

# EXCELSIOR SPRINGS AREA NEWS

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Friday, November 04, 2011

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## Groundbreaking officially kicks off Excelsior Street project



Local officials joined with Gardner Capital representatives to break ground on the Excelsior Street housing project Tuesday. From left are Planning Director Nick Pappas, City Manager David Haugland, Mayor Pro Tem Chad Taylor, Mayor Ambrose Buckman, Tammi Creason and Janna Darmon of Gardner Capital, Councilman Jim Nelson and Downtown Excelsior Partnership Executive Director Keith Winge. (Photo by Eric Copeland)

By [ERIC COPELAND](#)  
Managing Editor

The symbolic beginning for the housing project on Excelsior and Foley streets took place Tuesday afternoon, but now the real work can begin.

City officials, representatives of developer Gardner Capital and leaders of the Downtown Excelsior Partnership broke ground with gold-colored shovels, and the event was viewed by many as a culmination of what DEP Executive Director Keith Winge called “a long-awaited project.”

Winge said the roots of the project, which will see the demolition of several blighted buildings, the rehabilitation of a handful of historic structures and the construction of more than three dozen new single-family homes, date back four or five years.

A boost in downtown housing was first envisioned during the DREAM Initiative program in Excelsior Springs, a state-administered effort to breathe new life into the downtown cores of cities across Missouri.

But the road from then to now wasn't easy. Winge expressed special thanks to Gardner and, especially, Tammi Creason, as well as Excelsior Springs Planning Director Nick Pappas for their hours of work.

“There's been nothing done like this before in the state,” he said.

Pappas agreed.

“It's never easy to get a project like this to a small town, especially during what was maybe a depression and was definitely a recession,” Pappas said.

Gardner's role can't be overlooked, he added, noting that the company's history with Excelsior Springs dates back to the Oaks Hotel rehabilitation several years ago. But it was the comprehensive master plan work done by RDG Planning & Design that added the vision that inspired Gardner to get involved in Excelsior Springs again.

For more on this story, see the print edition or e-Edition of the Friday, Nov. 4, *Standard*.

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EXCELSIOR SPRINGS STANDARD



## Controversial zoo tax is only issue on local ballots

By [ERIC COPELAND](#)  
Managing Editor

A one-eighth-cent sales tax for the Kansas City Zoological District is the only thing Excelsior Springs voters will see on their ballots next Tuesday—and then it will only be on the Clay County side of the community. Ray County voters aren't being asked to participate in the zoo's tax-based funding.

In fact, only Clay and Jackson counties will be casting votes on the issue. Zoo tax supporters had collected enough signatures to put the tax on the ballot in both Platte and Cass counties, but officials there declined putting the issue before the voters. Zoo tax supporters plan to hash that out in court.

In the meantime, the tax, which would be used to maintain the zoo's existing features and build new ones, including a penguin habitat and new facilities for the apes, big cats and other animals, is a no-sunset tax that is expected to raise \$14 million over the next decade.

The ballot language reads: "Shall a retail sales tax of not to exceed one eighth of one percent be levied and collected for the benefit of the Kansas City Zoological District, which shall be created and consist of the counties of Jackson and any other eligible county whose voters authorize the county to create or participate in the Kansas City Zoological District, for the support of zoological activities in the district?" It requires a simple majority for passage.

The Jackson County voters will, to some extent, determine the tax's future. Because the zoo is located in Jackson County, those voters' approval is necessary before any other county can join the new zoological district. So even if Clay County votes in favor of the tax, if Jackson County rejects it then the issue will have failed.

Pat O'Neil of the One Zoo For All Committee told *The Standard* earlier this week that the group's polling shows good support for the issue. The committee's goal is to make the zoo more of a regional destination, much like the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha or the St. Louis Zoo.

There's support here in Excelsior Springs for the tax. Several yard signs can be seen around town, and when *The Standard* asked for feedback on our Facebook page this week, there were opinions both for and against. You can see what these readers had to say by turning to page 4.

