

Vote for your desired level of library service on August 3

JUST THE FACTS: WHY A MILLAGE REQUEST?

Library services are financed separately from police, fire and general township operations. The elected autonomous Library Board would like you to vote for your desired level of Library Service.

- **Current Library hours and services will be cut further if tax revenue is not restored.**

The Library operates on a budget that provides basic library services. Taxable property values and corresponding property taxes for Library service have declined. In 2009 the decline was 5%, this year revenues are estimated to decrease at least 11%, 14% in 2011, 13% in 2012 and 5% in 2013. **The Library's 2010 budget is \$900,000**, which is 2% of the total property tax collected by the township. **Declining revenues are projected to shrink the budget to approximately \$650,000 in 2013**, requiring corresponding cuts in library services to compensate for the \$250,000 loss in revenue. **We are asking for the millage so we can continue the same level of service for our customers.**

- **The Library has already cut hours, staff, books and DVDs**

Wages have been frozen for over 2 ½ years. The five staff members who receive health benefits have had to increase their contributions to their health care premium in 2009 and 2010. Hours were cut 7% in 2010 and expenditures for materials such as books and DVDs were cut by 20%. Funding for services like preschool early literacy classes for children, reading programs, teen programs, concerts, movies, classes in history, finance, crafts, health and our popular computer classes have already been reduced by 50%.

- **Economic conditions contribute to double digit growth in demand for library services.**

Foot traffic, circulation of materials and computer usage (categories that we use to measure success) experienced double-digit increases in 2009. For-profit businesses often hire more staff to meet demand, yet the Library has met a rising demand without hiring additional staff.

- **A positive return on tax investment.**

A recent study of the impact of public libraries on their communities showed a 4 to 1 return on investment. (Nine Libraries, 2006) A [library value calculator](#) is available at the Library and demonstrates how much is saved by using the Library.

- **How much will it cost?**

The owner of a township property with a taxable value of \$100,000 (\$200,000 market value) would pay 0.4 mills or an additional **\$40** in property taxes to the Library in the first year of the millage collection. A mill is equal to \$1 for every \$1,000 of a property's taxable value, which is generally equal to half the property's market value.

Currently the Library operates on a 0.3-mill perpetual levy authorized by voters in 1975 and now collected at the rate of 0.2114 mills due to Headlee Amendment rollbacks; and a renewable 0.5 mill levy originally levied in 1998 and is now collected at 0.4528-mills due to Headlee Amendment rollbacks. Together, the library levied 0.6642 mills in 2009.

- **The Library is a reliable information resource for the community.**

The Library is a resource to help residents who are unemployed, seeking job and career materials; or individuals and families with foreclosure and housing issues. Students use the library for homework help and for a place to study. The Library is often the first stop for reliable information regarding health issues.

For more information please contact Library Director, [Larry Ostrowski](#) at 248-698-4942 x 7 or Millage Chairpersons, [Roger & Gerry Herrington](#) at 248-618-3117.

- **The Library is the only area provider of free pre-school early literacy classes for children.**

The data on the value of such a program for a child is quite extensive. ([Preschool Education through Public Libraries, 2001](#)) The program may need to be reduced without basic funding.

- **The Library is the only provider of free computers and Internet access in White Lake.**

Many job hunters and businesses depend on the Library to provide Internet access for employment related correspondence. Students who do not have a computer in the home use our computers for school work. Many people use our free wireless access with their laptop and/or phone. The demands and needs for Internet access continues to grow in White Lake, even while those able to afford it decline, and approximately 20% of the Oakland County population attempts to get by without it. As the Internet evolves and demand increases, the Library will also need to update and replace computers and software.

- **The Library partners with others for community events and to raise funds.**

The Library partners with nearby libraries and schools, as well as other governmental units and organizational groups like the White Lake Historical Society, in activities such as the Big Read, Fisk Farm Festival, Community Tree Lighting and the recent Eggstravangza. The annual Friends of the Library Mini-Golf event was also established to raise funds for the Library.

- **State aid to the Library is disappearing.**

State aid has declined by 60% in the last two years and is expected to decline further in the future. State funding for the valuable Michigan Electronic Library is not assured past 2011.

- **Other libraries may be increasingly unwilling to share resources.**

As money becomes tight, larger libraries are expected to be less willing to share their collections with other libraries, especially the smaller ones like ourselves. Many residents request materials from other libraries. This service requires extensive staff time to process and may need to be reduced. We may also expect fees to provide this service to our residents in the future.

- **Library grants do not provide money to finance day-to-day operations.**

The Library seeks grants from foundations such as the National Endowment for the Arts for programs like the recently completed and very successful Big Read. In the near future, we will have additional computers via a federal stimulus grant and two additional early learning literacy computers from a PNC foundation grant. The fact that the Library has sought out grant opportunities shows its commitment to staying within its budget. However, while fulfilling goals developed during our 2008 strategic planning process, these grants do nothing to address the lack of funds needed to maintain day-to-day operations.

BALLOT LANGUAGE

Shall the authorized millage for the White Lake Township Library be increased by .4 mills (\$0.40 per \$1,000 of taxable value) upon all property subject to ad valorem taxation within the Charter Township of White Lake, for a period of 8 years, from 2010 through 2017, inclusive, to provide funds as determined by the Library Board to be necessary for Library operations, for all Library purposes authorized by law, including general operations, and shall the Charter Township of White Lake levy such millage for these Library purposes? It is estimated that, from this millage, the Township Library shall collect the sum of approximately \$413,036 in 2010.

The election is on Tuesday, August 3, 2010.

Please vote for your desired level of service.

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