

Parish seeks new tax, portion of an old one, for roads

Also wants a "trash for cash" verdict on Oct. 4

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The fairly mundane Oct. 4 primary is likely to attract more voters as a result of the St. Landry Parish Council's decision to put three propositions on the ballot.

Voters will be asked to approve two tax proposals and endorse a third revenue idea to fund a road-building program.

Those proposals join judicial elections on the ballot.

The parish council on Wednesday night, with Eunice-area members Jay Guidry, Jimmie Edwards and Gary Courville voting no, opted to put a 10-mill, 10-year property tax on the ballot in unincorporated areas.

That tax would fund road work in a new district, created by merging existing road districts into one entity.

Parish President Don Menard estimates first-year collections on that millage at \$3 million.

The council has considered such an election call since February, holding two public meetings on the subject.

The western side of the parish has no road taxes, and Courville said his constituents don't want one.

The other tax proposal, also originating with Menard, seeks permission to redirect part of the Solid Waste Disposal District sales tax revenue to parish roads.

Courville and Guidry also voted against that proposition, which some Solid Waste District commissioners, including Gardie McManus of Eunice, say would threaten its operation.

The proposal would leave the same tax rate in effect, but move about \$500,000 to the road program from the landfill district. It must be approved parish-wide.

The third referendum is non-binding, asking for public expression of whether the garbage district should accept garbage from other parishes.

"Trash for cash" could yield as much as \$3 million a year, some estimate. Others say the revenue is not worth the environmental price.