



WATERSHED NEWS

FOUNDATION

AUGUST 30, 2006

FOUNDATION STAFF

[STEVE STEWART](#)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

[VICTORIA ANDERSON](#)

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT /
OFFICE MANAGER

PO Box 6218
BRANSON, MO 65615
417-334-7644
FAX 417-334-7645

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Annual Beaver Lake
Clean-up is scheduled for
Saturday, September 30,
2006. Call Alan for more
information at:
479-636-1210 ext. # 313, or
send e-mail to
[alan.p.bland@usace.army
.mil](mailto:alan.p.bland@usace.army.mil)."**

WITH YOUR HELP
WE WILL WORK
TOGETHER TO
MAKE BEAVER,
TABLE ROCK,
TANEYCOMO AND
BULL SHOALS
LAKES THE FOUR
CLEANEST
MANMADE LAKES IN
NORTH AMERICA.

TODAY'S HEADLINES

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

- [RUPTURED FUEL TANKS LEAK INTO DRAINAGE DITCH](#) – *The Morning News*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)

POULTRY:

- [PHOSPHORUS FIGHT HEATS UP ON BANKS OF ILLINOIS](#) – *The Morning News*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)
- [POULTRY LAWSUIT: OSRC'S DILEMMA](#) –
Muskogee Phoenix
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)
- [OKLAHOMA SUES COMPANIES FOR DUMPING HAZARDOUS WASTE](#) – *The Washington Post*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)

DEVELOPMENT / PLANNING:

- [WATER TAX ON NEWTON COUNTY BALLOT](#) – *The Joplin Globe*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)
- [TAXING QUESTIONS](#) – *Northwest Arkansas Times*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)
- [SENECA SETS WATER PRIORITIES](#) – *The Joplin Globe*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)

SEWER / SEPTIC / WASTEWATER:

- [MAYOR EXPLAINS SEWER PLANT OVERRUNS](#) – *The Morning News*
TO JUMP TO THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE, CLICK [HERE](#)

[BACK TO TOP](#)

RUPTURED FUEL TANKS LEAK INTO DRAINAGE DITCH

By Melissa Blakely The Morning News

Posted on August 29, 2006

URL: <http://www.nwaonline.net/articles/2006/08/30/news/0830rzuelspill.txt>

ROGERS -- Firefighters on Monday morning attended a semitrailer accident where ruptured fuel tanks were leaking diesel fuel into a drainage ditch. The accident and subsequent diesel spill posed no threat of fire, said Bill Huntingon, hazardous material team coordinator with the Rogers Fire Department.

"Diesel is a stable fuel," said Huntingon. "As cold as it was and with the breeze, it was a stable situation."

The semitrailer owned by CS&S Transport of Morrilton was delivering lumber to Meek's Lumber at 630 W. New Hope Road when it missed the driveway and ran into the drainage ditch rupturing both fuel tanks, said Mike Holmquest, Meek's retail sales manager.

The accident caused the transfer hose to tear loose from the driver side and passenger side fuel tanks which began leaking, according to the Fire Department report.

Firefighters used 18 sandbags from Meek's to build a dam to prevent the diesel fuel from flowing east toward the railroad tracks in the drainage ditch, said Huntingon.

The firefighters applied oil dry to the asphalt and concrete to absorb the fuel, according to the report. The tanker was plugged and towed away.

Approximately 70 gallons of diesel fuel leaked into the drainage ditch, said Ethan Beckcom of the Benton County Department of Emergency Management. CS&S Transport hired HAZ-M.E.R.T., a third-party contractor, to clean up the rest of the diesel.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

PHOSPHORUS FIGHT HEATS UP ON BANKS OF ILLINOIS

By John L. Moore The Morning News

Posted on August 29, 2006

URL: <http://www.nwaonline.net/articles/2006/08/30/news/0830azscenicrivers.txt>

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. -- Poultry companies hauled 52,262 tons of poultry litter out of the Illinois River watershed from September to Aug. 28, said Sheri Herron, the executive director of BMPs Inc.

Herron, who runs the industry-backed nonprofit company, spoke to a packed house of members of the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission, poultry company representatives, lawyers, farmers and environmentalists Tuesday night in a small meeting room in the offices of the commission on the banks of the Illinois River.

Some commissioners voiced support for the poultry companies' efforts, but Ed Brocksmith, a commissioner and founding member of Save The Illinois River Watershed, questioned the amount of federal grants and state subsidies that have been used to prop up the fledgling litter transport industry, which BMPs Inc. has grown in the past three years.

