



OKALOOSA COUNTY

HALF-CENT SURTAX



It Just Makes Cents!

www.ItJustMakesCents.org

June 2018

Dear Citizens of Okaloosa County:

When our Sheriff, Larry Ashley, tells us that if WE do not do something soon, we will not enjoy the same quality of life we currently experience in Okaloosa County, then it is time for us to take action.

When it takes you two hours to get home due to traffic conjection, it is time for us to take action.

When our roads flood any time it rains, it is time for us to take action.

When our bay's clean water is being polluted by dirty storm water because we do not have adequate facilities to collect storm water, it is time for us to take action.

Now is our time. It is time to reinvest in Okaloosa County by supporting the half-cent sales surtax which will help enhance our public safety, and help address the problems that plague our roads and waterways.

Fifty-six percent of peak season sales tax is paid by visitors. Time for them to pay their fair share of our infrastructure issues.

On November 6, this half-cent sales tax will be on the ballot in Okaloosa County. By voting "YES," we are voting to reinvest in Okaloosa County. By doing nothing, we are just letting the problems fester and losing the opportunity we have to keep Okaloosa County safe and a good place to live.

Referendum wording for November 6, 2018 Election

This is a policy for the greater good.

We cannot ignore our critical infrastructure and continue to enjoy the quality of life we cherish in Okaloosa County.

We must be a forward thinking community of YES.

The aim is to improve the quality of life we enjoy here in Okaloosa County.

Okaloosa County and municipalities are in need of funds to support vital Projects and Services which affect our entire community. This half-cent surtax is being brought forward to voters on the November 6, 2018 ballot.

*We all agree that there are critical needs that need to be fulfilled...and with peak season tourists paying for over 56% of Okaloosa County Sales Taxes. **IT JUST MAKES CENTS!***

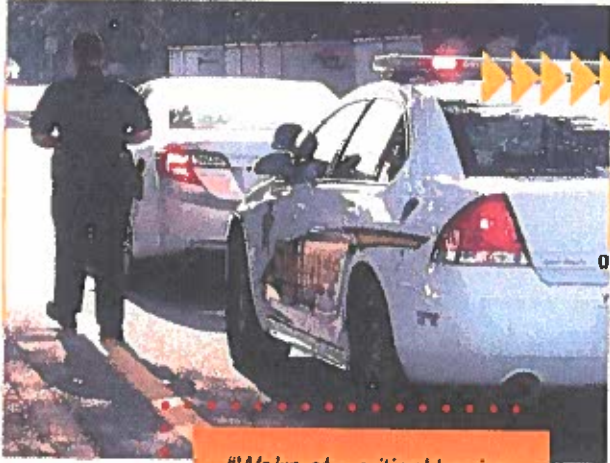
REFERENDUM TO IMPOSE A ONE-HALF CENT SURTAX TO FUND ESSENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Shall the County be authorized to levy a ten year, one-half cent per dollar sales surtax on taxable transactions occurring within Okaloosa County effective January 1, 2019 for funding of critical needs including essential law enforcement/public safety facilities and vital equipment; reduce traffic congestion; construction and repairing of roads and bridges; flood control and water quality improvements and construct other public facility improvements and pay debt, subject to oversight by a citizens' committee?

FOR THE ONE-HALF CENT SALES TAX

AGAINST THE ONE-HALF CENT SALES TAX

OKALOOSA COUNTY'S CRITICAL NEEDS:



Public Safety Enhancements

Our current public safety and law enforcement communication systems are out of date and unreliable.

County law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services are charged with ensuring the protection of citizens, organizations and institutions against threats to their well-being and to the prosperity of their communities.

"We're at a critical turning point in this community. We must step up now to invest in our community and tourists must share the costs - or we'll all pay the price with a declining quality of life."

