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Law-tax backers prepare educational campaign

"It's going to go down in flames," an opponent of the measure predicts.

By Kathryn Wall
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Now that the 1/8-cent law enforcement sales tax is on the ballot in Greene County, supporters say they will focus on an educational campaign moving forward.

But opponents say tax supporters are the ones who need some

schooling. "It's going to go down in flames," said Tom Gargus, a Springfield resident who has been following the criminal justice funding discussion and spoke at the last Greene County Commission listening session on the issue. At that Oct. 3 meeting, the funding option had been a 1/4-cent sales tax. Since that time, officials tweaked the plan, cutting most of the capital projects and dropping the proposed tax to 1/8-cent. The commission voted 2-1 Mon-

day to submit the tax to voters on the April ballot. Prosecutor Dan Patterson said he listened to the concerns he heard in the community and altered the plan to get at what Commissioner Harold Bengsch has called "the most critical of the critical." Patterson said the 1/8-cent plan now makes the tax neutral, because a portion of the parks sales tax sunsets before the law enforcement sales tax could go into effect.

"That to me is misleading," Gargus said. "There is no such thing as tax neutral when it comes to taxes." Gargus said the fact that the parks sales tax is sunseting doesn't mean replacing it with a law enforcement sales tax makes the tax burden in some way equal. He said voters wanted the burden of the parks tax to go away, not just be reouted. Steve Helms, Greene County's circuit clerk, agrees he wouldn't call the proposed new tax neutral.

He said a portion of the parks tax — specifically a 1/8-cent sales tax used for stormwater projects — will drop off completely independent of the discussion of the law enforcement sales tax. "We didn't replace the parks tax. It sunset like it was supposed to," Helms said. Sara Ray is a local real estate agent who has closely followed the two tax proposals that came before the commission this year

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"The good things we create outlive us."

Terri Hunter, daughter



PHOTOS BY NATHAN PAPES / NEWS-LEADER

Around a trash can filling up with chopped apples, friends and family of Juanita Dame slice up freshly peeled fruit to make apple butter during their 21st annual Apple Butter Daze celebration at the family farm near Lebanon.



JUANITA DAME
Submitted photo
Juanita Dame makes apple butter with her family. Juanita grew up making apple butter with her grandparents — an experience that has left a lasting legacy in the Apple Butter Daze family celebration she founded. Juanita (pictured at right) died Oct. 13.

She was the apple of their eyes

Family gathers to remember woman, honor tradition.

It takes four hours to tackle 12 bushels of apples. Outside a white farmhouse near Lebanon on Friday afternoon, about 20 people peel and slice as juice drips from their sticky hands and flies swarm around the picnic table. Whenever one of them gets up, acorns crunch under their feet.

This is day one of a family tradition known as "Apple Butter Daze." But this year is different. The woman who started it all is absent.

Juanita Dame or "Mema," passed away a week before the family's 21st Apple Butter Daze. She was 78.

If she'd have been here, she wouldn't have sat down the whole time.

She'd have fretted over the farmhouse, whipped up a feast for breakfast, made sure everyone got enough to eat for lunch, and baked a batch of her legendary biscuits for her crew of family and friends.

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JULIANA GOODWIN

Juliana is a columnist for the News-Leader. While she's lived all over the world, she's been in the Ozarks for more than a decade. Goodwin comes from a large family and is a fan of traditions, whether they be from different families, cultures or simply a special food made a certain time of year. jgoodwin@news-leader.com » 417-836-1124



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Favorite memories from Apple Butter Daze



"My favorite part is the end, when everyone gets really anxious. Everyone would ask 'Is it ready?' The timing was crucial. So she would get a spoonful and put it on a plate and say, 'Not ready yet. Not ready yet.' Just the tension."

Amanda Liljegren, granddaughter



"I like when you're done canning, you get biscuits and bread and wipe down the kettle."

Kat Liljegren, granddaughter



"After canning, once the jars are wiped down, you start hearing the lids pop and you know 'We're done.'"

Terri Hunter, daughter



"Just seeing everyone. We don't come up here often, so this is the one time we get to see everyone together."

Morgan Barnes, grandson



"Being together and seeing the grandkids and everyone have fun."