The commission is the principle state agency responsible for protecting and preserving Oklahoma's scenic rivers, including the Illinois. But the interest in the river's water quality and poultry litter for the past year has focused on a lawsuit from Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson.

Edmondson sued 14 poultry companies in June 2005, accusing them of polluting the watershed with poultry litter applied on fields. Of primary interest is phosphorus. Excessive phosphorus in a watershed can lead to rampant algae growth, which degrades water quality.

Floyd Simmons, a cattle farmer in Christie, Okla., said he did not own one chicken, but supported the poultry farmers and was against the lawsuit filed by Edmondson.

Don Nowlin, a member of Save The Illinois River, said the poultry companies seemed to be making a sincere effort to reduce the amount of litter used in the river basin.

"But I question whether that would have happened without the lawsuit," Nowlin said.

Morril Harriman, president of The Poultry Federation, also spoke to the group on actions that poultry companies have taken in the past few years to start reducing the amount of chicken litter applied to fields in the area.

Harriman said that contrary to numbers used by Oklahoma state agencies, there are currently 1,694 poultry houses in the watershed.

Harriman outlined legislation approved in Arkansas in 2003 requiring nutrient management plans for farmers. He also noted that the poultry companies have contributed matching funds for BMPs Inc. and have also financially backed the Illinois River Watershed Partnership.

The partnership is working to get Oklahoma and Arkansas to file a joint request for an Environmental Protection Association Grant that could provide up to \$1.1 million per year for five years to help with water quality efforts in the watershed.

Commissioner Gerald Hilsher, who worked on former Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating's animal waste task force, said the task force had asked to work with poultry companies in 1997 on steps to reduce phosphorus in the watershed, but the companies rebuffed the task force's efforts.

"Why the hell didn't this start in 1997," Hilsher said. "It's too little too late."

Fast Fact:

Chicken Litter Leaving Watershed

60,311 tons of chicken litter, or 1.75 million pounds of phosphorus, have been hauled out of the Illinois River Watershed in the past three years.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

POULTRY LAWSUIT: OSRC'S DILEMMA

By D.E. Smoot Muskogee Phoenix

Posted on August 30, 2006

URL: http://www.muskogee phoenix.com/local/local_story_242005929.html

Playing to a packed house, Oklahoma Scenic River Commission members debated an issue that was pulled from the agenda last Friday.

Chairman Bill Blackard had planned to ask commissioners to pass a resolution opposing the state's efforts to hold the poultry industry liable for its alleged role in polluting the Illinois River Basin. The agenda item was withdrawn Friday, but the issue clearly was on the minds of commissioners and more than 50 visitors.

After some parliamentary wrangling over which agenda items would be heard first, the commission passed a proposal allowing its watershed management subcommittee to coordinate with the Illinois River Watershed Partnership in applying for an Environmental Protection Agency targeted watershed grant. The funding, if awarded, would be used to address Illinois River Basin pollution problems.

A proposal asking commissioners to prioritize a \$35,000 expenditure for an urban survey of Oklahoma residents who live within the Illinois River watershed failed to get enough support to go to a vote.

The issue that attracted the most attention — and drew a substantial crowd — was moved toward the end of the meeting, which lasted more than four hours. But after poultry industry representatives gave reports about steps the industry is taking to lessen the impact of poultry litter in the Illinois River Basin, the gloves came off.

Chairman Bill Blackard, who according to the agenda was supposed to report to commissioners about his meeting with Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson, used his time to express his opinions about the state's lawsuit against the poultry industry and a commissioner who has been a vocal advocate of that action.

In a speech that rambled for more than a half hour, Blackard said he “locked horns with the attorney general” over the lawsuit. Blackard denigrated trial lawyers and politicians, saying the pollution problem allegedly caused by the poultry industry could be settled at the negotiation table. “I believe the poultry industry has been picked on,” Blackard said. “If you leave the politicians and the lawyers out, I have no doubt that these folks can sit down and work it out.”

Blackard's comments drew a stern rebuke from Commissioner Gerald Hilsher, who was part of former Gov. Frank Keating's animal waste task force. Hilsher said the poultry industry only began working to find solutions after Edmondson filed the federal lawsuit.

“Poultry integrators have not been the stewards they claim to be,” Hilsher said. “The poultry industry said (in 1997) it would not make any changes in the way it handles litter until somebody made them change.”

