

Cedar Rapids Community Schools

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Community Keeps Close Eye on Spending



Voters in Linn County approved a one percent school local-option sales (SILO) tax on February 13. Shoppers began paying the 10-year tax on July 1. All counties in Iowa now have a SILO tax to support education needs.

In the Cedar Rapids Community School District, SILO funds will be used for infrastructure building needs, property tax reduction, and technology. To involve community professionals from each area, the District has formed two monitoring committees - one for technology and the other for infrastructure and property tax relief. Committee activities will include assessing whether projects fit the

original plan and determining if they are completed within the budget and on schedule.

"The importance of the SILO oversight committees cannot be overstated," noted Steve Graham, Executive Director of Business Services. "The use of the previous "bond funded" Facilities Oversight Task Force resulted in the completion of \$52.7 million in infrastructure projects as promised to the community on time and under budget. This positive experience for both the District and taxpayers will be replicated through the use of SILO oversight committees. The structure and function will ensure that public trust is maintained throughout the duration of this funding source. "

"I see the committee as both overseeing and advising," added Emmett Scherman, Co-Chair of the Infrastructure Oversight Committee and Chairman of the 2000 Facilities Oversight Task Force. "The main objective is to see that projects are within the SILO guidelines and that those projects and purchases are completed within budget and in a timely fashion. I would also hope that committee members would make suggestions concerning those projects and purchases to assure the District is getting the most for its money."



Both committees will meet regularly to review potential time schedules and proposed purchases and spending schedules while determining that projects are within the SILO guidelines. Later, both groups will review quotations or bids for projects and then monitor progress to assure staying on time and within budget.

"It's great to have our 'customers' involved in making our technology vision a reality," said Jay Marino, Associate Superintendent of Organizational Effectiveness and Accountability. "Without the support of the technology oversight committee, their expertise and their interest in helping us improve, we wouldn't be able to carry out our technology plan as effectively."

Technology Oversight Committee Members

Tim Gustin, Mitec; John Helbling, Alliant Utilities; Jim Hoffman, retired from Alliant Utilities; John Kehoe, Rockwell Collins; Dallas Miller, Aegon USA; Scott Minkel, United Fire; and Bill Dawson, CGC Services.

Infrastructure Oversight Committee Members

Joe Ahmann, Ahmann Design; Lisha Coffey, Alliant Utilities; Mike Dawson, Food Service; Steve

Gray, ImOn Communications; Marc Gullickson, Ryan Companies; Bill Hanes, IBEW Business Agent; Paige Martino, Rockwell Collins; Frank Rainbolt, United Fire; Emmett Scherrman, retired form Lease America; Lindsay Schumacher, Aegon USA; and Marshall Clemens, District Custodial Representative.

PLANNED SILO PROJECTS
BASIC BUILDING NEEDS (Infrastructure)

- Energy efficient geothermal heating and air conditioning for:
Jefferson
Washington
Kennedy
Harding
Taft
- Energy efficient replacement window walls for:
Washington
Jefferson
- Plumbing, wiring, and other upgrades at Kingston Stadium.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

- Sales tax dollars will be used to help retire debt from the 2000 bond referendum.
- Estimated from 2005 figures, approximately \$4 million will be realized each year.

TECHNOLOGY FOR CLASSROOMS

- Upgrade the network backbone system for high speed access.
- Upgrade classroom computers/equipment.
- Implement wireless networks in all schools.
- Implement video conferencing capabilities at all schools.
- Maintain technology systems over 10 years.

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