

JESSAMINE

Continued from 1A

of real property value, a decrease from the current tax rate of 67.8 cents/\$100,” Scrivner said.

Scrivner also noted that the rate was 69.3 cents per \$100 when he joined the school board in January 2019.

For property whose taxable assessed value does not change, the proposed rate would reduce the school portion of the tax bill by \$13 for every \$100,000 of assessed value.

A property with a taxable assessed value of \$200,000, for example, would generate \$1,330 in school real estate taxes under the proposed rate, compared with \$1,356 at the current rate, a difference of \$26 annually.

The district used the same \$200,000 example in information released about the proposal.

At \$300,000, the difference between the current and proposed rates would be \$39 annually. At \$400,000, the difference would be \$52.

Those examples apply only to the Jessamine County Schools portion of the property tax bill, before any applicable exemptions or discounts, and assume the property’s taxable assessed value remains unchanged.

A lower tax rate does not necessarily mean every property owner’s school tax bill will decline. If the assessed value of a property increases, that increase could offset or exceed the savings created by the lower rate.

Kentucky Department of Education tax calculations show the total valuation of Jessamine County real property for the upcoming year at approximately \$6.76 billion. Personal property is valued at approximately \$455.4 million, bringing the total real and personal property valuation to approximately \$7.22 billion.

The previous year’s total real and personal property valuation was approximately \$6.65 billion.

State calculations also show approximately

\$190.1 million in new property and net assessment growth of more than \$584 million.

The proposed rates are projected to generate \$48,067,173.99 in total property tax revenue, according to an expected revenue calculation worksheet presented by the district.

The fiscal 2026 general fund property tax levy generated \$43,852,179.13, according to Kentucky Department of Education documents. Based on those figures, the proposed rates would generate approximately \$4.21 million more in total property tax revenue than the previous year’s levy.

The additional revenue comes despite the lower real estate tax rate because the amount and assessed value of taxable property in the county have increased. Kentucky Department of Education calculations provide school districts with several possible tax rates.

For Jessamine County, the compensating real estate rate is 64 cents per \$100 of assessed value. That rate is calculated to produce roughly the same amount of revenue from existing property as the previous year, excluding the effects of new property.

The state’s calculation lists 66.5 cents as the district’s 4% increase real estate rate. The corresponding personal property rate is 67.8 cents.

At the compensating rates of 64 cents for real estate and 67.8 cents for personal property, the district would be expected to generate approximately \$46.38 million.

The 66.5-cent real estate and 67.8-cent personal property rates recommended by district officials are projected to generate approximately \$48.07 million.

District officials have also outlined several steps being taken to keep the school system’s budget healthy. Those include evaluating and reducing nonessential departmental expenses, consolidating

positions and responsibilities, analyzing staffing levels, identifying unneeded property or resources that could be sold and pursuing grants and other revenue sources.

Jessamine County Schools also said that, after SEEK equalization related to local property growth, the district will receive an additional \$2,525,059 in funding compared with last year, or approximately \$315 per student.

The district said the additional funding is important for balancing the budget, maintaining instructional programs, purchasing necessary resources, covering rising utility costs and providing staff raises.

Monday’s action did not make the 66.5-cent rate final.

The state provided tax reports to the district Aug. 6, beginning the tax-setting process. District leadership presented its proposed rates during the Aug. 17 special called meeting, where the board voted to move the proposal forward.

Public notices are scheduled to be published Aug. 20 and Aug. 27.

The board’s regular meeting Aug. 24 will include an opportunity for public comment on the proposed rate. A second special called meeting is scheduled for Aug. 31, when the board is expected to take its final vote on the tax rates.

Scrivner said in his statement that the public would have opportunities to comment on the proposal at both the Aug. 24 and Aug. 31 meetings. However, a timeline released by Jessamine County Schools lists the Aug. 31 meeting as the official vote to adopt the proposed rates and states that no public comment will be taken at that meeting.

The final rate is scheduled to be submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education and the Jessamine County sheriff Sept. 1 for billing.

The district has emphasized that the proposed rate remains subject to final board approval.

