Truesdale proposes sales tax for streets

By Adam Rollins  
STAFF WRITER

The city of Truesdale is asking local voters to consider a half-cent sales tax to help pay for improvements to city streets. Truesdale aldermen voted Jan. 22 to place the tax on election ballots for city residents. Local elections are April 7 this year.

If approved, the tax would add a half-cent to each dollar of purchases at Truesdale businesses. The language of the ballot specifically limits the proposed sales tax to be used only for "transportation purposes."

The proposal would not affect property taxes. Mayor Chris Watson said there are several streets in Truesdale in need of extensive repair or replacement, and the additional funding would help make that happen. He said residents have noted multiple spots they want the city to get fixed. "Just like everybody else, I don't like tax increases, but sometimes it's what's needed," Watson said. "We sent out a survey, and we had positive feedback that (residents) would be willing to support a tax increase."

One major project that recently took a large chunk out of the city's street budget was a storm drain collapse that damaged a street in the Heritage Hills subdivision. Watson said that repair is costing the city close to $150,000.

Watson said he believes residents will understand that the board of aldermen is trying to serve the public good by proposing the sales tax. "I feel the citizens of Truesdale know that the board has the best interest of the city in mind. They feel very confident that we will spend that money wisely," Watson commented.

City Administrator MaryLou Rainwater explained that Truesdale currently has a 1-cent sales tax for general city operations and a half-cent tax for capital improvements. Capital improvement funds are currently used for the city's water system, Rainwater said.

Put together, the ballot proposal would increase the total Truesdale sales tax to 2 cents per dollar. Rainwater estimated the increase would bring in about $65,000 per year for street projects. Truesdale residents who want more information about the sales tax proposal can attend a town hall meeting that will be hosted in March. Rainwater said an exact date hasn't been set yet, but a notice will be sent out with water bills prior to the meeting.