Darrell Dame, Juanita's husband of 59 years



Darrell Dame stirs a large kettle of apple butter during the family's 21st annual Apple Butter Daze celebration at the family farm on Saturday near Lebanon.



Online: See many more images from Apple Butter Daze at News-Leader.com

Goodwin/Family reunion meets tradition

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It's tradition, after canning the apple butter, for the family to hover over the copper kettle and wipe down the last bits of warm apple butter with fresh biscuits.

"Before you know it, you'd eat six biscuits," says Kat Liljegren, granddaughter.

In many ways, this is a typical family gathering.

Men talk about baseball. Siblings poke fun at each other and interrupt saying "Let me tell the story." Women knit.

When a little girl comes up the table, some of the elders say "There's dessert in there. Help yourself while your mom's not around" and she scurries off to get her sweets before she's busted.

But there is something special taking place here.

Something unique. Over the years, this has morphed into a family reunion centered around an old tradition.

Friends and relatives sit at a bench and crank manual apple peelers which make a buzzing sound as they strip the peel from the flesh of the fruit.

Someone jokes that Mema could peel as fast as these machines.

Farm full of memories

Juanita grew up making apple butter with her grandparents in her native Virginia and wanted to start the same tradition in her family. So she bought a 40-gallon copper kettle and got started.

The first year, they peeled the apples in Juanita's oldest sister's kitchen and got so much juice on the floor that when people walked across it, their shoes would stick to it and pop when they lifted them.

"I thought I'd never get all that mopped up," says Ruth Triplett, Juanita's sister.

That first year was small.

Now, 50 people might show up, each taking part in the process. Just looking around the farm — which has been in the family for six generations — triggers memories. Like the ropes that are still tied high in two trees from the year it rained and they had to string up a tarp to protect the precious butter.

Or the chicken coop that used to scare Kat, but has been converted into a bunkhouse.

There's even something special about the tool they use to stir the butter: It was carved by "Pa" or grandpa Darrell Dame.

Last year, the family pressed five gallons of cider and made 345 half-pints of apple butter.

Mema was the absolute authority on apple butter and had the final say of when it needed to come off the fire.

It was always her call, and while they'd pester her, they never questioned her.

So who decides this year? "There will be no shortage of opinions," says granddaughter

Amanda Liljegren, as she slices Yellow Delicious apples.

Sugar, cinnamon and cloves

After 21 years, you get to be something of an expert on apple butter.

Family members have learned you get the best results by mixing at least three varieties of apples, says Terri Hunter, Juanita's daughter.

Finely chopped apples cook faster. They've dabbled with different flavorings: salt, red hots, brown sugar, white sugar. But now, they've pretty much settled on sugar, cinnamon, cloves.

On Saturday afternoon, about 40 people gather and take turns stirring the kettle — as smoke billows out of the pot and a fire crackles underneath it.

The apple butter bubbles and is the color of pumpkin pie. Shifting winds sweep the scent of cinnamon across the lawn.

"I remember when you were a kid, you wanted to stir and they wouldn't let you," says Kat Liljegren.

Darrell Dame laughs and says when you're a kid you want to stir, but when you're an adult, not so much.

Juanita's sister and best friend, Shirley Durham, is one of this year's testers. With a wooden spoon coated in apple butter, Amanda walked up to Shirley and says, "Do you have a clean finger?"

"Nope," Shirley replies. "I don't even want to know," laughs Amanda. "Taste this."

Shirley scrapes the tip of her finger across the spoon, tastes it and says, "It's good, but not ready. Go back to stirring." Amanda threatens to flick the spoon on her and they laugh.

On everyone's mind

The family talked about canceling this, but quickly dismissed the idea.

"The feeling was if we cancel, well, she would have wanted us to do it. Once you stop, it's hard to start up again," says Darrell Dame.

Juanita knew she wouldn't make it to the 21st event, but still she fussed over the details.

The day before she died, the family gathered around her and thought she was sleeping. Without opening her eyes, Juanita asked, "Did you get the apples ordered yet?" said her daughter Becky Barnes.

At this Apple Butter Daze some family members share stories of Juanita; other choked up and can't talk about her.

But there is no doubt she is on everyone's mind.

