

# June 8 vote

## Clarenceville seeks Headlee override

By Sue Mason  
Staff writer

The decision before Clarenceville voters in the June 8 school election is a confusing one at best.

The district, which includes portions of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Township, is asking voters for the authority to levy its full operational tax rate — \$37.90 per every \$1,000 of assessed property value (one-half of market value).

The request isn't in the form of a millage renewal.

The request is to override the Headlee amendment.

The amendment stipulates that if property values increase more than inflation, the tax rate must be rolled back to prevent a taxing authority, in this case the school district, from reaping the windfall revenue.

"We've done a lot of positive things to improve opportunities for students," Superintendent Michael Shibler said. "We're not asking for a rate increase, but the ability to maintain and to continue to improve this district."

Clarenceville's property values have increased between 5 and 8 percent, although specific figures aren't available as yet. The inflation rate, on the other hand, increased only 1.9 percent.

As a result, the district must roll back its tax rate \$1.80 for every \$1,000 of assessed value unless voters decide to override.

CLARENCEVILLE IS an in-formula school district. About 28 percent of the money spent to educate students comes from state school aid. Local property taxes provided the bulk — 70 percent — of its revenue.

A tax rollback mandated by Headlee would be doubly felt in the district.

A portion of the state aid formula is based on the amount of mills a district levies.

So a lower tax rate means less state aid along with less local tax revenue for the district.

For a typical \$50,000 home with an assessed value of \$25,000, a rollback would trim \$45 off the yearly tax bill.

For a \$70,000 home, the rollback would be \$63, small savings in com-

**'We're not asking for a rate increase, but the ability to maintain and to continue to improve this district.'**

— Michael Shibler  
superintendent

parison to the effect it would have on the district, Shibler said.

He estimates the district could lose up to \$250,000 in local and state revenue.

"Clarenceville has maintained a tight budget for years and years. There's no surplus out there to use," Shibler said. "We're looking at a 50 percent increase in Blue Cross-Blue Shield."

"The suppliers won't roll back their costs because we have to roll back millage. The book companies won't, the utilities won't."

The school district has worked hard to project a positive image, Shibler said, and that effort will be for naught if the override is rejected by voters.

He has met with every booster group and parent group in the district to explain the importance of the request and has made a video clip for cable television that will air before the election.

HE HAS found that residents are concerned about why they must reaffirm decisions made the last two years when they renewed the operation tax levy.

And while the district is asking for the authority to levy the full operational tax rate, it also has offered residents a reprieve of sorts from higher taxes.

The district plans to roll back the debt rate by 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

But that action is cause for concern, Shibler said. Voters may view it as an enticement to approve the override, he said.

The debt rate was reduced for the same reason the override was requested — increased property values — Shibler said.

The higher property values are generating more money than needed to pay the debt and the potential for similar rollbacks for that levy exists for the next few years, he said.

Shibler is maintaining a positive attitude about the vote and declines to discuss what will happen if the override is rejected.

It has been the school board's practice to not "threaten" voters with talk about cutbacks, if a tax request is rejected, he said.

"I hope the reputation of this school district and the improvements we have made will speak for themselves (on election day)," Shibler said. "I'd hate to see all this come to an end."

## Weekend closings noted

Memorial Day will mean several closings.

Both the Farmington and Farmington Hills city halls will be closed Monday, May 25. Trash collection will be delayed later in Farmington Hills next week. Farmington will collect trash as scheduled.

The Farmington Community Library will be closed Saturday through Monday. The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Com-

merce, 47th District Court and the Farmington Observer will be closed Monday. All banks and savings and loan associations will be closed Monday as well.

Regular hours will resume for all Tuesday.

Because the mail must get through, the Farmington Post Office will operate on a holiday schedule for Memorial Day.

There will be no regular residen-

tial or business mail deliveries. Usual post office lobby services will not be available.

Certain expedited mail service will continue, including Special Delivery and Express Mail.

Mail pickup from collection boxes will be done according to the holiday schedule posted on individual boxes.

Normal mail service will resume the next day.

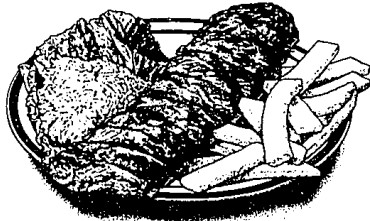
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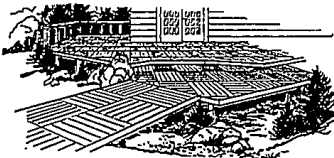
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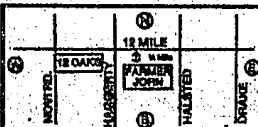
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