

Dear Douglas County Citizen:

On November 8, 1994, the citizens of Douglas County will vote on a plan to fund public improvements and property tax relief with a 1 cent county-wide sales tax. The purpose of this letter is to share with you information about this proposal and to answer questions that have been asked.

## **Description of the Proposal**

### ■ **New Public Facilities for Parks, Protection, and Health Care.**

- The City of Lawrence plans to use the largest portion of its share of the proposed sales tax to provide \$12.2 million in Parks and Recreation improvements.
- Douglas County plans to use the largest portion of its share of the proposed 1 cent county-wide sales tax to build a larger jail to house additional prisoners and comply with state and federal requirements. Estimated cost: \$11.0 million.
- Douglas County and the City of Lawrence plan to jointly fund the expansion of the County's three community health agencies, (Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center and the Douglas County Visiting Nurses Association), to meet current and future service demands. Estimated cost: \$8.2 million.
- Baldwin City, Eudora, and Lecompton plan to dedicate their share of the proposed sales tax for capital improvements determined annually by their City Councils.

### ■ **Property Tax Relief.**

Both Douglas County and the City of Lawrence have pledged to use some of the sales tax revenue to lower property taxes. Douglas County will reduce its mill levy by two (2) mills, and the City of Lawrence will reduce its mill levy by five (5) mills.

## Questions and Answers About the Proposal

### *Why do we need these new public facilities ?*

**PARKS** - Earlier this year, the Lawrence City Commission adopted a Comprehensive Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department that identified new and renovated facilities to meet the community's parks and recreation needs. Program participation increases from 1986 to 1993 are shown below:

Classes	Adult Sports	Youth Sports	Special Events	Special Populations	Recreation Center Use
47.7%	16.5%	70.9%	60.6%	288.1%	32.8%

Existing facilities restrict program growth currently and will not be adequate to accommodate anticipated parks and recreation needs.

**PROTECTION** - Our County jail is overcrowded. The current jail was built in 1976 with space for 50 prisoners. In 1976, the average daily prisoner population was 42.7. In 1993, the average daily prisoner population was 86.8. It is not uncommon to have 100 prisoners in the facility at one time. This growth in prisoner population reflects state-wide and nation-wide trends:

Prisoners per 100,000 population	1976	1991
Kansas	91	231
U.S.	123	310

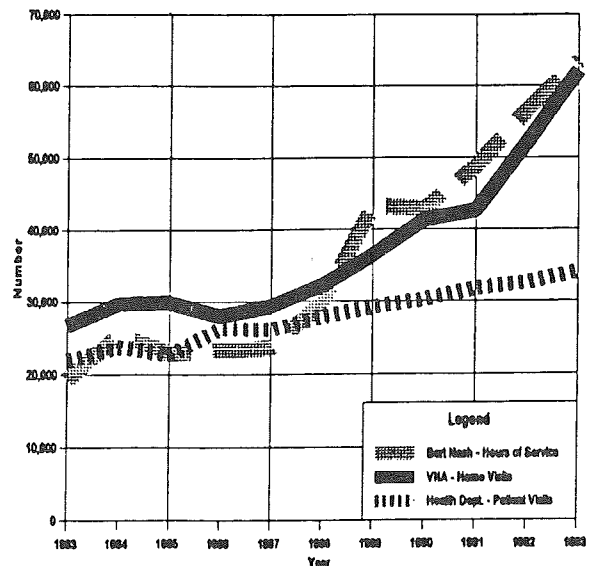
The County has the legal obligation to either house or find jail space for prisoners sentenced to jail terms. Alternatives to jailing people are already being fully utilized through the Douglas County Community Corrections Department. There are legal standards for prisons. Without more space, Douglas County will become vulnerable to lawsuits which claim that the jail space is inadequate. Other counties in Kansas, and elsewhere across the country, have been successfully sued and ordered by the courts to build new facilities with property tax dollars when facilities were determined to be inadequate. This proposal will also provide additional public parking for the County Courthouse and the Law Enforcement Center.

**HEALTH CARE** - The Douglas County community health agencies provide services for children, adults and senior citizens to help keep them healthy and out of hospitals. Over the 10 year period ranging from 1983 through 1993, Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center provided an increase of more than 227 percent in the number of service hours; home visits provided by Douglas County Visiting Nurses (VNA) increased by 145 percent; and annual visits to the Lawrence - Douglas County Health Department increased by more than 55 percent. The agencies are overcrowded today, and a citizens panel recently recommended additional space in order to meet the anticipated growth in service needs.

