



West Irvine students enjoyed a some snowcones during opening days of school at they transition to the change in schools.

## County property tax rates will increase .5% this year

County tax rates are going up due to lower property assessments.

Judge/Executive Wallace Taylor said the tax assessment rate came from the state of Kentucky based upon information it received from the local PVA office.

Taylor recommended the fiscal court take the compensating rate, which would bring in approximately the same revenue as last year.

"We will receive the same revenue as last year, even though our costs continue to escalate," he stated.

"I don't feel like we should raise it," said Magistrate Gerald Rader. "We'll have to spend less."

Taylor said the jail budget had increased from \$385,000 to \$985,000 in ten years.

"We've done forgot that our insurance increased -- \$100,000," Taylor stated.

"We've got to pay the bills. We don't want to go to the bank and borrow more money," he stated.

Rader cast the only no vote for the 8.4% property tax rate. Last year's rate was 7.9%.

The fiscal court also accepted into their minutes tax rates from the ambulance board, extension service, and library board. The am-

balance board kept their tax at 10%, while the extension service and library board accepted compensating tax rates.

Taylor said he is opposed to special districts increasing taxes when they have large surpluses in the bank. He added the only thing the fiscal court can do about that is to appoint board members who are not in favor of tax increases if the taxing district has a large surplus.

The judge announced that his office had printed over 650 applications for Bowie Refinery. Over 275 have been returned, and interviews will begin in September.

In the past, Taylor said there was an odor problem at the landfill caused by methane gas. In September, the landfill will go on the electric grid when they use the methane gas to generate electricity. The local methane will generate enough electricity for about 1,200 people.

The wet/dry vote has been set for Tuesday, October 8. Taylor said the only people voting will be those living in Irvine city limits only.

A recycling baler bought with a grant will be delivered Monday. This makes

three balers the county owns. Taylor said the recycling center is making a transition to the Old Pike.

Bids were opened for an animal shelter trailer and repeaters and receivers for Emergency Operations.

The bid for the trailer was rejected because it exceeded funding. The other bid was accepted contingent upon it meeting the specifications.

The court will advertise for bids to repair the capstone at the EOC Building, for a motorized louver for the boiler room and fan and louvers at the storage building.

Taylor said David Jenkins had retired from the road department. Two other employees were off on leave.

The fiscal court agreed to advertise to fill a vacancy requiring the applicant to possess a Class A CDL license. Zachary Clevenger and Justin Samples were hired as part-time firefighters to cover rotating shifts on weekends.

September was proclaimed as Recovery Month for substance abuse and mental health.

Magistrate Earl Young was appointed to serve on the EC2 committee through Estill Development Alliance.

## Cobb Hill veteran is presented with medal after 40 yrs.

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Last Monday, Sixth District Congressman Andy Barr's representative was at the Estill County Courthouse.

Watson's brother-in-law, Defort Bailey, made a request of the representative. He wanted someone to present the medal to Watson.

The presentation was confirmed later in the week for Saturday afternoon. Barr was presenting the medal to Watson at his home on Cobb Hill.

"If you ever want to come to Washington," Barr stated.

Watson interrupted him with "No."

"We'd be more than happy to host you," Barr added.

Watson teared up. There

were names of people he had served with on the wall. The memory was just too painful to relive.

Sgt. Tyler White works for Barr's office. He is usually the field representative who comes to the Estill Courthouse on the third Monday of each month.

White heads up the Veteran's Coalition for Barr's office. The coalition wants veterans to talk about issues the veterans and their families are facing.

Watson's second time in Viet Nam was in 1973.

"I went there when (the war) ended," he said.

He went to language school for 35 weeks, six days a week.

He said the unit was then given a chance to stay or come home. He chose to

come home. Later he ran into one of the men who stayed. Watson said that man was the only one who survived.

The language school was not a waste of time. Watson and his wife worked as an interpreter and nanny for Vietnamese refugees who were brought to Louisville.

The Watson family has served their country for three generations now. The oldest and middle Watson sons served about 11 years each, and the youngest was in the National Guards and Navy.

Their oldest grandson has served about 12 years and will probably retire in about eight more years.

A granddaughter, Brie, is now in basic training for the Marine Corps.

## Property tax rate decided after the Irvine council discusses other options

by CATHY DAWES  
The Estill County Tribune

The property tax rate within the city of Irvine was the main focus during the Irvine City Council meeting on Monday night, August 26, 2013.

Mayor Ernest Farmer began by saying that he had recalculated the rates and he would like to see the council take the two percent tax increase rather than the four percent which was discussed during a previous reading.

Property Valuation Administrator Jeff Hix was in attendance to explain the rates to the council and to answer any questions that they might have. According to Hix, if the council took the compensating rate, they would only profit \$17. If they decided on the 2 percent tax increase they would profit \$4,382, and with a four percent increase the city of Irvine would profit \$9,575.

Tobo Bryant said that he would like to see a fifty cent increase on the garbage bills instead of the property tax increase. He said that the rate increase on garbage pickup would ensure that property owners as well as renters paid the same amount and it would be fair to everyone in the city. He added that the tax rate increase would affect the businesses in downtown Irvine but the garbage rate increase would not.

"I think you're right, it's something that's going to have to be done but I would like to see the

garbage bills raised by \$1 per month," stated Mayor Farmer.

Councilwoman Nelle Williams asked how many residents in the city pay for garbage pickup and was informed that there are around 800 customers.

She added that she thought Bryant had a good point by letting the home owners and renters share the expense rather than taking the tax increase which would effect only those that own property and businesses in the city.

City Attorney Rodney Davis advised the council that if they didn't take the tax increase then it would effect them years down the road.

Jeff Hix added that the average assessment on a home in the city is between \$58,000 and \$60,000. He said that there are homes that are worth much less and homes that are worth much more but the cheaper properties will never be purchased unless they are purchased for investment properties.

"We want to do what is right for everybody," stated Mayor Farmer.

The council finally agreed to raise the taxes by 2 percent and wait on the garbage rate increase. The 2 percent increase means that the council does not have to hold a public hearing before setting the tax rate. Hix told the council that they would have to hold a public forum only if they went with the four percent tax increase.

Nelle Williams asked

Fire Chief Tony Murphy how long it had been since the apartments on Bertha Wallace Drive had caught on fire. He said he thought it had been about two years since the fire.

Williams said that her concern was that there are pallets, bricks, and bags of concrete laying everywhere around the apartments and something needed to be done.

Davis said that the council could file a civil lawsuit and let the courts do something about it.

"Writing a letter is like spitting in the wind," Davis added.

Brad Smith said that to his knowledge the previous owner had transferred the property to a relative. Davis added that if the paperwork was served on the owner it could take as little as 60 days to have something done about the situation.

"If the council directs me, I'd be happy to file a lawsuit," said Davis.

The council agreed to proceed with the necessary actions to take care of the property.

Mayor Farmer said that City Hall will be closed on Monday, September 2nd in observance of Labor Day. He said that no garbage would be picked up that day but would resume on Tuesday and pickup throughout the city would be delayed by one day due to the holiday. He also added that anyone interested in having a yards ale over the holiday weekend could do so free of charge.

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