Hilsher cited the state's three- to four-year effort to negotiate an agreement with the poultry industry that fell apart before Edmondson filed the lawsuit in June 2005.

“When did the money start to happen? When did they (poultry integrators) start exporting litter?” Hilsher said. “It began happening after the lawsuit was filed.”

Hilsher said Blackard’s proposal to distance the commission from the poultry lawsuit is “going backwards.”

“What’s happening now is too little, too late,” Hilsher said.

Reach D.E. Smoot at 684-2903 or dsmoot@muskogeephoenix.com.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

OKLAHOMA SUES COMPANIES FOR DUMPING HAZARDOUS WASTE

By JULIET EILPERIN The Washington Post
Posted on August 29, 2006
URL: <http://www.nysun.com/article/38710>

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. — Every time the rain comes down, muddy water laden with phosphorus, arsenic, and other contaminants flows into the Illinois River from chicken farms nearby and just across the border in Arkansas.

The inflow of nutrients has begun to change the river and the reservoir that it feeds, Tenkiller Ferry Lake. At times the water is clogged with fish-killing algae, occasionally emitting a foul odor that affects the drinking water and undercuts the area's attraction as a tourist destination.

"This river used to be crystal clear," Ed Brocksmith, a member of the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission, said. "Phosphorus is the problem here."

Frustrated that nearly four years of talks failed to produce a solution, Oklahoma is now suing eight firms — including Arkansas giant Tyson Foods Inc. — on the grounds that the chicken waste applied to crops near the river contains hazardous chemicals that are damaging the ecosystem and jeopardizing the region's tourist industry.

"They're not fertilizing. They're dumping," an Oklahoma lawyer who filed the suit last year, Drew Edmondson, said. "My concern is for the environment. My concern is for the lake and the river, which I'm watching being degraded before my eyes, literally."

Across the country, states and localities are suing polluters outside their jurisdiction, and sometimes each other, in efforts to curb air and water contamination that respects no borders. They say they are forced to act because Congress and the Bush administration have failed to crack down on everything from storm water runoff to dumping of invasive aquatic species.

In some cases, there is little in the way of federal law or regulation. This is the case with the factory farms in Arkansas and Oklahoma. The administration is still sorting through which regulations apply to poultry, dairy, and hog farmers, and existing rules do not apply to those who buy the waste for fertilizer. And some lawmakers, such as Rep. Ralph Hall, a Republican of Texas, are lobbying to permanently exempt these industries from even minimal federal oversight.

Other times, the administration has blessed activities in one state that another state opposes: Virginia — over Kentucky's objections — plans to allow a strip mining company to discharge more than a billion gallons of briny water into a river just eight miles from where it flows into Kentucky.

In others instances, the Bush administration has declined to take action, such as the Environmental Protection Agency's decision not to regulate ballast water from freighters that release invasive species into waterways.

An environmental law professor at Nova Southeastern University in Miami, Joel Mintz, said he has noticed an increase in such cases. "The [state attorneys general] have gotten aggressive in the last couple of years," Mintz said. "It's a little hotter now."

An EPA spokeswoman, Jessica Emond, said the agency works hard to monitor all pollution.

"EPA is committed to protecting public health and the environment by coordinating closely with its 10 regional offices to implement environmental laws at the state and regional levels," she said. "In addition, EPA solicits and takes into consideration comments submitted by state and local governments when developing national rules and regulations."

But New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, who has sued EPA over its aquatic species policy as well as air pollution rules, said the flurry of legal activity reflects "the lack of enforcement" by the administration.

"It's more than a trend, it's an ideological decision that's been made by the Bush administration," Mr. Spitzer said. "Into that void we have stepped in to enforce the law."

In many cases, state lawyers say out-of-state pollution jeopardizes their tourist industry. Kentucky Assistant Attorney General Scott Porter, for example, argues that Virginia's proposal to let Consolidation Coal Co. release water from its mining operations could damage Fishtrap Lake, a reservoir filled with bass and catfish that attracts tens of thousands of visitors a year.

Mr. Porter's office is weighing whether to sue Virginia. "We will take every available method we have to protect the waters of Kentucky."

The chief engineer of Virginia's Division of Mined Land Reclamation, Leslie Vincent, said Virginia is aware of Kentucky's concerns but believes the plan's requirement for mixing the discharge with cleaner water should keep levels of harmful chloride to an acceptable level. "It should not be an adverse impact," Ms. Vincent said.

