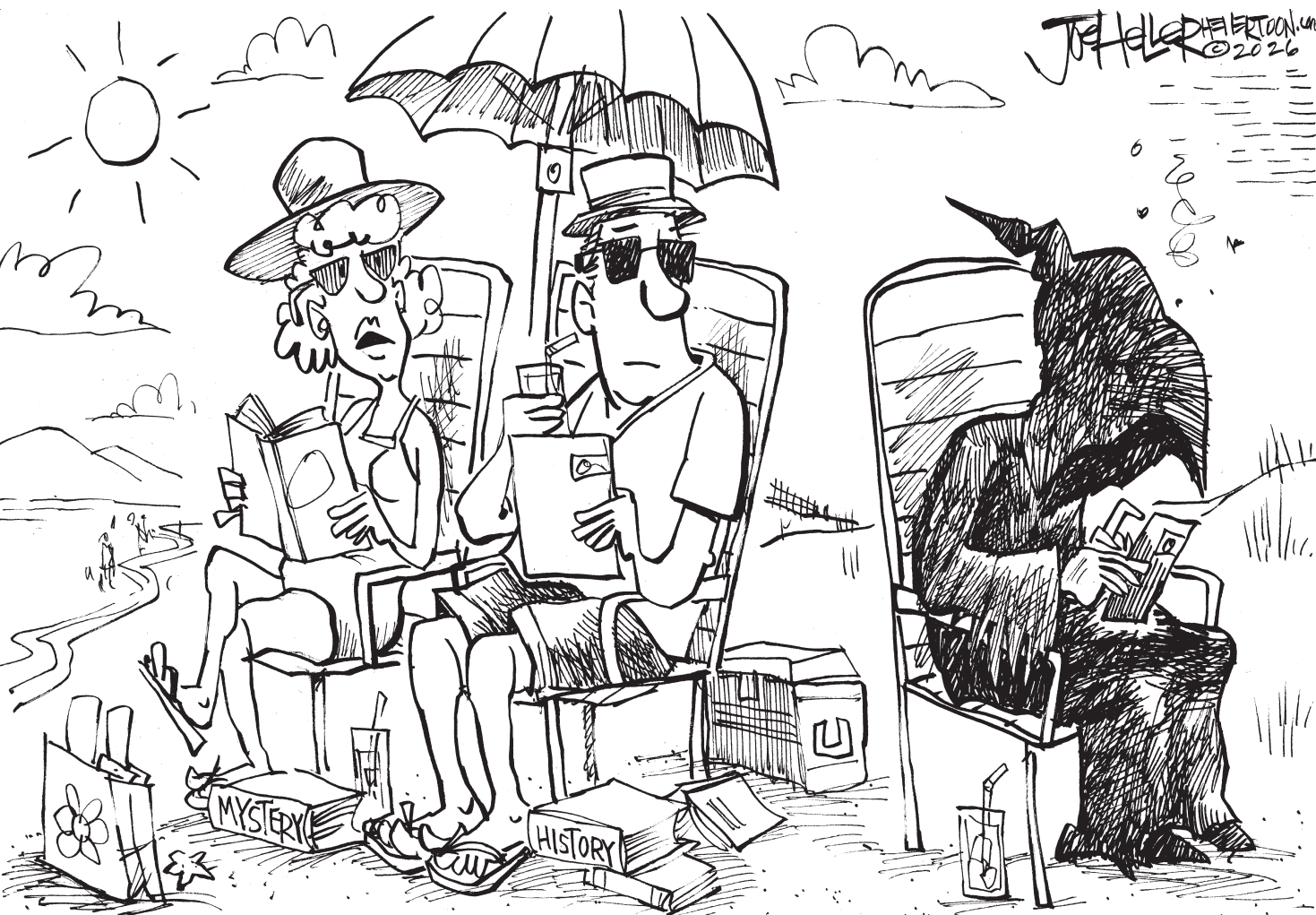


The opinions of writers on this page are not necessarily those of the newspaper, or management. We encourage our readers to share their views on the publication.

The Edmonson News

OPINION



"ON THE UPSIDE, YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT SUN EXPOSURE WHEN YOUR SUMMER READING LIST INCLUDES DOOMSCROLLING!"

How Kentucky Local Governments Establish Property Tax Rates



BY **JEFF JOBE**
COMMUNITY PUBLISHER

Kentucky cities, counties, school boards and special taxing districts are entering the annual property tax-setting season, when officials determine how much revenue to collect from property owners.

Under Kentucky's House Bill 44, taxing districts generally have three choices:

Adopt the compensating rate

Adopt a rate producing up to 4% more revenue from existing real property; or

Adopt a rate producing more than 4% additional revenue, making the excess subject to voter recall.

The 4% provision applies to a district's total revenue from existing real property. It does not necessarily mean the numerical tax rate will increase by 4%, nor does it limit an individual property owner's bill to a 4% increase.

