

Kinnikinnick School District Votes to Put Tax Referendum on Ballot

(Roscoe, IL) At its regular meeting on December 17, 2013, the Kinnikinnick District 131 Board of Education voted unanimously to place a referendum on the March 18th ballot asking voters for a tax extension limitation increase for the District's operating funds. Under the property tax cap, the District must seek voter approval for an increase.

The property tax extension limitation law limits the increase in total extensions to the lesser of 5% or the Consumer Price Index. The projected and estimated tax rates would increase as illustrated in the following chart.

| Tax Year | Kinnikinnick Tax Rate (Estimated) |
|-----------------|--|
| 2013 | 3.501 |
| 2014 | 3.694 |
| 2015 | 4.1723 |
| 2016 | 4.5033 |

The Kinnikinnick community expects educational excellence. The District is proud of what has been accomplished and fears the continued budget shortfall will jeopardize the educational environment that is provided to the students. In order to meet community and state expectations, the District has deficit spent an average of \$460,627 annually since 2009. There is currently a budget shortfall of \$1 million dollars and rapidly declining reserves. Projections reveal that the District's reserves will be depleted by the 2016-2017 school year. The last successful referendum was in 1998.

Kinnikinnick School District #131 Superintendent Keli Freedlund made a presentation at the meeting outlining the district's financial situation. "Our mission is to provide the environment that encourages and enables all students to develop to their highest potential, since 2002 we have delicately balanced living up to our mission and being fiscally responsible. The Kinnikinnick staff has continued to do more with less and have successfully problem solved when reductions were needed to minimize the educational impact on the students. However, we cannot continue to provide the type of education that our students deserve and the community has come to expect.

The deficit was not created by extravagant spending but rather decreased State and Federal funding since 2008 and continued educational mandates. We only have two options left; to continue with budget cuts that will significantly impact the educational environment for our students or increase revenue. With the additional funds, the District would be able to reduce staffing and program cuts which directly affect class size, provide necessary materials for our classrooms, and create financial stability over time."

Voters will be asked to approve a 12.5% increase in the extension limitation for their 2014 and 2015 property taxes. The referendum increase roughly translates into an additional \$105.64 for the owner of a \$100,000 home in 2014 and an additional \$101.77 in 2015. The estimated total operating tax increase over two years is \$207.41 or \$8.65 per month for the owner of a \$100,000 home.

For tax year 2015 and beyond, the property tax extension limitation law will once again limit the increase in the overall extension to the lesser of 5% or the Consumer Price Index. The property tax extension limitation law also includes caps on individual school funds which the District projects will further restrict the overall tax rate.

Kinnikinnick District Board of Education President Edgar Diaz encouraged the community to attend the **Kinnikinnick Town Hall meeting on January 16th at Roscoe Middle School at 6:30 p.m.** “By this unanimous vote, the Board is asking the community to decide how we will move forward. We cannot continue with the budget deficits we have had for the past five years. The voters have the opportunity to determine whether to increase our revenue and invest in the future of our children or proceed with significant cuts in staff and programs to balance the budget. I urge our voters to take the time to understand these issues.”