

Sales tax proposal takes aim at crime, methamphetamine

Clark County is at a turning point that calls for major investments to combat crime and confront the effects of widespread use of methamphetamine, county administrator Bill Barron declared as he recommended a sales tax increase to finance additional deputy sheriffs, expand treatment and beef up therapeutic courts.

Barron's proposal was made this morning during his presentation of the county's 2007-2008 budget to county commissioners. The proposal calls for commissioners to tap a 2/10th of 1 percent local option sales tax.

The sales tax that would bring in about \$5 million a year. It would raise the sales tax rate to 7.6% in the unincorporated area, but it would not affect the 8.1% rate that is currently in place in most other parts of the county. On average, this would cost each citizen about a dollar a month. With this money, the county can hire 16 new deputies now and add eight more deputies per year after 2008, two new jail transport officers, six Prosecuting Attorney officers, a judicial officer and four court employees and six Superior Court clerks.

Additionally, it would provide financing for planning expanded jail and court facilities, and would set aside \$10 million toward construction of this new jail capacity.

Barron's budget proposal also recommends local approval of the state-authorized 1/10 of 1 percent sales tax, which would cost residents approximately \$1.19 a month.

"This county is approaching a crisis," sheriff Garry Lucas said. "It's important that the county find new funding streams for enforcement and a new jail to keep up with meth-related crimes and our growing population."

Barron told commissioners that the baseline 2007-2007 budget is fully funded.

Both Marc Boldt, chair of the board of the county commissioners, and commissioner Steve Stuart said they support the tax increases. Commissioner Betty Sue Morris is out of the office this week and did not participate in the Wednesday workshop session.

Commissioners will hold public hearings on the 2007/2008 budget early in December.

Green power and personal property tax exemption measures getting statewide voter approval

A statewide initiative requiring large electric utilities, including Clark Public Utilities, to acquire at least 15 percent of their wholesale power from certain renewable resources was being approved by voters statewide and in Clark County, Tuesday election results show.

The measure was opposed statewide by the Association of Washington Business on behalf of its private utility members. Locally, Clark Public Utilities remained silent on the measure. (The utility has a green-power program of its own.)

Locally, 51.86 percent of the votes tabulated were in favor of the measure. Statewide, 51.6 percent of the voters were favoring the measure.

A constitutional amendment that would increase the personal property tax exemption for heads of households from \$3,000 to \$15,000 was being overwhelmingly approved statewide by a 78.9 percent majority. Local voters were giving the measure an 81.54 percent majority. The increased exemption would mainly benefit small business owners.

Although Clark County voters were approving Initiative 933, statewide the issue was being turned down by over 56 percent of the state's voters. I-993 is the so-called property rights initiative and would have compensated property owners for losses incurred due to regulatory measures.

Initiative 920, which would have repealed the so-called death tax, was losing both in Clark County, 53.51 percent, and statewide, 59.9 percent.

Clark County flood situation update

Clark County storm impact monitors report that Lucia Falls Road between Heisson Road and Moulton Falls, and 39th Street from 212th Avenue to Powell in Hockinson area, have been re-opened.

Roads with limited access are as follows: Etna Road, one mile West of Buncombe Hollow Road, one lane only; Fourth Plain Road between 124th and 127th Avenues, one lane open in both directions; Highway 503 at 99th Street, water on road, use caution; Highway 503 at 159th Street, water on road, use caution; and NE 102nd Avenue at NE 156th Street, water on road, use caution.

Still closed are NW 20th Avenue at Onsdorff Road in Battle Ground, Highway 99 between NE 117th and 121st Streets (Klineline Bridge), Allworth Road, between Crawford Road and Osman Road and NE 112th Avenue at NE 156th Street.

Calendar

Port of Ridgefield commissioners meet in regular session at 6 p.m. this evening in port offices at 111 W Division Street. ⚡ A free lecture on modern architecture is being presented by the Vancouver Historic Preservation Commission at 6:30 p.m. this evening in the First Presbyterian Church, 4300 Main Street. Speakers are **Jack Bookwalter** and **Jim Brown**.

Wednesday Headlines

[Rumsfeld resigns as Defense Secretary after big election gains for Democrats--New York Times, **David Stout**](#)

[Democrats take Montana seat, tie Senate; Virginia's Democrat Jim Webb has slight lead that could wrest total control to Demos--Seattle Times, AP](#)

[Stuart wins re-election to county commissioner's job--Columbian, **Don Hamilton**](#)

[Last night's election results from the Columbian](#)

[World sees Democrats' win as rejection of Bush--New York Times, AP](#)

[Nancy Pelosi expected to be first woman Speaker of the House--New York Times, AP](#) (Annotated)

[Kulongoski coasts to 2nd term--Oregonian, **Harry Esteve**](#)

[President Bush offers fresh bipartisanship approach--USA TODAY, **Douglas Stranglin**](#)

[Israeli forces fire on Gaza town killing 20--Washington Post, **Scott Wilson**](#)

Wednesday on the air

General Election Night Coverage—4:30 p.m. CVTV

Columbia River Crossing Task Force (10/25)—6:30 p.m. CVTV

LA Lakers at Portland Blazers (live)—7 p.m. KGW-TV, KXL

Vancouver Planning Commission (10/24)—8:53 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the Weather

Sarah Coomber getting shoji protection. ⚡ **Tom Hunt** digging new digs. ⚡ **Scott Barbour** coming up with smiles. ⚡ **Ed Geiger** working on half-bridge pose. ⚡ **Jim Demmon** putting together good show. ⚡ **Wednesday**, rain tapering off, 53. **Thursday**, rain could be gone, cloudy, 52. **Friday**, mostly cloudy, possible late showers, 51.