

# Meetings set to discuss proposed Douglas County sales tax increase

by Dee Riggs | May 15, 2012, 9:37 a.m.

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WATERVILLE — Douglas County commissioners have scheduled meetings with city councils in the county this month to explain a proposed sales tax increase to help the law and justice budget.

On May 8, commissioners voted to place the tax measure on the ballot in August. Commission Chairman Ken Stanton said Monday that he misspoke last week when he said commissioners had not yet voted to put the measure on the ballot.

It would add 0.2 percent onto the existing sales tax. Since a 0.1 percent sales tax is already in place and earmarked for law and justice, the additional tax would boost the sales tax for law and justice to 0.3 percent.

That 0.1 percent tax has been in effect for about 14 years.

Douglas County's sales tax is currently at 8.1 percent. If approved, the additional tax would go into effect Jan. 1.

Stanton said the tax increase is needed to prop up a law and justice budget that has been eroded by increases in salaries and health-care costs.

The sales tax measure is expected to raise \$933,203 in 2013. Sixty percent of that, or \$559,922, would go to the county. Forty percent would be distributed to cities and towns, based on population. East Wenatchee would get \$275,908 of that because it is the largest city in the county.

The law and justice budget for this year is \$9,394,366. County Auditor Thad Duvall said the figure includes costs for, not only the sheriff's office and courts, but probation and juvenile and adult criminal services and custody, boating safety and dispatch.

Commissioners will attend these city council meetings to address the proposed tax: 7:30 p.m. Monday in Waterville; 5:30 p.m. May 22 in East Wenatchee, 7 p.m. May 23 in Bridgeport, and 7 p.m. May 24 in Rock Island. A meeting will be held in Mansfield in June but information on the date and time were not available.

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