

Commissioner Questions 10-16-13

Q. When does the voting begin for the SPLOST IV sales tax renewal?

A. Early voting will begin on Tuesday, October 15 at the courthouse with the final voting day being November 5, 2013 (Election Day) where you will vote at your individual polling location. By the time you read this, the early voting should have already started.

Q. Will we be voting on a new tax?

A. No. This is simply a renewal of the 1 penny sales tax we have had for many years.

Q. Who should we contact if we would like to make a suggestion for a SPLOST sales tax project?

A. Contact the commissioner's office and let them know of your idea at 706-439-6000.

Q. How much do out of town people contribute to our SPLOST sales tax?

A. The number of 30% to 40% has always been used, but I have no idea except to say that it is a significant amount of sales tax that people pay who do not live here, yet they help us pay for our county projects and infrastructure, keeping our property taxes at the 4th lowest rate in the State of Georgia out of 159 counties.

Q. Will the majority of the SPLOST revenue be used for county infrastructure and repayment of our Community Center?

A. Yes it will. We estimate that we will spend \$ 6 million dollars of our SPLOST revenue on roads and bridges alone, with approximately 3/4 of the total revenue going to pay for roads and bridges, public safety vehicles and equipment, county facility repairs and payments on the Union County Community Center.

Q. It was repeated to me that someone said they wondered how we would pay the operation cost of new projects that were completed with SPLOST funds, because every time we build something new, it would take more tax money, more upkeep and more employees. Is this really what happens?

A. No. While it is certainly true that a new building will cost additional funds to operate and in some cases may require additional employees, in most cases, the growth of the county supports these increased costs without tax increases. For example, we completed the new courthouse 7 years ago and we were still able to reduce our county budget and property taxes for the past three years. Our utility bills doubled and some additional employees were necessary, but we still were able to keep property taxes low. . We have doubled the size of the library, but have not had to increase property taxes to fund it. We have built the Community Center, but have not had to increase property taxes to operate it. We always evaluate cost of operation and necessary employee adjustments prior to funding any new project and most require no new employees.

Q. Can you think of any reason that someone would want to vote against SPLOST?

A. I may be a little prejudice, but while I cannot legally ask you to vote for SPLOST, I certainly can not think of any good reason someone would want to vote against it. **It is the lifeblood of Union County.** It keeps property taxes low. It is why Union County is well known throughout the state as having such great facilities, equipment, recreation and roads (high quality of life) for a small rural county.

Q. Have we been able to utilize our pervious SPLOST funds to benefit the county?

A. The answer is a dramatic YES!!! Our, jail, courthouse addition, E 911 upgrades, fire engines and equipment, canning plant, Farmers Market, Library, Horse Arena, and many more, all demonstrate how carefully we utilize our sales tax funds now and in the past, so that our tax payers receive the best possible services and quality of life with the very least expenses and cost. There is no better way to let those who pass through our town contribute to paying for our services and facilities, other than through SPLOST.