Collection to start for triangle

OLATHE — A one-eighth cent sales tax to fund projects and programs for the Johnson County Education Research Triangle Authority will become effective April 1, 2009.

Johnson County commissioners' resolution to adopt and levy the sales tax was approved last Thursday, November 20, by the Johnson County Board of Commissioners. By state law, the tax becomes effective at the end of the next calendar quarter.

The commission's action follows voter approval Nov. 4 of Question No. 2 regarding creation of the Education Research Triangle Authority and authorization of the proposed sales tax. The question was approved by 57 percent of the voters with 154,360 voting in favor of the new sales tax and 115,917 voting against it.

Procedures for creation of the Education Research Triangle Authority and for imposition of the sales tax were authorized in legislation passed in 2007 by the Kansas Legislature. The legislation authorized the county to propose funding for the authority by a mill levy up to 2 mills or a sales tax up to 0.2 percent, or both. The November ballot question proposed only a sales tax of 0.125 percent. The one-eighth cent sales tax is expected to raise approximately $15 million per year.

Proceeds from the sales tax will support education and research projects and programs at facilities now located or proposed for construction or acquisition in Johnson County. They include:

- The University of Kansas Edwards Campus Business, Engineering, Science and Technology Center in Overland Park;
- The Kansas State University Innovation Campus National Food and Animal Health Institute in Olathe; and,
- The University of Kansas Cancer Clinical Research Center in Fairway.

The sales tax revenues will be equally divided among the three institutions. The sales tax, as authorized by statute and the public vote, has no sunset date and will be used to ensure that ongoing operations, maintenance and research are provided in the future.

The Johnson County Education Research Triangle Authority is a local board composed of seven members who must be elected officials in Johnson County. Members of the authority will be appointed by the governor, the Kansas Board of Regents, Johnson County commissioners, KU, K-State, and Johnson County Community College. The Board of Regents will maintain its constitutional authority over the universities.

In separate actions, the commission affirmed the creation of the authority and established a special fund for proceeds from the sales tax imposed for support of the authority, and appointed Commission Chairman Annabeth Surbaugh to serve as the Board's representative to the authority.

The state of Kansas and Johnson County both have the authority to audit the Triangle Authority at any time. The authority also will have a regular independent audit.
Local Student To Volunteer With KU

Natasha Parman, daughter of Dena and Craig Parman, is among the 63 University of Kansas students who will spend a week of their winter break volunteering at sites across America. KU's student-run Alternative Breaks program centers on service-learning trips that provide opportunities to include volunteer efforts in a student's educational experience. Following their selection for the program, students attend two-hour weekly class sessions to prepare for their trip. They may participate in weeklong winter or spring breaks or in shorter weekend breaks.

Students in Alternative Winter Breaks will work Jan. 5-9 with agencies in Arizona, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina and Texas that focus on human rights, health care, environmental preservation and rehabilitation, education and help for people with disabilities. The program costs participants $275 ($235 for site leaders) and covers their transportation, housing and meals.

Parman is a senior at KU majoring in sport science. She is a graduate of Mulvane High School.
Chicago.  

The University of Kansas

School of Law has honored Karen Collier, Ashley Ep- 
perly and Mike George, all of 
Valley Center, as scholarship recipients.