"She was just a joy to be around," said grandson Morgan Barnes, who notes how much he misses her cooking and playing cards with her.

This was a celebration of her legacy, says daughter Terri Hunter.

"Just a way of saying, you know, life goes on."

As her voice cracked, Hunter added, "and the good things we created outlive us. They live beyond us and touch a lot of people in ways we may never realize."



Sisters Ruth Triplett (center) and Shirley Dunham (right) look through an album of photos from previous celebrations at Apple Butter Daze on Saturday. They held the celebration at the family farm (above) near Lebanon.



JUANITA DAME (1933-2011)

Juanita Dame was born and raised in Virginia.

In 1951, she moved to Missouri, where she met her future husband, Darrell.

To find out whether she liked him, Darrell hid under a coat in the back seat of his buddy's car and had the friend ask Juanita if she'd go out with Darrell if he asked. They ended up married and made a home in Kansas City, where they raised two daughters.

First she raised her girls, then became a nurse; Juanita graduated from nursing school the year her daughter graduated high school.

She had a heart for others, especially children and the elderly.

Juanita moved to Springfield in April, partly to be closer to her sister, and in May was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor.

"Her family was her life," said Darrell Dame.

She was selfless. After diagnosis, sister Shirley Durham would call, "and I'd be down and she'd try to cheer me up."

To the end, she worried about others. Just two and a half weeks before her death, Juanita sent beef and vegetable soup over to her sister Ruth Triplett



because "she thought I wasn't eating properly. We'd talk every day and she'd say 'What did you eat today? Did you eat right?'" Triplett said.

Juanita died Oct. 13, one week before her family's 21st annual Apple Butter Daze.

A devout Christian, she leaves behind a husband, three sisters, two daughters, four grandchildren and slew of relatives and friends.

When she started the annual event, she had no idea it would become so big. Juanita grew up making apple butter with her grandparents and wanted to share that tradition with her family.

It's now part of her legacy.

—Juliana Goodwin

Tax/Deputies' actions criticized, supported

Continued from Page 1A

the failed effort to put the parks sales tax renewal on the ballot and now the law enforcement sales tax.

She said she'd be more inclined to vote in favor of the law enforcement sales tax if it had been a general revenue tax with a sunset provision.

"I would prefer the commissioners have more control over the distribution of revenue," Ray said.

Both Ray and Helms — interviewed separately — said dedicated revenue streams, like taxes directed at the county's road and bridge department, the Springfield-Greene County Park Board and law enforcement, tie the hands of commissioners during tough times.

"I was shocked to find out how little oversight the commission has" when it comes to budgets, Ray said.

Money from dedicated taxes, like the parks sales tax, can't be moved elsewhere.

Although he said he won't publicly come out for or against the tax, Helms said he does think that more alternatives to the new sales tax should be pursued.

Ray said she won't vote in favor of the tax, and wishes Presiding Commissioner Jim Viebrock had been given more time to offer alternatives and analyze the issue.

At the same time, both Ray and Helms have no doubt there's a need.

Gargus said he and others against the tax recognize that overcrowding in the jail is an issue, but he rejects that there is a criminal justice crisis.

"We have a problem. I think we have a management problem," he said.

Ray questions where all the new employees are going to go. She fears this proposal will only lead to a new request for office space to hold all the new employees.

"All this is doing is setting up another 1/8-cent tax," she said.



A 1/8-cent sales tax for law enforcement will be on the April ballot in Greene County.

TIMELINE
July 25 » The Safety and Justice Roundtable reconvened to get an update on the Greene County criminal justice system. The Roundtable was a community group brought together to analyze the local justice system and make recommendations. After 18 months of work, the Roundtable issued a report in 2009.

Aug. 8 » City Manager Greg Burris and County Administrator Tim Smith presented the update to the Roundtable, which answered the group's question as to what a 1/8-cent or 1/4-cent tax would fund in regards to local law enforcement. The Roundtable unanimously voted to recommend the Greene County Commission put a 1/4-cent law enforcement sales tax on the November ballot.

Aug. 30 » The deadline for the November ballot passes without formal commission action. Public debate about the need for a tax ensued.

Oct. 4 » At an open meeting of the Criminal Justice Funding Task Force, a group of city and county officials in the justice system, a new 1/8-cent law enforcement sales tax is proposed.

