

## Menard pushes yes vote on tax proposal

BY ALEXANDRIA BURRIS • ABURRIS@DAILYWORLD.COM • AUGUST 5, 2008

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St. Landry Parish Don Menard is taking a proposed \$2.7 million a year tax designated for road repairs to the people.

Saying the property tax is desperately needed to fix deplorable roads, Menard met with a group of Westgate Subdivision citizens Thursday to explain a 10-year, 10-mill property tax used to black top roads.

Taxpayers voted down a proposal in 25-year, 15-mill property tax in 2006 to finance repairs for parish roads, but Menard is pushing for voters to say yes come October.

Menard said parish voters turned down the tax because they felt it was too much debt for too long a time.

But the new tax proposal will not pay for as many roads.

"It's going to be less tax on the taxpayer. We're going to have borrowed money for less time which means we're going to do less," he said.

The parish council voted to put Menard's tax proposal on the Oct. 4 ballot in June.

Part of the proposal requires the parish to eliminate the existing tax districts.

But some residents questioned the fairness of a property tax, saying that renters would benefit from new roads without footing the bill for them.

Menard argued otherwise. "The people who benefit the most are property owners," he said. "Your property values will go up."

Redesigning 50 percent of the sales tax dedicated to garbage disposal will also ensure that everyone in the parish shoulders the debt.

In the Westgate Subdivision bumpy, ill-suited roads are the norm.

But some residents wanted to know why money generated from Evangeline Downs did not pay for road improvements.

Menard urged residents to look to the future.

"The longer we wait the more expensive it gets," Menard said. "The money is not there."



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Don Menard discusses road problems with residents of Westgate Subdivision during a meeting. (Photo by Freddie Herpin)