– SHERIFF LARRY ASHLEY

1. Protect our school children. Creation of single entry structures, metal detectors, video cameras, enhanced weapon systems to navigate extremely complex shooting scenarios, and better protection for deputies.
2. Ensure safety of Okaloosa County citizens, deputies and first responders by providing modern and reliable communication systems such as:
 - 9-1-1 system
 - Intra-agency operability between all Okaloosa county deputies and first responders
 - Mobile Emergency response equipment
3. Provide optimal response services in emergency situations by ensuring ample, reliable and adequately equipped vehicles such as:
 - Ambulances
 - Street and marine patrol vehicles
 - Hazmat and bomb squad
4. Maximize and expedite deputy and first responder training and duties by building adequate, up-to-date facilities such as:
 - Training facilities for public safety officials, first responders and citizens
 - A safe and secure room for court-ordered family visitation
 - Efficient and secure logistics facility for the processing of criminals, crime evidence and victims



Roads & Traffic Congestion

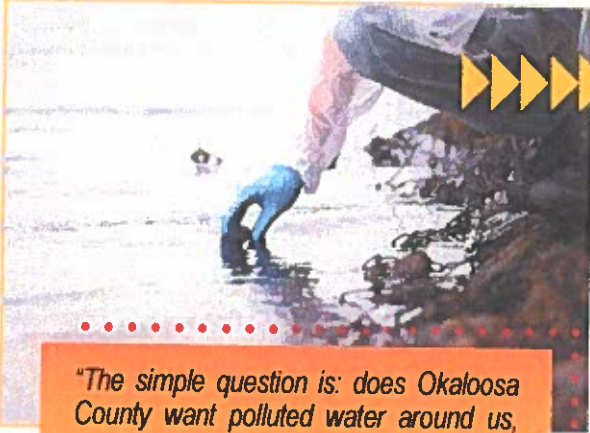
Critical infrastructure issues face our county. Our roads and highways are congested and traffic patterns are not conducive to our growing population and seasonal increases of visitors. In order to reduce traffic congestion in key areas throughout the county and keep our roadways safe, streamlined turning lanes, upgraded designs for traffic flow, right-of-way improvements and lighting/directional signals are all essential elements that need to be addressed.

"By upgrading our roads and intersection infrastructure now, we are investing to support our continued growth in tourism and as a bonus, to provide our residents with better road safety, employment opportunities and less traffic congestion throughout Okaloosa County's communities. Our infrastructure is at capacity. We simply cannot wait until the future to commence the work of upgrading our roads. "It just makes CENTS, to take action NOW!"

– LIZ MCMASTER PRESIDENT, EMERALD COAST ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

1. Design and implement new traffic patterns and alternative roadways such as:
 - Crestview Southwest Bypass
 - Destin Crosstown Connector
2. Adding new and upgrading traffic lights/improving intersections such as:
 - College Boulevard west and SR 85 in Niceville
 - Lewis Turner Boulevard and Hospital Road, Fort Walton Beach
3. Resurfacing projects such as:
 - Lewis St /Mayflower Avenue in Fort Walton Beach
 - Lovejoy Road, Fort Walton Beach
 - Santa Rosa Blvd, Okaloosa Island

All of the projects are designed to ease traffic congestion and maintain safe roadways for the residents of Okaloosa County



Water Quality/Storm Water

In an area that is surrounded by water, the level of our water quality is essential to the welfare of our communities. We need to ensure that water we use is safe and meets the highest standards of quality. In addition, we need to commit to storm water management to prevent flooding in several areas in our community such as:

1. Commons Drive in Destin and along Mooney Road in Fort Walton Beach where improvement to or replacement of storm water culverts is needed to avoid erosion by better managing the water flow.
2. Okaloosa Island where a need to design and construct a storm water collection and treatment system is vital to prevent road erosion and the same system at Union Avenue in Niceville to assure Rocky Bayou water quality remains stable.
3. Areas in FWB such as Standish Court and South Avenue and on 6th Avenue in Shalimar where pipes have failed and are in need of replacement to mitigate flooding.

"The simple question is: does Okaloosa County want polluted water around us, or clean water? We can determine our destiny, or we can surrender to the power of pollution. We all have contributed to the problem, but we can all help solve it – by supporting a surtax that will fund storm water facilities that keep the dirty water from contaminating the clean water. You're either in or you're out. I'm all in."

**– MICHELLE ANCHORS, ATTORNEY,
COMMUNITY ADVOCATE,
BORN/RAISED OKALOOSA COUNTY**



What Are the Advantages?