Monday » Greene County Commissioners Harold Bengsch and Roseann Bentley vote in favor of putting a 1/8-cent law enforcement sales tax on the April ballot. Presiding Commissioner Jim Viebrock voted no.

Part of the proposal contemplates capital money to renovate office and juvenile building space, but specific plans have yet to be mapped out.

Gargus said he takes issue with what he sees as county employees "lobbying" for the sales tax. He mentioned the number of people at the last listening session who identified themselves as sheriff's deputies or prosecutors.

"That was a lobbying effort," Gargus said. "It was a fear tactic." "That kind of argument is

just insulting," Patterson responded in a separate interview with the News-Leader. He said the sheriff's staff who attended the meeting were off duty and that members of his staff got his permission to go.

"It was a public hearing about matters that directly affect them. They had the right to be there like any citizen," he said.

Patterson said general county employees — not officeholders — can't advocate for a tax in their official capacity. They can, however, discuss facts sur-

NEW POSITIONS

The proposed 1/8-cent sales tax for law enforcement, if passed, would largely result in added jobs in the local justice system.

Estimated to result in around \$5 million per year, the tax would fund new positions in the Greene County Sheriff's Office, prosecutor's office, juvenile office, Pre-Trial Services department and court-house security.

A portion of the expected revenue has also been set aside for training and equipping new hires and capital projects.

The breakdown of the proposed new employee numbers (some of which reinstate positions previously cut):

- » Sheriff's Office - 67
- » Prosecutor's Office - 12
- » Juvenile Office - 13
- » Court Security - 2
- » Pre-Trial Services - 2

rounding an issue.

As an elected officeholder, Patterson can advocate for an election topic, but can't use county resources to do it.

Going forward, Patterson and others in support of the tax say they will organize an education campaign to inform voters on the issues facing the local justice system.

He said he remains confident the tax will pass.

City leaders weigh in on proposed law sales tax

City Council won't take an official stance, Burris says.

have to do go over to the jail and stand in one of those pods," she said. And she has.

By Kathryn Wall

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The conversation surrounding a new law enforcement sales tax has largely involved county officials to this point. Now city leaders are joining the public discussion.

"It's our jail too," Springfield Mayor Jim O'Neal said. "We cannot say this is not a city issue."

The City Council won't take an official stance on whether to pass the proposed 1/8-cent law enforcement sales tax in April, City Manager Greg Burris said.

Councilwoman Cindy Rushefsky said she hopes her colleagues will join her in informing the public about an issue with which she is all too familiar.

Rushefsky is former Greene County assistant prosecutor who says she witnessed jail populations climbing when she worked in the system. She said issues in the justice system as a whole — jail overcrowding, the slow progress of moving criminal cases and too few patrol deputies — have grown to a point that they should no longer be put off.

"This is critically important to the health and safety of this community," Rushefsky said.

She's heard the swirling questions — whether there really is a crisis or if jail overcrowding is as dangerous as the sheriff and others have said.

"That's crazy. All you

"I know, I saw it."

O'Neal said he similarly supports the tax, but also has his reservations.

"An eighth cent is not enough," he said. "My concern is we're creating a false sense of hope and comfort."

He recommended mapping out a strategic plan as soon as possible, and officials think another tax will be needed within the next few years, to say so now.

"The voters of Greene County and Springfield are smart," O'Neal said adding that voters who know there's another tax on the horizon will be more receptive if told upfront.

"I want to know what we're going to do about this, and help in any way I can," O'Neal said.

Commissioners Roseann Bentley and Harold Bengsch have said in past interviews they plan or are devising an education plan to inform voters about the issues facing the local justice system. Bengsch said a big part of the plan will be explaining the complex legal system in more man- ageable terms.

"This is a community that takes public safety quite seriously," Rushefsky said.

"What they need is accurate information."

Business Administration have a good program and that they work hard to make sure the students receive a quality education.

"They also work hard to continuously improve all of their programs," Baker said.

EMBA

Continued from Page 1A

pull out.

The agency in Hong Kong keeps more than half of the program fees paid by students to cover expenses such as marketing, promotion and traveling.