**BALDWIN CITY, EUDORA AND LECOMPTON** - These growing Douglas County cities each have capital needs to be financed. Those capital needs can be financed with property taxes or with assistance from a 1 cent county-wide sales tax.

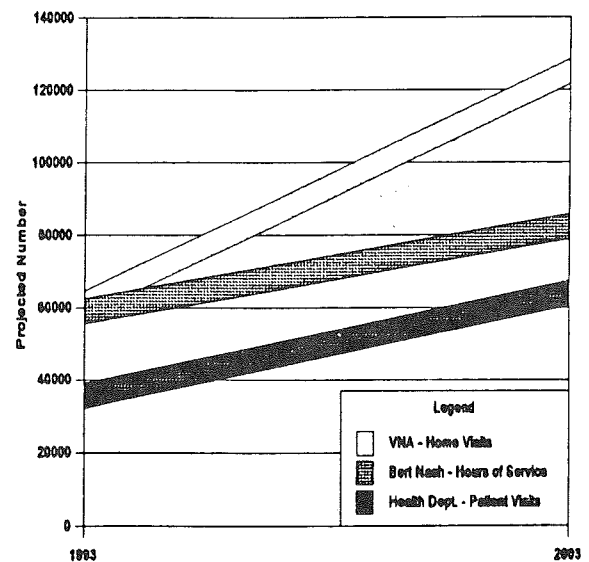
Health Agencies Services

1983 - 1993



Health Agencies Service Projections

1993 - 2003



***What improvements would be financed with the sales tax revenue ?***

**PARKS** - The City of Lawrence parks and recreation facilities to be funded include:

- ▶ An addition to the East Lawrence Community Center;
- ▶ A major recreation center with an indoor swimming pool;
- ▶ A baseball/softball complex;
- ▶ Improvements to the Youth Sports Inc. (YSI) complex;
- ▶ Renovation of the Municipal Pool;
- ▶ Community and Neighborhood Park Acquisition;
- ▶ Park Development - Prairie Park, Green Meadows, "Dad" Perry, Hallmark, Northwest, and Southwest;
- ▶ A nature and outdoor education center in Prairie Park;
- ▶ Bike trail development; and
- ▶ City entryway landscape improvements.

**PROTECTION** - The proposal would enable Douglas County to increase the number of jail beds from 50 to 170 and provide additional public parking for the County Courthouse and the Law Enforcement Center. The new jail would be attached to the existing Law Enforcement Center at 11th & New Hampshire.

**HEALTH CARE** - Additional space would be provided for the three Douglas County community health agencies by renovating the old wings of Lawrence Memorial Hospital built in 1928, 1937 and 1956. The increased space will allow for the expansion of preventive and community-based health care services for Douglas County residents.

**BALDWIN CITY, EUDORA, AND LECOMPTON** - Each city intends to use its share of the 1 cent county-wide sales tax on capital improvements to be identified annually by its respective City Council. Capital improvements funded by the sales tax revenue could include: streets and drainage; vehicles, machinery and equipment; a municipal swimming pool; public safety equipment; water treatment/distribution systems; and wastewater collection/treatment facilities.

### ***Why is a sales tax being proposed to pay for new public facilities ?***

The 1 cent county-wide sales tax is being proposed because local officials believe that local government is too reliant on the property tax and there are pressing needs for these facilities. A county-wide sales tax would help keep property taxes down and allow visitors to Douglas County to help fund local government services when they shop here.

### ***Do other Kansas counties have a sales tax ? What about neighboring counties ?***

- Douglas County does not have a county-wide sales tax.
- 64 of 105 Kansas counties have a county-wide sales tax .
- Of the 64 counties with a sales tax, 49 (three out of four) have a 1 cent sales tax.

