



July 31, 2008

Anderson Park Dept. to ask for 'replacement' levy

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ANDERSON TWP. - The Anderson Township Park District will ask voters in November to approve a 1.9-mill levy to replace a levy of the same size due to expire in 2010.

If the new 10-year levy passes, the park board will rescind the existing one and begin collecting on the new levy in 2009.

Ken Kushner, executive director of the Anderson Township Park District, said park officials didn't want to wait until next year to put the replacement levy on the ballot.

"If it's not successful this November, it gives us a chance to pass it next year," he said.

Revenue from the levy constitutes about 70 percent of the park district's \$2.3 million operating budget. The district also uses that levy revenue to leverage other funding, Kushner said.

"If the levy doesn't pass by next year, we're out of business," he said.

Although the proposed 1.9-mill levy would replace the existing 1.9-mill levy, it will be called an "additional" levy, not a "replacement" levy on the ballot.

Ohio law permits a proposed levy to be called a replacement levy on the ballot only if it's replacing a levy in its final year.

The proposed 1.9-mill levy will cost the owner of a \$100,000 house a total of \$56.19 in taxes a year. That's 73 cents a year more than the existing 1.9-mill levy cost when it was approved in 2000.

However, the cost of the existing levy for the owner of a \$100,000 house is \$43.49. The cost has dropped each year since 2000 because the take from levies isn't permitted to increase as housing values rise, Kushner said.

The park district maintains 469 acres of park land; 4.5 miles of hike/bike trails; three miles of nature trails; 50 athletic field areas where soccer, football, rugby, lacrosse and field hockey are played; 15 baseball diamonds; seven shelters; five playgrounds, a dog field; four basketball courts; three tennis courts; and four sand volleyball courts.

The district also owns Beech Acres Park RecPlex, which includes a gym, four classrooms and a covered patio.

Planned projects include developing W.M. Johnson Hills Park, scheduling renovations of all park playgrounds and improving the parking lots at Clear Creek Park.