

MOVING FORWARD ON THE COURTHOUSE EXPANSION/RENOVATION PROJECT WILL SAVE TAXPAYERS MILLIONS

Reading Commissioner Geissman's recent editorial in the Trading Post, I agree with her on one point, stopping the Medina County Courthouse Expansion/Renovation project today, will have no effect on the current budgetary crisis. No jobs will be saved, no increased services provided. Commissioner Geissman proposes that we shift monies (inside millage) previously dedicated for capital improvements to the general fund budget in 2010. In effect, while we are making cuts this year her plan is to "grow" the General Fund in 2010 by cutting into our future funding for building repair, maintenance and construction.

All three Commissioners and the Judges agree, the Current Courthouse facility is in bad shape; by deferring the project for a period of 5 years we will be forced to make critical mechanical (HVAC) and structural improvements very soon. Our Building Maintenance Superintendent has estimated the cost of these improvements to be approx. \$ 400,000 – money that will have to be taken out of the general fund budget - resulting in more layoffs and deeper service cuts. Under Commissioner Geissman's proposal, at some undetermined date in the future, the Commissioners would have to wean the general fund budget off the inside millage currently used to pay debt on capital improvements - putting us right back where we are now.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul is not the answer. It would be irresponsible of us as a Board to push this unpleasant task to future boards. By moving forward now on the Courthouse expansion/renovation project, Medina County is getting the benefit of record low interest rates and construction costs, resulting in long-range savings to the taxpayers.

Medina County has a long tradition of replacing/renovating county buildings using the inside millage. This has allowed Medina County to maintain a very low overall debt ratio and has allowed for successful project funding over the last several decades - without raising taxes. To discontinue this practice now would be short-sighted and financially irresponsible.