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Anderson Parks ask for replacement levy

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The Anderson Township Park District is placing an operating levy on the November ballot.

This 1.9-mill levy will replace the current operating levy, and allow the park district to maintain the parks for the next 10 years.

Ken Kushner, executive director of the park district, said even though the ballot language lists the new levy as an additional tax, it is not.

Under Ohio law, new levies can only be called a replacement levy in the last year it is effective, and the current levy is set to expire in 2010.

If the new operating levy is approved, Kushner said taxes from the 2000 levy would not be collected, and the levy would be rescinded.

If passed, the operating levy would annually cost a homeowner \$56.19 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

The park district operating levy has stayed at 1.9 mills since 1992. Kushner said one reason they are going to the voters early is because park levies have only been successful in presidential election years.

Financial officer Biz Martella said if the levy fails this year, the park district has another chance to get the levy passed next year.

"If it doesn't pass (in 2009), we're out of business," Kushner said. "Our funding comes from the residents."

In addition to maintaining facilities and infrastructure, other projects being considered for the next levy cycle are the continued development of Johnson Hills Park on Little Dry Run Road, renovating the playgrounds in the park system and enhancing the parking lots at Clear Creek Park on Batavia Road.

At Johnson Hills Park, Kushner said they would like to add shelters, restrooms and a rental hall but the park district needs money.

Kushner said Clear Creek Park has enough parking for six fields and the district wants to upgrade the overflow grass lots to accommodate parking for all 24 fields.

Martella said the levy brings in an additional \$400,000 a year to the park district's operating budget, which was \$3.7 million in 2008.