In Arkansas, poultry farmers see the Oklahoma lawsuit as a threat to their livelihoods. Keith Morgan, who raises 178,000 chickens at a time for Arkansas-based Peterson Farms, said he and other producers make a profit selling their waste as fertilizer and cannot afford to truck it out of the million-acre watershed.

No one questions that Tenkiller Ferry Lake and the Illinois River — which travelers in 1870 described as "one of the prettiest rivers on the continent, sparkling with crystal waters" — are being flooded with nutrients. The lake and river remain a popular tourist site that generates at least \$42 million a year in revenue: Last week, Adam Visor and his friend Jordan Hebert drove three hours from Oklahoma City to fish for smallmouth bass along the river's banks.

Mr. Edmondson and allies such as Mr. Brocksmith say a significant amount of the pollution comes from the 200,000 tons of chicken litter — waste and shavings that fill poultry houses stretching the length of nearly two football fields — that more than 2,800 farmers in Arkansas and Oklahoma buy and apply to their crops.

Poultry officials counter that western Arkansas towns such as Bentonville and Fayetteville are also to blame for the river's pollution, since they rank among the fastest-growing in the nation and generate their own runoff. John Elrod, a partner at the Arkansas firm of Conner and Winters, who represents Simmons Foods, said the industry is willing to help Oklahoma but will not fold under legal pressure.

"Our attitude all along has been if you need someone to help with this problem, we're going to be standing at the front of the line, but if you're going to file a lawsuit against us, it's going to be an all-day affair," Mr. Elrod said.

Mr. Spitzer has scored some legal victories over the Bush administration, but he acknowledged that not all environmental goals can be pursued through litigation.

"Long term, states cannot supplant the role of the federal government in addressing these issues," he said.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

WATER TAX ON NEWTON COUNTY BALLOT

By Carol Stark The Joplin Globe

Posted on August 30, 2006

URL: http://www.joplinglobe.com/local/local_story_242013744?keyword=secondarystory

NEOSHO, Mo. - Members of the Newton County Commission on Tuesday signed a court order allowing a proposal to be placed on the November ballot that would increase the Newton County Health Department's levy by 7 cents with voters' approval.

In the same order, the commissioners said they would not support the levy increase, terming it an "excessive and unjustified increase."

The current levy of 5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation generates about \$310,000 annually for the Health Department. That, along with state funding, grants and fees, backed a department budget of \$847,735 in fiscal 2006.

The additional revenues - estimated at \$434,000 a year - would be used to hire four more staff specialists, and to purchase equipment to begin monitoring and testing water samples from area creeks for health hazards, according to the Health Department.

Trustees for the Health Department voted Aug. 17 to place the proposed levy increase on the Nov. 7 ballot. But the county commissioners, after seeking legal advice, said the board of trustees did not have authority to place the issue on a ballot. The issue needed approval of the commission or a petition of voters to get on the ballot, the commission said.

Commissioner Jerry Black said Tuesday that while the commission will not support the issue, it wanted to give voters the opportunity to make their own choice.

"We are without rancor in doing this," Black said. "We asked the Health Department to reconsider the amount of the increase they were asking for, and they were firm on it. But we believe the amount is excessive."

Bob Kulp, Health Department administrator, when contacted Tuesday for a reaction, said he had just received a copy of the order, and that he and members of the health board would not comment on the order until they had met.

Kulp said he believes a primary component of health is environmental health.

"The primary thing we want to do is monitor the streams in Newton County," he said. "We have already identified some issues, and we know the public health is at risk."

Kulp said the county relies on one volunteer to take stream samples.

The additional tax money, Kulp said, would be used:

For year-round monitoring of streams and creeks in the county. That way, Kulp said, the department could advise the public on the safety of the streams. He said multiple sample points are necessary to judge the health of a water source.

To determine the sources of contamination. Kulp said there now is only speculation as to what those sources are.

"We can make some pretty good guesses," he said. "In order to have an action plan to make things better and to make improvements to our environment, we need answers. We feel like this is part of the Health Department's responsibility to the public."

Black said contamination levels in the waterways are already known.

"There is lots of information about the contamination," he said. "It's hard to justify the money to collect data for something we already know."

Kulp said he does not want to debate the issue with the commissioners.

"We'll let the voters decide," he said. "Water pollution is a big concern in Newton County. And what happens in Newton County affects our neighbors. We're just happy to see the issue on the ballot."

Carol Stark is the metro editor for The Joplin Globe.

