



Funding Library Services in West Richland

The West Richland City Council, during their July 26 meeting, passed a resolution to place a proposition on the ballot for the November general election. If approved by voters, the proposition replaces the 2.5% increase in city electric, telephone, and gas utility taxes approved by voters in 2003 specifically dedicated to the Library, with a property tax levy lid lift of \$0.45 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The city contracts with Mid-Columbia Libraries (MCL) to provide library services. The contract only includes library service costs and does not include maintenance and capital costs for the city-owned library facility. These costs are paid by the city in addition to the contract costs for library services.

Over the past six months, the city has been engaged in a community-based process to examine options for ongoing funding for the library. Without a sustainable funding source, the city will be required to substantially reduce library service levels and will no longer be able to afford the city's contract with Mid-Columbia Libraries, which has been servicing West Richland residents for 48 years.

The revenue collected from the voter approved 2.5% telephone utility tax has been significantly declining since 2011 by over 25% as more telephone customers eliminate their land line and the expansion of non-taxable data services by cellular phone service providers. The city anticipates this decline in telephone utility tax revenue to continue. To balance the library fund budget, the city has had to make cuts to maintenance expenses at the library facility and utilize reserves. The recent decline in electric utility tax revenues due to warmer winters and increasing number of energy efficient homes has further complicated this matter. The city's current projection shows the library fund will be depleted by spring of 2017.

If approved by voters, this proposition would repeal the library dedicated 2.5% utility tax on telephone, electric and gas utility services beginning in 2017 and increase the regular property tax levy by \$0.45 per \$1,000 assessed value. That means the owner of a \$200,000 home would pay \$7.50 a month (\$90 per year) for library services.

Meetings

- Sep. 6 City Council meeting
Library - 7:00 p.m.
- Sep. 7 West Richland Chamber meeting
Sandberg Event Center - Noon
- Sep. 11 Planning Commission meeting
Library - 6:00 p.m.
- Sep. 20 City Council meeting
Library - 7:00 p.m.
- Sep. 26 Park Board meeting
Library - 6:30 p.m.

FREE Fluorescent Light Recycling Day

When: September 17, 2016

Where: Flat Top Park
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Bring: Fluorescent tubes, straight or curved shapes, CFLs, HIDs such as metal halide, mercury vapor and high pressure sodium. (Any light that contains mercury)

Limit: Up to 10 mercury-containing lights per person.

Currently, a home with a monthly electric bill of \$150 and phone bill of \$100 pays \$6.25 a month (\$75.00 per year). The property tax levy increase would be dedicated to Library Operations and allow for the continuation of current library services in West Richland.

Additional information can be found on the City's website at www.westrichland.org, including an online calculator to assist residents in comparing the current utility tax rate of 2.5% versus a regular property tax levy lid lift of \$0.45 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Finance Director Jessica Platt is also available to answer questions at 967-7134 or jplatt@westrichland.org. For questions regarding library services provided by Mid-Columbia Libraries, please contact Communications & Advancement Director Davin Diaz at 737-6365 or DDiaz@midcolumbialibraries.org.



A Time of Remembrance - September 24th and 25th

A statewide effort is being planned to honor the families and comrades of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Hawaii and Alaska's Fallen. This tribute is being held to honor those who have died for their country and the families left behind.

A Candlelight Vigil will take place at Columbia Park at the Veteran's Memorial in Kennewick. The public is invited to join the families at the beautiful Candlelight Ceremony next to the Columbia River. The Vigil will start at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 24th.

Sunday, September 25th, there will be an official State Recognition Ceremony hosted by the City of West Richland at Flat Top Park. Our goal is to have each of our heroes memory represented. We encourage all citizens to attend this important event as we give back to those who have given their all. The Memorial Ceremony will begin at 11:00 a.m.

School is Back in Session - Please Slow Down!

Flashing school zone lights on South Highlands Blvd. for Wiley Elementary, North 62nd Avenue for Tapteal Elementary, and Paradise Way for Enterprise Middle School are used to draw attention to school zone signs when children are present and the 20 MPH speed limit is enforced. School zone flashing times are as follows:

<i>Days</i>	<i>Wiley & Tapteal Elem.</i>		<i>Enterprise MS</i>	
<i>Monday-Thursday</i>	<i>7:50-8:50</i>	<i>3:10-3:45</i>	<i>6:35-8:00</i>	<i>2:20-2:55</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>7:50-8:50</i>	<i>2:10-2:45</i>	<i>6:35-8:00</i>	<i>1:20-1:55</i>

Online Payment System Down for Upgrades September 20 - September 22

The City partners with Retail Lockbox Merchant Services as our credit card merchant. Retail Lockbox is updating our online payment system with some new improved features including updated daily account balances. This update may affect your ability to make online or over the phone payments between September 20th and September 22nd. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

As always you may remit payment in cash, cashier's check, money order or personal check at our office or you may mail in or use our drop box and remit with check, cashier's check or money order.

We expect our online system and phone system to be back up and running with new features on Monday September 22nd.

HARVEST FESTIVAL - SEPTEMBER 17th

The annual Harvest Festival, sponsored by Red Mountain Lions Club, is being held on Saturday, September 17th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Flat Top Park.

There will be vendor booths, fun games for the kids and more. Benton County Fire District #4 will be selling hamburgers and hot dogs as a fundraiser.

Bring the family down for a fun day at the park!