

USD 377 Looks Forward Following Voter Defeat

(KAIR)--It's back to square one for the leadership of Atchison County's USD 377, following voter defeat Tuesday of the school district's desire to allow the Board of Education the authority to increase the district's capital outlay levy. "We're always disappointed," USD 377 Superintendent Steve Wiseman tells MSC News. "It just means that we have to go back to the drawing board and keep working on how we can meet the needs of our aging facilities."

Wiseman who says, despite the defeat, the district will continue to address capital outlay needs as necessary, and prioritize the projects that must be done. "We just prioritize what we need to get done based on the resources we have available. You have so much money allocated to you that you can spend for these projects and you just prioritize them and make things work. That's what you have to do."

Wiseman, who during his time of leadership has seen the voter defeat of other initiatives to fund facility upgrades, says he must remain creative in finding methods of gaining funding. "When we failed a couple bond issues, I had to go out and seek other funding mechanisms, and sometimes you're just lucky."

Wiseman is hopeful that the Kansas Legislature will provide some assistance in making needed improvements, and is hopeful that nothing drastic arises until new methods of funding are secured.

"A lot of it's going to depend upon the state in terms of what the new funding formula's like," Wiseman says. "We're hopeful that someday we'll be able to get some capital outlay equalization aid, but at this point in time we don't have that option. We just have to go back to the drawing board and keep working the plan. Hopefully nothing real serious happens. It's difficult when you have old buildings."

Voters in the district on Tuesday cast 500 votes in opposition fo the plan to allow the district the authority to raise the current four mill levy for capital outlay purposes up to 8 mills on a regular basis, which is the maximum allowed.

271 voters said yes to the idea.

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