- Seasonally, 56% of monies generated will be paid by tourists
- Everyone Contributes – Okaloosa Citizens, Property Owners, Tourists, Visitors Crossing Through Our County – EVERYONE!
- Reduces the need to raise property taxes, thus keeping ad valorem taxes paid by property owners low
- By adding a half cent surtax vs. raising property taxes to pay for desperately needed infrastructure improvements/public safety enhancements—we actually save local citizens annually—and have visitors—who use our roads, law enforcement and other services—pay their fair share of the costs!!
- Monies collected can ONLY be used for critical capital infrastructure needs over a 10 year period. It cannot be used for operations or maintenance.

- A citizen advisory committee will be appointed to assure government accountability
- Every dollar collected will be spent in Okaloosa County
- Potential to leverage matching state and federal dollars to maximize investments
- Monies collected will be divided fairly, based on population in each municipality and unincorporated Okaloosa County
- Discretionary sales surtax applies ONLY to the first \$5,000 of any single taxable item (such as motor vehicle, mobile homes or boats)
- A half-cent surtax increase (from 6% to 6.5%) on \$5,000 item would result in only an additional \$25.
- On a \$100 item this would result in only an additional \$0.50
- Okaloosa County Median Income \$55,768. Based on average annual spending on taxable goods, a half cent surtax would increase sales tax expenditures \$132.50 per person PER YEAR, or \$11 per month.
- The average Okaloosa County homeowner would likely pay an additional \$400 in ad valorem taxes to generate the same revenue this surtax would provide.

▶▶▶▶▶ Frequently Asked Questions

WHO WILL PAY THE SURTAX?

The local option sales tax would apply to all transactions subject to the state tax imposed on sales, use, services, rentals, admissions, and other authorized transactions. Anyone who buys goods in Okaloosa County would pay the [half-cent] sales tax.

Since 56% of sales tax receipts in Okaloosa County are paid by our visitors, they will bear the largest portion of the tax!

HOW IS THE SURTAX DISTRIBUTED?

The county and municipal governments share the proceeds in accordance with the following statutory formula (F.S. 218.62):

- **COUNTY:** The proportion for each county government shall be computed by dividing the sum of the unincorporated area population plus two-thirds of the incorporated area population by the sum of the total county population plus two-thirds of the incorporated area population.
 - **Okaloosa County: Approximately \$18 Million Dollars will be collected annually.** Twelve (\$12) million will be designated to Okaloosa County Projects. Approximately 1/3 (\$4 Million Dollars per year for 10 years) will be assigned to the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; 1/3 (\$4 Million Dollars per year) to roadway projects such as The Southwest Crestview bypass, Raspberry connector and other projects to eliminate traffic congestion; 1/3 (\$4 Million per year for 10 years) water quality and stormwater projects throughout the county.
- **CITIES:** The proportion for each municipal government shall be computed by dividing the population of that municipality by the sum of the total county population plus two-thirds of the incorporated area population.
 - **Okaloosa County cities: \$6 Million Dollars will be assigned to all Cities based on population.** For example, Crestview (\$1.8 Million per year); Fort Walton Beach (\$1.6 Million per year); Niceville & Destin (\$1 Million each); Valparaiso (\$400,000 per year); and Mary Esther (\$300,000 per year) Shalimar (\$63,000 Per year); Laurel Hill (\$42,000 per year), Cinco Bayou (\$32,000 per year).

HOW DOES THIS FUNDING DIFFER FROM WHAT WE RECEIVE FROM TALLAHASSEE/WASHINGTON DC?

Major infrastructure projects are expensive. They are extremely complex taking many years of planning and execution. Okaloosa county must compete with other counties to receive federal or state funding by providing "skin in the game." State and federal monies are not free. Matching Funds are required to gain access and priority to federal and state funds. Currently, the federal and state work priorities list has project requests that extend to 2040. The Okaloosa ½ Cent Surtax provides our county and cities with the money required to pay for infrastructure needs and provides matching funds needed to compete for state and federal money.

▶▶▶▶▶ Resolutions of Support

The following have provided resolutions of support for the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners to levy a half cent sales tax to fund capital improvement projects:



Laurel Hill Florida



OKALOOSA COUNTY

HALF-CENT SURTAX

It Just Makes Cents! Vote YES! on November 6.

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