Tax impact

If the proposed levy increase passes, the owner of an \$80,000 home would see a tax increase of \$10.64 annually.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

TAXING QUESTIONS

By MARSHA L. MELNICHAK Northwest Arkansas Times

Posted on August 30, 2006

URL: <http://www.nwanews.com/nwat/News/44327/>

Mayor Dan Coody held a town hall meeting Tuesday to explain the upcoming sales tax bond issue and " why this bond issue is so important for Fayetteville. "

He fielded six questions from an audience of about 40, about half of whom were city staff, aldermen or consultants for the Wastewater System Improvement Program.

“ Actually, I was expecting more questions. Maybe the message is getting out there and maybe people understand the ramifications of the election, ” Coody said after the meeting.

Voters’ decisions Sept. 12 will determine how the wastewater system improvement project is paid for and what streets and trails will be constructed or upgraded.

As described by Coody, the first two of the four bond issue questions on the ballot deal with funding the cost escalations of the sewer system; the third involves a \$ 65. 9 million bond issue for the road program; and the fourth is a \$ 2. 1 million shot in the arm for the trail system, primarily for Scull Creek Trail.

If any of the four questions is approved, a quartercent sales tax increase will go into effect. Depending on what issues pass, an existing 3 / 4 cent sales tax that started in 2001 for the sewer system will be extended.

If all four bond issues are approved, the tax will be extended for about 12 years.

Questions to the mayor Tuesday were about impact fee and traffic studies, funding for the sewer project, what happens if the bond issues fail, and an alternate use of funds.

Jim Bemis, Ward 4 resident, wondered why the city didn’t study traffic flow around Mount Comfort and do impact fee studies before voting on the sales tax bond issue.

Coody answered that a bond issue can’t be based on impact fees because bond dealers want steady, reliable income, “ and that is not impact fees. ”

City Engineer Ron Petrie, one of about a dozen city staffers at the meeting, said traffic studies being done now are a matter of getting prepared so they are ready to get going “ as soon as the sales tax is approved. ”

The bond issue identifies 13 street projects.

Don Connor wondered if part of the money that would be raised for the street projects would also be used to repay about \$ 20 million that was moved to the sewer project to lower how much would be needed in that bond issue.

“ Let me answer you very clearly. No, ” Coody said.

“ If you take one penny and spend it on anything else, a lawsuit’s waiting for you, ” he said.

Ward 1 resident Bob Falk asked what would happen if the bond issue didn’t pass.

Coody said if the sewer rate bond issue questions fail, there is no choice but to fall back on sewer rates.

To bring in the same number of dollars the sales tax would bring in two years would require a 30 percent sewer rate increase for 22 years, he said.

In addition, if the bond issue fails, the city could lose most of \$ 25 million in matching funds from federal and state governments, according to Coody.

Today, the city spends about \$ 2. 5 million in street improvements per year. Based on that, he said it would take 12 to 13 years just to do the Ruppel Road project.

Nancy Allen, Ward 2 candidate for City Council, asked Coody when he was first aware of a shortfall for the sewer plant.

Coody said it was about Feb. 2, 2005, when he first became aware the city was not on schedule.

Pete Heinzelmann of Ward 1 told the mayor he thought people were willing to support the bond issue for what they think is needed. He asked the mayor what those needs are regarding the sewer plant.

Coody said the new westside sewer plant is only about a third of the entire wastewater improvement project, which also includes rehabilitating the eastside plant and about 31 miles of new pipeline.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

SENECA SETS WATER PRIORITIES

By Linda Greer The Joplin Globe

Posted on August 30, 2006

URL: http://www.joplinglobe.com/local/local_story_242014824

SENECA, Mo. - Where a 30-foot well once sustained the population, four wells at least 1,000 feet deep now pump almost a million gallons a day.

In 10 years, those wells could be sucking air if nothing is done, according to city leaders in Seneca. "We have to keep dropping down, or we are not going to have any water," Mayor Gary Roark said at a public hearing Monday on the topic of water-system projects.

Doyle Shields, water superintendent, said the city has two, 1,400-foot wells, and two at 1,000 feet. All reach into the same aquifer that is steadily dropping, he said.

The pumps in the No. 1 and No. 3 wells were lowered three years ago. Now, the pump in well No. 2 should be dropped an additional 400 feet, Shields said.

Shields said that according to the Missouri Water Coalition, in the best-case scenario, those wells could last 14 years. In the worst case, they could be dry in 10 years, he said.

"It's not a pretty picture, but it's a fact of life," Roark said.

