

PROPERTY TAX ELIMINATION: SOUNDS GREAT BUT IT WILL COME AT A COST

Joan Hollekim
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I am speaking on my own behalf, not on behalf of the Board of Mountrail County Commissioners. Before it is too late, I am feeling an obligation to speak up on Measure #4 relating to the elimination of valuation based property tax at the local level of government. Prior to serving as county commissioner, I worked in the Mountrail County Auditor's Office for 30 years. I consider myself knowledgeable on local budgeting and taxation. Don't get me wrong I do believe in responsible property tax reform, but this proposed initiated constitutional measure is short-sighted and presents inequitable replacement dollars to local political subdivisions. This is not the only issue with the measure – there will be more articles to follow.

It's that time of year again when your Estimated Property Tax Statement(s) will arrive in the mail. I am guessing most people are like me, you glance at it not paying too much attention—you might even roll your eyes or make a remark about having to pay, yet another, tax bill—but you move on with your day without too much disruption.

This year, you might find yourself expending a little more emotional energy and time when you notice that one or more of your local taxing districts proposed an increase. This increase for many is related, in part or potentially in full, to the proposed initiated constitutional measure pertaining to "local property tax elimination" that you will be voting on this November.

The reality is many local taxing districts were faced with very difficult budgeting decisions this year with the proposed measure on the ballot. Why? Well, the exact excerpts from the proposed constitutional measure states: "The state shall provide annual property tax revenue replacement payments to political subdivisions in an amount equal to no less than the amount of tax

levied on real property by the political subdivisions, excluding tax levied on real property for the payment of bonded indebtedness, during the calendar year in which this amendment was approved by the voters." What you can't find in the measure is a guarantee that State legislators will increase the tax dollar amounts to cover inevitable inflationary costs or any plan to address any need for additional funding in the future.

It is because of the vagueness and inadequacy of this proposed measure to address important budgetary questions that local taxing districts are feeling this is a last chance opportunity to secure some level of security with regards to future funding. Local political subdivisions (schools, cities, counties, fire and ambulance, townships, parks, etc.) cannot provide the same level of public services and programs into the future at the same dollar amount levied in the year 2024 if there is no viable means in place to raise additional funding, especially in rural communities where funding sources are limited. If this was a false statement, why would the small local community of White Earth City, in Mountrail County, jump from zero dollars levied (from 2019-2023) to levying the maximum dollars allowable by law (equivalent to 105 mills) for the 2024 tax year other than to cover budgetary expenses or to protect this revenue source. I highly doubt any local elected official would just increase property taxes to entice voters to vote yes on Measure #4. I encourage anyone with questions regarding their tax bill or how their tax dollars are spent to show up at their local budget hearing(s).

While you may feel or believe property taxes are unfair (or just too high in general), it is equally unfair to base replacement dollars off one budget cycle. Look at your prior tax statements, you will see the tax dollar fluctuate as a direct result of changes in annual budgets (you might even see a decrease). Not only does the

See **PROPERTY TAX** on A6

A Look Back in Time

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60 YEARS AGO (1964)

Webster Street in Lisbon was blooming with many of the city's newest homes, and would finally be rid of dust which had plagued it in recent years. Paving would be finished by the end of the year.

50 YEARS AGO (1974)

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald A. Berg, Englevale, announced the engagement of their daughter Connie, to Scott Sorby, son of Mr. and Mrs. Curt Sorby, Englevale. Both are graduates of Lisbon High School. An October 19 wedding was planned.

Pupil registration at Sheldon

Public School was 170 students.

45 YEARS AGO (1979)

Three elephants were part of the Geneo Circus at the Ransom County Fairgrounds.

40 YEARS AGO (1984)

Lisbon Park Board members approved the Associated Pool Builders, Inc. low bid for the new outdoor swimming pool, minus the bathhouse portion of the project.

An estimated \$20,000 worth of marijuana (street value), or 50 pounds, was confiscated from a field near Fort Ransom.