WILMORE

Continued from 1A

deserves the credit for turning the idea into a festival and doing much of the work to make it special.

“Devin Marks is the one running this and doing this. He’s the worker bee on this whole project,” Rainwater said. “It was a great idea of his. He’s doing all the work. He’s doing the presentations, he’s getting the artists. He’s setting it up. I’m just providing the facility to do it.”

The inaugural Ginkgo Galore Festival will use the tree and its distinctive autumn leaves as the central theme for a day of art, music, food and family activities.

Rainwater said the festival will feature jewelry and artwork incorporating the ginkgo leaf, as well as an art show.

“I’ve seen a few of the little presentations,” he said. “There’s a fine rug maker that’s putting ginkgo on a Persian-type rug. I’ve seen art that’s being created. They’re going to be a juried art collection

there, some 40 paintings and other types of art with a theme of ginkgo tree or ginkgo leaf.”

The festival will also feature music, food trucks, entertainment and a 5K run.

“We’re going to have a run. We’re going to have music. They’ve got very talented artists coming in. They’re going to give away some money on a judged art show. Food trucks, entertainment, fun,” Rainwater said. “Hopefully a family-oriented type of gathering.”

One of the larger goals behind the festival is to encourage the planting of more ginkgo trees throughout Wilmore.

Rainwater compared the idea to the way Washington, D.C., is known for its cherry trees.

“It’s like the beautiful cherry trees in Washington, D.C.,” he said. “This could create a focal point that people would come to see when the fall comes.”

“The goal is that we plant them everywhere,” Rainwater

continued. “And so basically anywhere you go in town, you’d see these beautiful trees, 60 feet high. Then they turn that beautiful gold in the fall and create a foot of leaves.”

Rainwater said he hopes the festival will become an annual family event similar to the Woodland Art Fair in Lexington, which draws tens of thousands of visitors each year.

“Hopefully it can become a family-oriented type of gathering, similar to Woodland, which is now 50 years old, so we’ve got a long ways to go to be Woodland. But we’ve got to start somewhere. So that’s our goal with starting our Ginkgo Festival here.”

Current plans call for the Ginkgo GO 5K, live music, artisan vendors, a juried art show, storytelling and food.

Organizers are also considering additional activities, including a scavenger hunt through Wilmore, among other events.

The festival is scheduled for Oct. 24 in Wilmore and is set to run from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

MARY

Continued from 1A

over artist Catherine Gaffney will portray Lincoln, offering audiences a look at her Kentucky upbringing, marriage to Abraham Lincoln and experiences during one of the most turbulent periods in American history.

Mary Todd Lincoln was born into a prosperous Lexington family and received an education that was uncommon for many young women during the early 1800s. She later moved to Springfield, Illinois, where she became part of the city’s social circles and met Abraham Lincoln, then a young attorney.

The two married in 1842, and Mary became an important supporter of her husband’s political ambitions as he rose from Illinois

politics to the presidency. Her years as first lady were marked by the Civil War, political controversy and significant personal loss.

The Chautauqua presentation will explore those experiences through Lincoln’s perspective, including her childhood in Kentucky, her marriage, the deaths of members of her family and the challenges she faced while living in the White House.

The program is set as Mary prepares for an evening at Ford’s Theatre, allowing the character to reflect on her life with Abraham Lincoln and the events that shaped their family and the country.

Gaffney is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area and has performed on stages across the country. Her Kentucky credits include work with The

Lexington Theatre Company, Lexington Children’s Theatre and AthensWest Theatre Company.

Kentucky Chautauqua is a program of Kentucky Humanities that uses professional performers to portray significant figures from the state’s history. The presentations combine historical research and theatrical performance to introduce audiences to people who helped shape Kentucky and the nation.

Kentucky Humanities provides programs focused on the state’s history, literature and culture and works with communities across the commonwealth to preserve and share Kentucky stories.

More information about Kentucky Humanities and its programs is available at kyhumanities.org.

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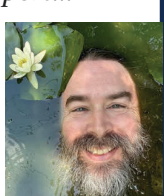
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