Roark said the city has around \$670,000 available in state low-interest loans and Environmental Protection Agency grants to use for water-system projects, including the wastewater system.

Roark said Milnot Co. uses around 500,000 gallons a day, accounting for about 60 percent of the city's water consumption. The Eastern Shawnee Tribe uses about 1 percent of the city's water daily in a casino, but it pays 1.5 times the normal rate because the casino is outside the city limits, Roark said.

Resident Sherrie Hansen asked if it costs more to provide water to Milnot and the tribe than what they pay.

Shields said that as a public utility, the city is obligated to provide water to consumers within the city limits. Users outside town pay the higher rate and must seek approval before connecting to city waterlines.

Roark said revenue from Milnot allows the city to maintain city waterlines, some from the 1800s, that break at a rate of two to three a week.

"If Milnot shuts down, the city will use half the water it does, but it will also lose half its revenue," Roark said.

Proposed projects

Roark said the city established three priorities for the water system: lower pump No. 2, chlorinate the system and increase water pressure in the Cherry Street area.

Roark said city water is still within safe drinking limits for impurities, but it eventually will require chlorination because water quality is going down.

Referring to the state coalition's theory on the dropping aquifer, Hansen asked, "Then we will have an expensive project with a low life span?"

Shields said the city needs new waterlines no matter where the water comes from, whether it pumps its own or buys it from another entity.

"It's pretty scary," Hansen said.

Roark said the city could have project bids in the spring to lower one pump, add chlorine and increase pressure. Future projects would include adding water towers to increase storage, he said.

Water customers

The city of Seneca has 900 customers and receives \$37,000 to \$38,000 monthly for water.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

MAYOR EXPLAINS SEWER PLANT OVERRUNS

By JD Malone The Morning News

Posted on August 29, 2006

URL: <http://www.nwaonline.net/articles/2006/08/30/news/0830fzsalestax.txt>

FAYETTEVILLE -- The question of the sales tax bond election Sept. 12 might not be if Fayetteville residents pay for current and future infrastructure improvements, but when and how they pay.

Mayor Dan Coody convened a town hall meeting Tuesday night to discuss the election.

The bond issue asks voters about four issues. The first two call for support of a bond issue to raise an additional \$38 million for the wastewater treatment system project already under way.

The third and fourth questions involve about \$70 million to upgrade roads in the city and \$2 million for improved trails.

The mayor explained that if all four issues are approved, a 12-year extension of two existing sales taxes would result: a quarter-percent and a three-quarter-percent tax.

Attending the meeting were elected officials, several city employees, some experts and professionals close to the city's infrastructure projects and maybe a dozen residents.

The mayor fielded several questions from concerned residents. Here are a few of them:

Q: Will part of the money being raised with Issue 3 (\$70 million for street improvements) be used to fund some of the \$23 million shortfall on the wastewater project the city promised to pay?

Coody: No. We did everything we could to reduce the cost needed to fund this cost escalation. This money can only go for what is on the bond issue.

Q: If Issue 1 didn't pass, would the sewer rate be increased? If Issue 3 and 4 aren't passed, what happens to the roads and trails?

Coody: If the question fails, we have no choice but to fall back on sewer rates. To bring in the same amount of money, we would need a 30 percent increase in the people who use the sewer system -- 30 percent for 22 years instead of two years of sales tax.

If the bond issue for the road question fails, then we just won't be able to do the work. We have been working with Washington, D.C., to get some money. We have about \$25 million in matching funds -- if the bond passes. If it fails, we would have to walk away from the \$25 million. Today we spend \$2.5 million a year on street improvement. The work obviously isn't going to get done without the bond passage.

Q: When were you first aware there was a shortfall (for the wastewater system project)?

Coody: I was aware on about Feb. 2, 2005. I would have liked to have known months earlier because I feel that the information was out there. But it was not being made clear to the City Council or me. The No. 1 problem we have had is that we dropped the ball with communication. We all are in this thing together and the communication breakdown has got us where we are.

Q: What are the needs as far as the sewer goes for Fayetteville?

Coody: David Jurgens, water/wastewater director for Fayetteville answered: The westside sewer plant is only one-third of the entire project: \$59.9 million is for the westside plant. It will have a 10-million-gallon daily flow capacity. We will also upgrade the eastside plant and 39 miles of pipe. The new system is being built for ultimate build-out, 150 years of life. Plants will treat water for a population of 115,000.

[BACK TO TOP](#)