

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# Fire training academy repairs to cost \$500,000

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Voters will decide on Aug. 4 whether to extend the existing sales tax at its current level for another 10 years. The tax, last approved in 2005, is one-fourth of 1 percent for construction, maintenance, repairs and replacements of city infrastructure like public works and public safety buildings and vehicles and roads. It is set to expire Dec. 31.

A total of \$500,000 has been budgeted for fire training academy repairs. In addition, \$10.5 million is budgeted for replacement of 10 fire trucks over the next 10 years. Almost \$1.1 million is designated for repairs to Fire Stations 4, 5 and 6, and another \$1 million is set aside for acquiring land for future fire stations.

If the sales tax is extended for another decade, it is estimated to generate \$63 million in revenue for the city — \$10 million for the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years and another \$53 million in revenue for the 2018 through 2026 fiscal years.

The list also includes major road projects; construction of municipal facilities for police and snow removal operations; and renovations to the Grissum

Building, where the city maintains buses, snow plows, garbage trucks, police cruisers, fire trucks and other vehicles.

## Fire training academy

Rust is a major culprit in the deterioration of the fire department's training academy on Big Bear Boulevard. Exposure to dampness has caused significant rusting of steel support beams and stairways.

**Until the building is usable again, Assistant Fire Chief Brad Fraizer said the department could conduct training in facilities belonging to other agencies. Availability could be an issue, however, especially on short notice.**

Interior door frames and exterior window shutters are corroded. Latches on shutters don't work, Fraizer said. Doors and windows that don't work properly are safety concerns for trainees, he said.

Until the building is usable again, Fraizer said the department could conduct training in facilities belonging to other agencies. Availability could be an issue, however, especially on short notice, he said.

The padgenite — heat-resistant material covering the interior walls to keep the concrete from crumbling — is in good shape. But the outside concrete deck on the second floor is severely chipped.

Along with exposure to cli-



Photos by ADAM VOGLER/Missourian

The burn house at the Columbia Fire Department's Training Academy sits vacant July 14. Rust damage to the doors and other structural issues have made the house unsafe to use for training, according to Assistant Fire Chief Brad Fraizer. The proposal for \$500,000 in repairs and renovations to the Training Academy are part of the 2015 capital improvement sales tax project list.

mate, fire, smoke and water, the heavy gear carried by firefighters causes wear and tear to the building. The weight of fire trucks has also taken its toll on the asphalt parking lot, which needs to be re-surfaced.

The classroom building added in 1985 also needs work, Fraizer said. The building is used regularly for a

number of classes, and there is only one men's and one women's restroom for all the groups.

## Fire stations 4, 5, 6

Three Columbia fire stations are on the list of priorities to receive funding, should the sales tax be extended.

Station 4 at 2300 Oakland Gravel Road was built in 1970;

Station 5 at 1400 Ballenger Road was built in 1971; and Station 6 at 3112 Chapel Hill Road was built in 1973.

Engineer Mark Poole described the living room of Station 4 in winter: With just one large single-pane picture window as a barrier to the elements outside, "The wind feels like it goes right through there," he said. Firefighters turn up the thermostat, he said, increasing the energy costs.

The roof leaks above the station's bedroom, as it does in the rear of the two-bay garage where the fire trucks are parked. Stained ceiling tiles sag above the weight-lifting equipment behind a ladder truck.

Fixing the leaks has become a cyclical process. Firefighters notice them, report the leaks, they're fixed, and a few months later more leaks appear in different spots, Poole said.

There are cracks in the concrete floor of the garage and

cinder-block walls of the living quarters, and the steel headers on the garage doors are rusting, Poole said, although the doors are in good shape.

"We're noticing the same type of issues there, too," Fraizer said of the overall conditions of Stations 5 and 6.

