

SCHOOL TAX REFERENDUM

The Board of Directors of The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (GSCC) supports the proposed one percent Countywide Sales Tax referendum. We believe the need for safe, secure, 21st century school facilities throughout Springfield and Sangamon County are critical to the future of our community and this referendum is our most attractive means to that end.

"Nobody wants to pay more in taxes, but this is essential. The future of our community is dependent upon our schools which are directly related to our ability to attract people and businesses. Thousands of visitors each year will contribute to sales tax revenues and our school facilities. Why not allow others to help us secure our future, rather than face the harsh reality in 10 or 20 years that our community is in real trouble? We've all seen people choose other communities because of "better school facilities". We must reverse this trend and invest in our future today."

- John Staff, owner of Staff Carpet & GSCC Board Member

Key Facts

Many school facilities throughout Springfield and Sangamon County need critical safety and security upgrades, renovations and additions, and in some cases need to be replaced. For example, 81% of Springfield Schools are 50 years old or older, with 28 temporary classrooms (mobile units) in use across the District.

School facilities and performance are critical when it comes to attracting talent to the region and preparing our future workforce. School facilities are directly tied to new residents, employees, and businesses, and are one of the first things potential residents want to see.

There have been no voter-approved tax increases (property or sales) to benefit District 186 schools since 1984. While the proposed referendum is a sales tax it does not tax groceries, medicine, cars, boats, licensed vehicles, farm equipment, parts, or inputs.

Sangamon County residents living in districts where facility needs are not as significant as others may experience a decrease in their property taxes if the referendum passes.

Revenue from the referendum can only be used for facilities and is the only means to significantly renovate and/or build new, more functional facilities, thus addressing the facility needs outside the parameters of health life safety bonds, which can only be used for very specific and narrow projects (roofing, heating/cooling systems, electrical systems, etc.) Revenue cannot be used for personnel costs.

Thousands of annual visitors will contribute an estimated 20-30% to the sales tax revenues and funding of the Sangamon County School facilities.

"A voter's first reaction can understandably be to oppose the proposed referendum. However, with further study, considering the overall need, and the long term benefits of the proposal, like talent attraction, business attraction, and business growth, I believe this will be a great step forward for the future of our community."

- Jim Britton, owner of Express Employment Professionals & 2018 GSCC Board Chair

Many believe Chambers of Commerce should oppose nearly all proposed tax increases and they often do. However, we believe the Countywide referendum is an investment in the future of our community.