Sheyenne Building Center, a branch of Oakes Lumber Company, opened for business under the management of Darrel Mennis of Fort Ransom. He is an architectural draftsman, having attended

Fergus Falls Community College. He and wife Lois have two sons.

Lisbon radio station, KQLX, operating at a frequency of 890 megahertz will debut November 1, 1984. The station is owned by Terry Loomis.

Gordon Weber had started Ransom County Farm Management Service located on the east end of Sitz Furniture. It specialized in farm counseling, agribusiness management, and related areas of agriculture.

Myron Johs, Vo-Ag instructor, had joined the Computers in Agriculture program, coordinating computer software with teaching plans.

35 YEARS AGO (1989)

The local Ben Franklin store had

See **A LOOK BACK IN TIME** on A6

Letters to the Editor

Sadly, on February 8 during the 2023 Legislature, Senator Mike Wobbema turned his back on Rev. Leanne Simmons of the First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck. In her opening prayer, she said, "Creator of the universe and all people therein, you who formed humankind in your image, placing them in this world in all their diversity—differing colors, genders, races, ethnicities and language, we praise you for the splendor of your creation and the love that motivated your hand on this Earth."

In what version of North Da-

kota does any person, but especially an elected official publicly or privately turn his back on a minister?

I believe Reverend Simmons was expanding on Revelations 4:11: "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things." So I wonder who Senator Wobbema's objection was aimed at.

Who is excluded from the masterful creation? Was he disrespecting the minister or the idea that we all began and will end as one, in the image of the Creator?

His action showed a complete lack of respect for the ministry, the Senate, and his constituency. It did not sit well with numerous other Senators, nor with folks here in District 24 and across the state as indicated by the scathing media reaction.

He set a poor example for people trying to teach their children basic values like respect.

Mike Wobbema is an embarrassment to District 24. It's time for a change.

Arlene Andrus,
Valley City

Measure 4 provides huge property tax relief to everyone, completely reforms how cities and counties will tax in the future, and is a tremendous opportunity for all North Dakotans. It does this while ensuring full local control, and not a single dollar of funding is lost.

Dr. Arthur Laffer is a world-renowned economist who advised both President Ronald Reagan and President Trump on their famous tax cut programs. He has reviewed Measure 4, and believes it is a great opportunity for the people of North Dakota.

In a letter to the committee dated August 21, 2024, he

states:

"I'm writing to express my full support for North Dakota's effort to eliminate property taxes with Measure 4. What property tax relief will do for the state is wonderful, but it's important to also emphasize what Measure 4 will not do to the state. Due to the careful crafting of this measure, North Dakota's education, healthcare, and other public service funding will not suffer. With a consistent budget surplus and the state's blessing of natural resources, North Dakota is fully capable of offsetting the loss of property tax revenue. On top of this, the tax relief will do wonders for the prosperity

of the state, which will in turn raise excess revenues. This measure is a clear win/win for everyone.

Warmest personal regards,
Dr. Arthur B. Laffer"

When we pass Measure 4, Dr. Laffer has confirmed that there will be no loss of local control, no loss of local funding, no loss of services, and no loss of personnel. It is important for us to see through the lobbyists' misinformed campaign of fear, and vote yes on Measure 4. For our homes. For our families.

Rick Becker
6140 Ponderosa Ave
Bismarck ND 58503
701-527-6902

FYI & MEETINGS

RIDING FOR DREAMS ANNUAL RIDE
September 7, 2024, 7 am to 11 pm. Janice and Kevein Bishop Ranch

SODBUSTERS FALL SHOW
September 13-14, Sunne Farm, Fort Ransom State Park

RANSOM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The Ransom County Museum, located at 101 Mill Road in Fort Ransom, is under construction and will not be open this 2024 season. The Society is looking for volunteers to participate on the Board. Call (701) 429-4783, Nancy Lee Loftsgard for more information.