## Fire equipment

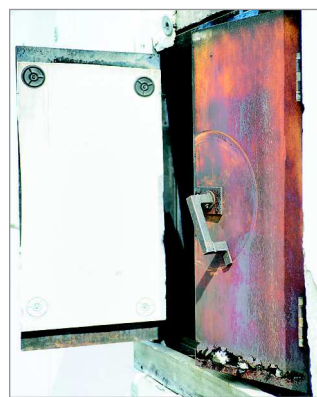
Eight quints, one ladder truck and one squad truck are on the list for replacement. The quints carry firefighters, ground and extended ladders, water pumps and up to 500 gallons of water. The ladder truck carries a series of ladders, and the squad truck carries the "jaws of life" and other rescue equipment but no hoses or a water tank.

Fraizer said the fire chief would make recommendations to the city about the truck replacement schedule.

Supervising editor is Jeanne Abbott: [abbottjm@missouri.edu](mailto:abbottjm@missouri.edu), 882-5741.



Rust eats away at the tower of the metal ceiling on July 14.



Damage to this window prevents it from closing.



Water stains mark the ceiling tiles in the garage of the Columbia Fire Department's Station 4 on July 7.

## 'Scramble' would piggyback on Shakespeare's construction

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the past. In January 2015, an MU student was injured when a turning vehicle collided with her in a crosswalk.

A University of California-Berkeley study on a pedestrian scramble near San Francisco's Chinatown district found the design decreased the rate of pedestrian-vehicle accidents at the intersection by 50 percent but also increased the number of pedestrians crossing illegally.

Sapp said the city's first pedestrian scramble will be a pilot project to determine whether it works. If the scramble doesn't work, he said, it would be easy to convert it to a traditional crosswalk.

The proposal was made about a month after the creation in May of the Mayor's Task Force on Pedestrian

Safety, which aims to lower Columbia's pedestrian traffic accident rates. According to previous Missouriian reporting, the past seven months have seen four pedestrian fatalities; the past 13 years have seen 267 pedestrian accidents and 11 fatalities.

The idea to install a pedestrian scramble in Columbia originated with Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas, who said he saw them in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

The Ninth Street location, Thomas said, was chosen because of the construction underway there. In addition to Shakespeare's, the new building at the intersection will have office space and several floors of apartments, meaning more traffic.

"We thought that would be a really good location to try out this rather different system for traffic signals," Thomas said.

Though a timeline for the project hasn't been finalized, it has been proposed in conjunction with city stormwater and sewer projects. According to city documents, the cost of the scramble as a standalone project is estimated at \$239,000, but piggybacking it on the stormwater work would lower the cost to an estimated \$132,000.

According to city documents, the traffic signals at the intersection are more than 30 years old and need to be replaced.

A public hearing about the Flat Branch Watershed Relief Sewer Project, the Ninth and Elm Storm Drain Replacement Project and the pedestrian scramble is scheduled for 7 p.m. Aug. 3 in the city council chambers at City Hall.

Supervising editor is John Scheller: [schellerj@missouri.edu](mailto:schellerj@missouri.edu), 884-2103.

## Cuba calls for end of embargo

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At the reopening of the Cuban embassy and again at a joint news conference with Kerry, Rodriguez repeated demands for the U.S. to end its 53-year embargo, return the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, stop efforts to change or reform Cuba's communist government and pay compensation for damage done to the island and its people over the past five decades.

"I emphasized that the total lifting of the blockade, the return of illegally occupied territory of Guantanamo as well as full respect for Cuban sovereignty and compensation to our people for human and economic damages are crucial to be able to move toward the normalization of relations," Rodriguez said as Kerry stood beside him.

Rodriguez thanked President Barack Obama for his conclusion that U.S. policy toward Cuba was faulty, his steps to ease sanctions thus far and his calls for Congress to

repeal the embargo.

He noted that there are "profound differences" between the U.S. and Cuban governments but stressed that "we strongly believe that we can both cooperate and coexist in a civilized way based on due respect for these differences."

Kerry, speaking briefly in Spanish, said America wants to work with Cuba to improve conditions there. But he also acknowledged persistent differences over human rights, democracy and reparations and flatly rejected the suggestion that Guantanamo would be returned to Cuba anytime soon.

