

For Immediate Release

Public Library Levy on November 5th

Livingston, Montana— Park County residents will vote on a crucial levy on the upcoming November 5th election day. The proposed levy seeks to replace all current City and County funding by adding 10.75 mills to the existing 5.5 mills voters approved in 1997 and 2016. This levy is intended to allow the library to fulfill its purpose in offering robust services throughout Park County, with funds set to be received starting in 2025.

Funds from the City and County's general funds currently constitute a significant portion of the library's budget, accounting for over 37% of the total budgeted revenues for the fiscal year ending in 2024. If passed, the replacement levy is estimated to generate \$985,400 annually, which would be added to the 5.5 existing voted mills. This additional revenue is essential for establishing and then maintaining quality library services that are the reason the residents of Park County established a joint city-county library, decades ago. The City and County would also no longer need to contribute a total of over \$300,000 from their general funds to the library.

The library has long been a cornerstone of the community, providing access to information, programming, and welcoming space for all. The continued support from the community through this levy will enable it to maintain and enhance these essential services, and to expand them outside of Livingston. Getting something to residents outside of Livingston has always proved challenging. In 2013 the library began offering online access to digital items, and this has been quite popular, but it also showed there was a need for even more. In 2016 the County's voters approved a 3 mill levy, which was sufficient at the time to begin operating the bookmobile, which hit County roads in 2019.

"While the bookmobile has been very—even wildly—successful with those residents able to visit it, one of the biggest lessons it has taught us is that so many people outside of Livingston need more than just an hour or so a week of access," said Library Director Mitch Grady. "We also found that the inherent limitations on the bookmobile model mean that it functions mostly as a way to deliver materials that users specifically request—a fundamental and hugely important service to be sure, but far from the only thing modern public libraries need to provide."

"What's more, on the basis of usage and given the hours of access it provides, the bookmobile is much more expensive to run than is a permanently located library." Grady continued. The bookmobile currently stops in Gardiner, Emigrant, Clyde Park, and Wilsall for an hour per week and Cooke City once a month, most months. It also delivers items to Mammoth Hot Springs but

does not make an actual stop there, where people can browse items.

With the passage of the levy, library administration would begin developing a network of libraries in Park County, with locations in the Shields Valley, Paradise Valley, and Gardiner. “We don’t plan on building libraries, but rather we will partner with existing public organizations to establish these locations,” said Library Board President Jack Longbine. “We want to become a truly countywide public library, as is our charge. We’ll even drop the ‘Livingston’ from the name, for good measure.”

But Livingston residents need not fear passage of the levy wouldn’t benefit them. The library in Livingston would be open Sunday afternoons, and would be in a better place financially to save for preservation and improvement of the building itself.

For more information about the levy and its impact on the library's services, please visit our website at <https://livingstonparkcountylibrary.blogspot.com/p/mill-levy-info.html> or contact the library directly at info.lpcpl@mtlib.org

The levy measure—officially *Referendum No. R-003 To Impose and Increase to the Mill Levy for the Livingston-Park County Public Library*—reads:

The purpose of this referendum is to increase the library mill levy. Currently there are 5.5 mills imposed for the library. The approximate amount of tax raised from the 5.5 mills is Five Hundred and Four Thousand One Hundred and Sixty Dollars (\$504,160). This proposes an increase from 5.5 mills to 16.25 mills on all taxable property within Park County. The purpose for which the additional monies will be used is to maintain the public library system and expand hours and locations throughout Park County. The increase to the mill levy is permanent. The approximate additional amount of tax to be raised is Nine Hundred and Eighty-Five Thousand Four Hundred Dollars (\$985,400). The increased yearly impact of the election on a home valued for property tax purposes at One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) in terms of actual dollars in additional property taxes that would be imposed is Fourteen Dollars and Fifty-One Cents (\$14.51) and for a home valued for property tax purposes at Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) is Forty-Three Dollars and Fifty-Four Cents (\$43.54) and for a home valued for property tax purposes at Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) is Eighty-Seven Dollars and Eight Cents (\$87.08) for residences with those values if the increase was to pass. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

☐ FOR increasing the library mill levy from 5.5 mills to 16.25 mills.

☐ AGAINST increasing the library mill levy from 5.5 mills to 16.25 mills.

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