How taxes are calculated

Real property includes land, homes, commercial buildings and permanent improvements. Rates are commonly expressed in cents per \$100 of assessed value. A rate of 20 cents per \$100 produces a \$200 tax on property assessed at \$100,000.

A property tax bill may include separate rates established by the state, county, city, school board and special districts such as libraries, fire departments, health departments and extension services. Property inside a city is generally subject to both city and county taxes.

The county property valuation administrator establishes most local assessments. Fiscal courts, city councils, school boards and special-district boards establish their respective tax rates.

The compensating rate

The compensating rate is designed to produce approximately the same revenue from real property that existed during both the previous and current tax years.

When assessments on existing property rise, the compensating rate generally decreases to offset that increase. The district still receives additional revenue from qualifying new property added to the tax rolls.

New property may include newly constructed homes and businesses, major improvements, newly taxable property and certain property annexed into the jurisdiction. A higher assessment on an existing home caused by changing market values is not treated the same as new construction.

The compensating rate should not be described as producing no additional revenue. In a growing community, it maintains approximately the same revenue from existing property while generating additional taxes from new development.

The 4% option

The 4% rate allows a district to collect approximately 4% more from existing real property than it would receive under the compensating calculation. Revenue from new property is added to that amount.

Suppose a district collected \$300,000 from existing real property last year and expects \$15,000 from new development this year. The compensating rate would produce approximately \$315,000.

Under the 4% option, the district could collect approximately \$312,000 from existing property, plus revenue from new development. Its total revenue increase could therefore exceed 4%.

Public notice and hearings

A city or county can generally adopt the compensating rate without conducting a House Bill 44 public hearing.

A proposed rate above the

compensating rate, including the 4% rate, requires a hearing. The district must disclose the previous rate and revenue, the proposed and compensating rates, expected revenue from new and personal property, and how the additional money will be used.

State law requires the notice to be published twice in consecutive weeks in the newspaper with the largest circulation in the county. The hearing must be held seven to 10 days after the second notice is published.

A rate producing more than 4% additional revenue from existing real property is subject to recall. Qualified voters generally have 45 days to complete the petition process. A valid petition ordinarily requires signatures equal to at least 10% of the votes cast in the affected jurisdiction during the previous presidential election.

A rate producing no more than the permitted 4% increase requires a hearing but is not subject to recall under House Bill 44.

What it means for taxpayers

The 4% provision applies to a district's overall revenue, not each property owner's bill. An individual bill can rise by more than 4% if the property's assessed value increases faster than the community average.

Taxpayers should look beyond whether the numerical rate increased or decreased. The important questions are how much total revenue will be collected, how much will come from new development and why additional money is needed.

For a growing community, the compensating rate already allows revenue to increase through new taxable development. Choosing the 4% rate allows the government to collect that growth revenue while also increasing collections from existing property owners.

Jeff Jobe is community publisher for JOBEnews, which serves a 10-county region and has the largest paid print readership and online audience in the communities it covers. He can be reached at jobe@jobeinc.com.

NEWS & NOTES

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test. For more information contact Edmonson County Judge executive office at 270-597-2819

Edmonson County Conservation District-Local Cost Share Program 26-27

To assist Edmonson County landowners by providing cost share for the following conservation practices:

COVER CROP, HEAVY USE AREAS (gate openings, barn access areas, winter-feeding areas), PASTURE AND HAY SEEDING, LIME, Pasture and Hayland Weed Management (\$10 per acre, up to 65 acres)

The program offers a 75/25% cost share, with a maximum reimbursement of \$650 per household, farm number or partnership. Applications will be accepted until program application limit of 50 applications is met. A farm serial number, and Agricultural Water Quality Plan is required to apply.

Call Edmonson County Conservation District 270-597-2761 or stop by the district office at 100 Washington St. Brownsville for more information, application and guidelines.

Send your events to ednews@windstream.net to get your News & Notes in the Edmonson News at no charge for a one-time run

Voting Now Open for Kentucky Living's 10th Annual Beautify the Bluegrass

Public chooses from among five finalists for Governor's Award

Staff Report

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (August 19, 2026) – Voting is officially underway to select the 2026 Beautify the Bluegrass Governor's Award from among five local finalists. The partnership between Kentucky Living, Kentucky Electric Cooperatives and the Kentucky Governor's Office is celebrating its tenth consecutive year.

Beautify the Bluegrass showcases the pride and dedication Kentuckians pour into their communities across the commonwealth, highlighting standout projects that demonstrate local spirit through efforts such as revitalized communal spaces, park cleanups and public art displays. Since launching in 2017, the initiative has given Kentuckians a voice in selecting the Governor's Award recipient, with the winning project recognized by Governor Andy Beshear.

"Thank you to Kentucky Living and Kentucky's Electric Cooperatives for highlighting people working to make a difference in their communities," said Governor Andy Beshear. "We

VOTING
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