"We celebrate this day — July 20 — as a time to start repairing what has been broken and opening what for too

long has been closed," Kerry said.

He added, though: "This milestone does not signify an end to the many differences that still separate our governments. But it does reflect the reality that the Cold War ended long ago and that the interests of both countries are better served by engagement than by estrangement."

Kerry compared the conflicting sentiments with the normalization of U.S. ties with Vietnam 20 years ago. In both cases, he said, "passions ran deep and run deep to this day."

Some U.S. lawmakers, including several Republican presidential candidates, have vowed not to repeal the embargo and have pledged to roll back Obama's moves on Cuba.

**'... We strongly believe that we can both cooperate and coexist in a civilized way based on due respect for these differences.'**

BRUNO RODRIGUEZ  
Cuban Foreign Minister

## All other states have monitoring programs for prescription drugs

HEROIN from page 1A

The Missouri State Highway Patrol seized 501 grams of heroin last year, said spokesman Sgt. Shawn Griggs. That figure was down 170 grams compared to 2013, but more than four times what the department confiscated in 2012 — 104 grams, according to Griggs.

Unlike heroin, prescription drug abuse has haunted communities like Springfield for years. The prescription drugs most commonly abused are opioid painkillers, which produce a similar effect to heroin, and that's why there is such a strong connection between the two, Griggs said.

"Many people that we interview didn't wake up and decide to do heroin, but they started out with prescription

drugs," he said.

About 75 percent of new heroin users first became hooked on prescription opiates, a class of morphine-like drugs that includes OxyContin and Vicodin, before turning to heroin, the CDC found.

Williams said prescription drug addicts are turning to heroin because it's relatively inexpensive.

"It's gotten to the point where they can buy heroin cheaper than prescription drugs on the street," he said.

In order to feed their prescription drug addictions, some people go "doctor shopping." In this scheme, people seek prescriptions from multiple doctors in order to feed their drug habit or to sell prescription drugs illegally.

"There's a lot of doctor shopping that occurs," said

**'Many people that we interview didn't wake up and decide to do heroin, but they started out with prescription drugs.'**

SGT. SHAWN GRIGGS  
Missouri State Highway Patrol spokesman

Jim Anderson, CoxHealth vice president of marketing and public affairs.

Forty-nine states have prescription drug monitoring programs that allow, or in some cases require, pharmacists to consult a database to make sure clients are not buying extra drugs. Missouri is the lone exception.

Making monitoring programs stronger is key to curbing heroin use because prescription drug abuse is "the strongest risk factor for

heroin addiction," according to the CDC report.

Legislation that would have created a monitoring program in Missouri has been stymied in recent years by filibustering senators.

Sen. Rob Schaaf, R-St. Joseph, a family doctor, is one of the monitoring program's stiffest critics.

In previous years, Schaaf has filibustered bills aiming to create a monitoring program, arguing the creation of a database would violate Mis-

sourians' privacy rights. He has said the threat of hacking makes the idea of a prescription drug database especially troublesome.

But this year, Schaaf didn't filibuster.

"I agreed to sit down after they agreed to my concessions," Schaaf said, noting he was able to tack on an amendment to the bill that addressed some of his privacy concerns. Even with his amendment, however, Schaaf said he still opposed the bill.

Some Republican lawmakers from the Ozarks agree with Schaaf.

"Even though it has been passed in every other state, it has not stopped the problem," said Eric Burlison, R-Springfield.

Rep. Sonya Anderson, R-Springfield, said she too

opposes the creation of a monitoring program because of privacy concerns.

But other Springfield Republicans, including Rep. Lincoln Hough and Rep. Kevin Austin, said they support a monitoring program.

"I think it's a good idea," Hough said, adding that a database would hopefully help identify addicts so they could get treatment.

By the time the legislation made its way through the Senate this year, several privacy protections had been added to it.

Among them were that the database must be encrypted and prescription information could only be kept in the database for 180 days. The bill would also have required the legislature to reconsider the program in 2020.