

## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

# Library And Sewers

There will be two county-wide millage proposals on the ballot next Tuesday. One will be the hospital proposal and the second will be the proposal for a unified county library. Today we would like to discuss the library proposal.

In effect, what you will be voting on is a proposal to tax the citizens of Branch County nine-tenths of a mill per year for the operation and maintenance of the county library. It has been agreed by local library officials that if the voters approve this type of an arrangement, the county and Coldwater city libraries would merge into one county operation.

How will this benefit the county? To a great extent it might mean the difference between no library and a good library. For many years the operation of the county library had come from penal fines and the general fund of the county. The penal fine money has dropped off over the past few years and the county fund portion of the money needed for operation has increased. The Coldwater library has been financed by a millage levy against the city property owners.

Both libraries have found that with rising costs it would be financially prudent to combine their operations. The Board of Supervisors has found it difficult to find sufficient monies from the general fund to keep the county facilities solvent.

The Coldwater city voters have little to lose financially by voting for the proposal. They are now taxed at about the same rate as is now being asked county-wide for the city operation. It would appear doubtful that the city library would continue to operate as a separate body should the proposed county plan fail. It would also appear doubtful that a very good library could continue to operate with dwindling county funds.

If we approve the extra millage what will we get? Those who know about these things tell us that the more support given to libraries by local residents, brings on more support from state and federal grants. They say we would receive \$30,000 dollars from the state for circulating materials. We can expect about thirty cents more per county resident from the state fund, which is computed on a formula basis. Federal grants would become available for professional

personnel, service to non-readers, 1,500 new books annually through a tri-county exchange and more building funds.

The advantages of a county library system operation obviously would bring several other advantages. Personnel is not duplicated as is the case with two operations. More services would become available to the whole county.

If we are willing to settle for a very poor library with little advantages for our children and ourselves then the proposal should fail. If we desire a good library and its obvious advantages then we must be willing to pay for it.

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Coldwater voters will be asked to complete the city storm sewer system with the approval of a \$195,000 bond proposal come Tuesday, November 8.

A few years ago, the citizens of Coldwater approved a bond issue for a large north side storm sewer project. This project has been completed and has opened up the area for good drainage and future expansion.

The new proposal is an extension of those original plans to completely take care of the city's drainage needs. The last area not adequately taken care of is the area north of Chicago-st and east of Morse-st.

Until storm sewer is constructed for this area there can be little paving accomplished and little can be done to improve the area. The new Jefferson elementary school is in the center of this area and badly needs paved streets. It is generally considered a fact that where sewer improvements and paved streets are built new and remodeled residential areas follow.

Coldwater has historically done all its storm sewer construction on a city-wide assessment basis. All residents paid for the original sewer system. All residents paid for the recently completed northern storm sewer project. Now we are being asked to complete the system.

The proposal calls for the levying of one-half mill for a period of seventeen years to pay off the bonds. Most of us enjoy the present storm sewer system and the residents of the new proposed area have helped pay for it. We should complete the project for the good of all.