

**A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR OSAGE COUNTY  
CONTINUATION OF ¼% SALES TAX**



*Slab approach on County Road 734*

---

**August 8, 2017**

The County Commissioners and Tax Payers of Osage County have a unique opportunity this year to address long term needs. The 10-year ¼ cent sales tax for the Administration Building will end on December 31, 2017 and the cost of the building has now been paid. The County Commissioners are placing a **Capital Improvement Tax on the August 8, 2017** Ballot which will be a continuation of the current tax for a 10-year period. The opportunity is to build funds to address ongoing capital improvements for the County without adding to the tax burden.

The proposal will earmark **90% of the collected taxes** to go into a separate new **Infrastructure Capital Improvement Fund** and **10% of the collected taxes** to go into a new dedicated fund, **Building and Grounds Capital Improvement Fund**. Both of these funds will be **restricted funds** as specified and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Infrastructure needs have become increasingly more expensive over the last few years and technology is rapidly changing. The Commission has the Road and Bridge Department working on a long-range plan to identify the needs. Currently we have a staff of 15 employees at Road and Bridge. They have many responsibilities for our transportation infrastructure. Osage County has **432.42 miles of gravel roads**, and now has **16.63 miles of paved roads, asphalt or chip and seal** for which the County will soon be facing major repairs. There are **37 bridges** in the county which all require some work along with **257 box culverts** that are over 50 years old. There are **100 low water crossings** that often flood, leaving residents isolated or without fire or medical access. There are **1,327 culverts that are needed** to keep runoff from damaging roadways the require ongoing maintenance.

The County has already begun **working on a plan to identify needs of Building and Grounds**. Masonry repairs are needed at the Courthouse and the front porch needs extensive repairs and restoration. The HVAC units are constantly requiring upkeep, and while we have installed ground source heating, the air handling units are slowly needing to be replace. The system in the Courtroom needs

to be addressed. There are ongoing problems with the distribution of water within the Courthouse which has caused excessive use of water there. There are storage problems and parking concerns that need to be addressed. There is a need for improvement in the landscaping of this public building.

The Administration Building is now 10 years old and the HVAC air handling units will soon be 10 years old. Not all spaces have appropriate heat and air conditioning or individual control. Computer technology is rapidly changing and our systems are not keeping pace with technology.

We need to coordinate and consolidate equipment types and styles to function as a network. Most of our office equipment and furniture is from the last century. We have drainage problems with this building that may need extensive repairs. There are storage problems in most departments and parking is becoming increasingly a problem for tax payers and employees. **Only 10% of the collected taxes will be earmarked for buildings and grounds from this replacement for the AXO8 Tax.**

**Grants and State and Federal** funding have been the primary source for major infrastructure construction but those funds *are becoming harder and harder to get*. It used to be that Federal Funds required 20% of the project cost to be local funds, but in recent months, if you are not able to provide 50% of the cost,



*Box culvert on County Road 521*

your application will not be funded. **These restricted funds would provide a pool of funds that could be used to attract funds to further benefit the County.**

. If you would like additional information, please contact your commissioners.

If Osage County is to continue to grow, we need to ensure that our service buildings and county infrastructure will serve present and future residents of Osage County as a great place to live and work.