County	County Sales Tax Rate	City Sales Tax Rate
Douglas	none	Lawrence - 1 cent; Baldwin City - 1 cent; Eudora - none; Lecompton-none.
Johnson	.6 cent	All cities - 1 cent
Shawnee	none (will vote on a 1 cent sales tax in November).	Topeka - 1 cent
Wyandotte	1 cent	All cities have either a 1/2 cent or 1 cent sales tax.
Jefferson	1 cent	All cities have either a 1/2 cent or 1 cent sales tax.
Franklin	1.5 cents	Ottawa - 1/2 cent

### ***How would the revenue from a 1 cent county-wide sales tax be divided ?***

It is estimated that a 1 cent county-wide sales tax would raise \$7.0 million each year. State law establishes a formula for dividing the revenue. The formula is based on population size and the amount of property taxes levied by each jurisdiction. Local officials cannot change the formula. Baldwin City, Eudora and Lecompton would each receive more revenue from a 1 cent county-wide sales tax than they would from a 1 cent city sales tax. Baldwin City, for example, would receive 47 percent more revenue under this proposal than a 1 cent city sales tax. Baldwin City, Eudora and Lecompton would receive revenue from sales that occurred outside of its own city limits. It is estimated that Baldwin City would receive \$164,679, Eudora \$155,061, and Lecompton \$32,313 annually.

***Will a part of the sales tax be spent for a new high school in Lawrence ?***

**No. No sales tax revenue from any source will be spent for any school facilities.**

Residents of Douglas County who reside in USD 497 will also vote on November 8th on a bond issue for a new high school and improvements to 14 other neighborhood schools.

***How would a 1 cent county-wide sales tax affect property tax rates ?***

Douglas County and the City of Lawrence have committed to using a portion of the sales tax revenue to replace property taxes. Douglas County will reduce its mill levy by two (2) mills and the City of Lawrence will reduce its mill levy by five (5) mills in 1996. Using the tax rate for 1995, the owner of an \$80,000 house would pay \$18.40 (6.7%) less property taxes to Douglas County and \$55.20 (20.7%) less property taxes to the City of Lawrence.

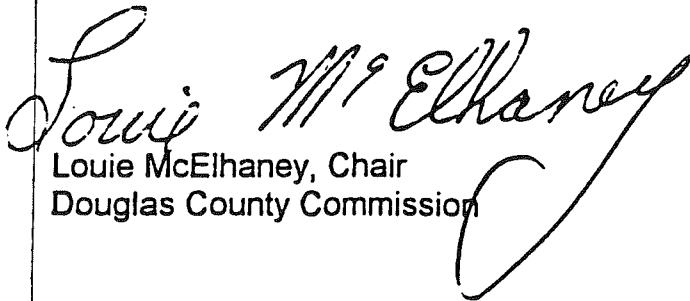
***What do I have to do in order to vote in the November 8 election ?***

In order to participate in the November 8th election, you must be a registered voter. If you have moved since the last time you registered to vote, you must re-register. You can get registration information by calling the Douglas County Clerk's Office at 832-5267. In order to vote you will need to register by October 24, 1994.


If you are unable to physically get to the polls, or plan to be out of town and wish to vote in the November 8th election, you can call the Douglas County Clerk's Office at 832-5267 to receive information about casting an absentee ballot. If you would like additional information about the 1 cent county-wide sales tax proposal, you may contact 832-5268.

We thank you for taking the time to read this material.

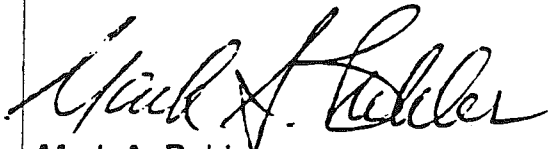
Sincerely,



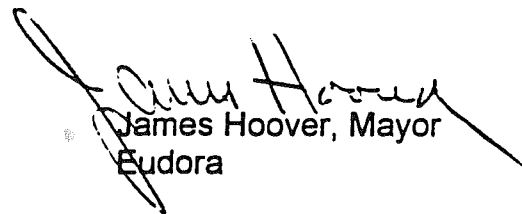
Louie McElhaney, Chair  
Douglas County Commissioner



Loren K. Litteer, Mayor  
Baldwin City




Mark A. Buhler  
Douglas County Commissioner



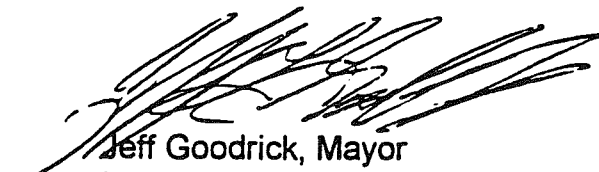
James Hoover, Mayor  
Eudora



Jim Chappell  
Douglas County Commissioner



Jo Andersen, Mayor  
Lawrence



Jeff Goodrick, Mayor  
Lecompton

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 1

IMPORTANT  
ELECTION  
INFORMATION

Current Resident or