Mayor Ambrose Buckman has come out against the tax, and the Excelsior Springs Area Chamber of Commerce is opposed as well. They fear the passage of a zoo tax would jeopardize Excelsior Springs' chances to pass a sales tax for a new community center, especially considering the continuing tough economic times.

For more on this story, see the print edition or e-Edition of the Friday, Nov. 4, *Standard*.

### Area polling places

Fishing River 1: Excelsior Springs Museum, 101 E. Broadway.

Fishing River 2: Flack Memorial Church, 1300 Tracy Ave.

Fishing River 3: Hall of Waters, 201 E. Broadway.

Fishing River 4: Missouri City School, 700 E. Main, Missouri City.

Fishing River 5: Mosby City Hall, 12312 4th Street, Mosby.

Washington 1: Goppert Financial, 29206 N.E. 148th Street, Lawson.

Washington 2: Excelsior Springs United Methodist Church, 1650 Rainbow Blvd.

Washington 3: Kearney First United Methodist Church, 1000 E. 92, Kearney.

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## NEWS Briefs

### Change your clocks, change your batteries

Daylight Saving Time officially ends at 2 a.m. Sunday, so be sure to remember to set your clocks back an hour before you go to bed on Saturday.

In addition, the Excelsior Springs Fire Department wants to remind everyone that the time change is also a handy way to remember to change the batteries in your home's smoke detectors. The early warning issued by a

### Richmond man killed in crash

A 42-year-old Richmond man died in a one-vehicle rollover crash in Ray County on Tuesday afternoon.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, James D. Roe, 71, was a passenger in a 1998 Ford driven by James J. Roe, 42, also of Richmond. The vehicle was eastbound on Route H a mile west of Missouri 13 at about 2:30 p.m. when it went off the right side of the

detectors. The early warning issued by a smoke detector can mean the difference between life or death if a fire occurs at your home.

#### **Costume contest winner didn't get prize**

One of the costume contest winners from the Bill Payne Halloween Party Monday night is still owed a prize.

One contestant was handed a "most original" card during the event but never turned it in for his or her prize. If anyone out there got a card at the party and still has it, call 816-506-8077 to make arrangements to pick up your prize.

#### **Drug rehab in new Liberty location**

The Northland Community Center has moved out of the building at 106 Elizabeth Street to make room for a new housing development, but they're still providing substance abuse treatment at a new Liberty location.

The new spot is 1205 College Street. The facility has a CSTAR-accredited substance abuse program with outpatient counseling, day and evening groups and experienced counselors. Referrals are accepted, and the facility still primarily serves residents of Clay, Platte and Ray counties.

An open house has been scheduled for 1 to 3 p.m., Friday, Nov. 18, with a short program at 2 p.m. For more information about the facility, call 816-883-4677.

#### **CarStar having military appreciation today**

Wicklunds CarStar, 941 Sutton Place, Liberty, is hosting an annual military appreciation celebration from 5 to 9 p.m., today, Nov. 4.

Hertz and Bud Light are also sponsors for the event, which includes food, refreshments and door prizes. The business is south of Missouri 291 and east of Price Chopper and Sutherland's.

2:00 p.m. when it went on the right side of the roadway. According to the MSHP, the driver over-corrected, went off the left side of the roadway and overturned. Both men were ejected.

The older man was pronounced dead at the scene by Ray County Coroner Jim Garrison. The younger man sustained serious injuries and was taken to Truman Medical Center by air ambulance.

An investigation continued, and charges are pending.

#### **MoDOT workers improve surface on bridge at ES's east end**

Maintenance workers at the Missouri 10 bridge on the east end of town were making minor repairs to the bridge—but it was nothing to do with the PaveGuard system that was built into the structure to keep it clear of snow and ice in the winter.

Kerri Lewis, senior community relations specialist at MoDOT, said that the approaches to the bridge had settled some and workers were at the scene Tuesday to level things and create a smoother transition from the roadway to the bridge.

The PaveGuard technology, designed to heat elements inside the bridge during cold weather, has never been hooked up to its solar power source because the company that designed it has not yet presented a workable system.

The PaveGuard system was built into the bridge while it was being rebuilt last year.