RANSOM COUNTY JOB DEVELOPMENT
Ransom County Job Development Authority meetings held the third Wednesday of January, April, July & October at 7pm. Meetings move throughout the county so please check the Ransom County website for the location.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS
The August School Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in the High School conference room.

OAKWOOD CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
Memorials to Oakwood Cemetery in Lisbon may be sent to Box 1079 in Lisbon, ND 58054.

STAR COMMITTEE
The Star Committee meets the 3rd Monday of every month. Call 683-4140 for more information.

ENDERLIN AA MEETING
Alcoholics Anonymous meeting Tuesday nights 7pm at First Lutheran Church in Enderlin.

LISBON AREA AGING IN COMMUNITY
Serving adults ages 60+ in the Lisbon School District. Volunteer rides to appointments in Fargo, Valley City, Wahpeton, and Lisbon. Find different services available. Provide companionship, host educational events, and organize social activities. Follow us on Facebook for more information. Call Katie Mairs at 701-683-8346. Those wishing to volunteer call Elise Meyer at 701-683-8345. Office at the Lisbon Senior Center 625 Main St.

AA MEETINGS MONDAY & FRIDAY NIGHTS
The Lisbon Alcoholics Anonymous group meets every Monday night at 8 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran, . They also meet every Friday night at 7 p.m. at Parkside.

AMVETS Post 26 will be meeting 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7PM. Lisbon, ND 58054. All Veterans are welcome to attend.

FLORENCE KIMBALL AMERICAN LEGION POST #7
Will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Gazebo at the North Dakota Veterans Home.

LISBON OPERA HOUSE FOUNDATION
The Opera House Board meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the community room of the LOH. Public is encouraged to attend.

THE ENDERLIN MUSEUM
Located at 315 Railway Street, is open from May through September on Thursday and Friday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9 to noon, or by appointment. The Museum is filled with displays and artifacts from the area and there is also a research area. Tour groups are always welcome. Phone 701-799-0725 or 701-73-9743 if you have questions or would like to volunteer.

FOOD PANTRY
Call the Food Pantry at 701-308-0905 by Wed. at 5p.m. to receive a food basket to be picked up on Thur. Between 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. at the RC Food Pantry.

RANSOM COUNTY TRANSIT SCHEDULE
Van: Public Transportation (In-Lisbon rides - \$2 round trip + \$1 per additional stop) runs Monday – Friday in Lisbon, with transportation to surrounding towns upon request (in Ransom County rides - \$5 round trip) Bus: Fargo every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month and every Thursday (\$8 round trip). The transportation is public, but seniors will receive priority. Call 683-3131 to schedule or ride or for more information.

RANSOM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
Office hours are 8 am to 12 & 1 to 4:30 pm daily. Every Thursday is immunization day and the 3rd Thursday we are open from 8 am until 6:00 pm. No appointment is necessary. Cholesterol screenings are available anytime by appointment. Fasting is required with a \$25 fee. To make an appointment, please contact at 701-683-6140.

WHILE WE'RE WAITING BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP: For mothers of child loss of any age, meets every fourth Monday on the lower level of the Lisbon Opera House 415 Main St. at 6:30 p.m.

ABUSE RESOURCE NETWORK
Free counseling available for anyone with issues of domestic violence or sexual assault available through Abuse Resource Network. The Abuse Resource Network is located at the Medical & Professional Building 13 - 11th Ave West, Lisbon. Call 683-5061

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY CALLS
Calls to the Ransom County Sheriff's Office will be handled by state radio. Call 1-800-472-2121 for assistance. Their number is on back of driver's licenses.

LISBON SENIOR CENTER
Membership meetings will be held the first Wednesday of each month during lunch at 12:00p.m. Open to the public. Bingo Mondays 1pm. Check the Bulletin Board for a list of Board members and also a list of the activities contacts. Any questions contact Brad Ellingson at 701-678-4844, Or Paula Ellingson for Rental Information at 701-678-2922.