now is approximately a sixth of what the sales tax brings in," Guy said. "But this capital improvement sales tax has no sunset on it."

The arrival of additional — albeit used — fire engines will allow the fire department to explore options concerning the old fire engines. Behrens said he sent a questionnaire to smaller towns around the area to see if they were interested in purchasing

the 30-year-old aerial truck.

"If they can't do it and maintain it, ... it's just an extra piece of equipment that I don't maintain but we can still use here in the city," Behrens said, adding that the engine had only accumulated 16,000 miles and minimal wear in 30 years.

Macomber said she will approve the committee's decisions before they take purchasing proposals to the City Council.

"If they came to me and said they want to buy a used truck, and I didn't think there was any merit to it, I'd have thought, 'Oh, no, we're not going to do it,'" Macomber said. "They had sound reasoning behind it, and so let's take it to council."

Behrens said the truck committee narrowed the choices for the aerial truck purchase to three or four possibilities, including a five-year-old truck from a town in Pennsylvania.

"I'm pretty excited," Behrens said. "I can't wait till we find that one that will fit our needs."

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