

# VOTERS APPROVE LOCAL LEGISLATORS SAIL TO NEW

## Tax measure is approved in Ames, Huxley

By BRIAN STEFFEN  
Staff Writer

Get your pennies out.

Voters in Ames and Huxley approved a 1-cent local sales tax Tuesday, meaning shoppers in those cities will pay a total of 5 cents in sales taxes for each dollar they spend after Jan. 1.

All other cities and townships in Story County rejected the tax Tuesday, but 55 percent of Ames voters approved the measure, 5,951 to 4,874 according to unofficial results.

Huxley narrowly instituted the tax by a 51-49 percent vote, with 316 in favor and 301 against. But that total does not reflect the counting from absentee ballots.

Ames property owners will see reductions in the city and county property taxes as a result of the sales tax. Sixty percent of the projected \$2.2-million-the tax will generate in Ames will replace property taxes in the city's general fund.

At the same time, local human services agencies and the arts will see much of their funding restored after they bore the brunt of cuts in federal aid to cities and counties.

"To me, it was a vote of confidence for the work we do at the Committee for Criminal Justice. They think that we're doing a good job," said CCJ Director Lynette Hanthorn, a member of the private Committee for Property Tax Relief that pushed for the sales tax.

TAX see page 8



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## Victory stand

Rep. Johnie Hammond, D-Ames, accepts the cheers of well-wishers at Story County Democratic headquarters Tuesday night after she defeated Republican challenger Kirk Goettsch for another term from House District 74. Rep. Ralph Rosenberg, the Ames Democrat from House District 73, and Sen. Charles

Bruner, another Ames Democrat from Senate District 37, also defeated Republican challengers to win new terms. In House District 87, rural Ames Republican Teresa Garman defeated Boone Democrat David Reed.

# Tax/Late start minimized opposition

CONTINUED from page 1

George Belitsos, director of Youth and Shelter Services, the city's single greatest beneficiary from government contributions, said voter approval of the tax will allow his organization to consider restoring the cuts it made when its funding was cut a year ago.

"Our first priority is to try to

reopen the Media Arts Workshop or a program very similar to it," he said.

Tim Finn, co-chair of the Committee for Property Tax Relief, said it was the group's broad base of members and the work they did in the final two weeks of the campaign that convinced voters to approve the sales tax.

"**WE BUILT** a coalition of people that you wouldn't normally think of working together, liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans," he said. "We made a good committee."

Tax backers were criticized in early October for not starting an early push, but Finn said the group "wanted to come out strong in the final two weeks" to minimize any opposition to the proposal.

There was no organized effort to defeat the tax in Ames. The Government of the Student Body at Iowa State University went on record against the proposal, however, saying it would unfairly shift local tax burdens from property owners to

students.

As results came in Tuesday, it became apparent ISU students as a group were voting against the tax.

Sixteen of the city's 22 precincts voted in favor of the measure, and many of those precincts that rejected the tax were in student-dominated neighborhoods.

One example is at the Towers dormitory complex, where 75 percent of those voting opposed the sales tax. Precincts for the ISU campus and the neighborhood just west of it also opposed the sales tax.

The Ames Chamber of Commerce never took an official stand on the proposal, although most members taking part in a mail survey supported the tax. Many retail businesses who feared they would be hurt by the tax opposed it.

"**THE FEAR** of Ames losing its retail base isn't a big factor," said Mayor Paul Goodland. "The quality of Ames' businesses will keep the people coming."

Goodland said he's sure city officials and council members, who

never took an official stand on the tax, are "excited" that voters approved the proposal: "We'll be able to fund the human services without any difficulty and be able to do those infrastructure projects in the city without contemplating an overall tax increase."

City Manager Steve Schinker recommended the council use some of the sales tax funds to pay for street improvements and one-time capital improvement projects, such as those in Ames' parks. The council has yet to determine exactly how each dollar of the tax funds will be spent.

Finn said the Committee for Property Tax Relief will remain as a monitoring organization for the use of the sales tax funds by the city government in the future.

In Huxley, projections show the city government will receive about \$75,000 per year from the tax. Eighty percent of that money will go to relieve property taxes, with much of the rest going to human services and economic development.

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