Baker said MSU officials are planning to visit the Chinese sponsors and reassure them of the quality of the program.

"It went viral"

A few days after the stories were published locally, a U.S.-based Chinese language newspaper Sing Dao Daily apparently picked up the stories and rewrote them into a single-page Chinese story with nine paragraphs.

Baker said he saw the Sing Dao story quickly spread from one Chinese news site to another.

"It went viral," he said.

The story is available on major general and educational news websites in China, such as China News, Netease and China International Education Online.

Translated to English, the Sing Dao story says in its first paragraph:

"The program is suspected of selling degrees, helping MSU and the middle man to profit while the Chinese students do not get a good education."

That story includes a defense of the program from MSU interim president Cliff Smart, who said the program, though profitable, is not selling degrees.

The original News-Leader story also includes comments from Smart defending the program.

The News-Leader story never criticized the university of selling degrees.

In the translated and News-Leader stories, Smart also says the EMBA program has the same graduation requirements as the regular MBA pro-

ALLEGED INACCURACIES

Here are the inaccuracies MSU contends were in the Aug. 21 story and the News-Leader's responses:

» **MSU:** A former business college dean was quoted as saying 25 percent of the Chinese students struggled with English, but the observation should have been applied to the first group of Chinese students in the program.

Response: In context, it seemed clear the former dean was talking only about his experience — but the point could have been emphasized.

» **MSU:** The News-Leader overstated the profit of the program, because it failed to account for expenses yet to be spent.

Response: The News-Leader published the program's finances as provided by the university, though the phrase "fund balance" would have been more precise than calling it a "profit," which was an attempt to avoid government jargon.

» **MSU:** The News-Leader inaccurately reported program fees are usually "paid in cash." In fact, the money is wire-transferred to a Hong Kong bank.

Also, the fees paid per student by the students ranged from \$15,000 to more than \$22,000, but the News-Leader failed to inquire about the difference or the rationale.

Response: The News-Leader inquired about the program's fees from students. They said they paid through wire transfers, which they equate with paying in cash.

The News-Leader also reported the fees can vary by quoting Gloria Wang, a director of International Management Education Center (IMEC).

The News-Leader also reported: "Wang said IMEC works with Chinese sponsors to determine the program fees based on costs and funding from students, governments and companies."

» **MSU:** The students were recruited through Chinese sponsors, not through IMEC, as reported by the News-Leader.

Response: An agreement between MSU and International Management Education Center obligates IMEC to provide students to the program.

A university memo of understanding with a Chinese sponsor also states: "MSU entrusts the International Management Education Center (IMEC) as its sole representative to work with (the Chinese sponsor)."

As reported, Wang told the News-Leader that IMEC works with Chinese sponsors on various aspects of the program, including selecting students.

gram, despite different admission standards.

The Sing Dao story relays the financial arrangement among students, the Hong Kong agency and the university.

It reports students were surprised the Hong Kong agency got to keep half of their fees but still believed the program costs were reasonable.

MSU response

On Monday, interim MSU president Cliff Smart declined a News-Leader interview request but instead issued a statement.

"(There) were notable inaccuracies in the (News-Leader) articles, and those

week upon a request by the News-Leader.

For example, MSU contends the stories failed to qualify a certain statement about the number of students struggling with English, misinterpreted the program's fund balance and inaccurately reported payment in cash when money was wire transferred, the university said.

(See box with this story for a fuller explanation and the News-Leader's response.)

None of those alleged inaccuracies, however, was relayed in the Sing Dao story.

University officials also have claimed the students interviewed by the News-Leader did not represent the views of the whole student body.

Since its inception in fall 2007, more than 250 Chinese students have completed the program.

In his statement, Smart defended the program.

"Missouri State's China EMBA Program is a solid program," he wrote. "Like all international programs it's not without challenges, but will continue to evolve and mature, consistent with the university's commitment to continuous improvement."

David Meinert, associate dean of the College of Business Administration and director of the China EMBA program, declined further interviews with the News-Leader.

"I agree with the university's position. I don't have new information," Meinert

said.

On Wednesday, after being contacted again by the News-Leader, Baker, who oversees MSU's China programs, sent a text message to the News-Leader.

"I really don't have much to offer beyond the fact that Dave and (College of

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