

Hospital sales tax petition verified

(KNZA)--A sales tax initiative to benefit the Hiawatha Community Hospital will appear on the November 5 general election ballot after a petition is verified.

Brown County Clerk Melissa Gormley said Hospital CEO John Broberg submitted a petition Friday to place a ten year countywide, half-cent retailers sales tax on the ballot.

Gormley said the petition contained 537 signatures, with 499 of those determined to be valid. That was well over the 343 signatures needed.

Broberg said the Hospital Auxiliary and Grey Ladies were in the hospital's main lobby for the past two weeks visiting with patients and visitors about the petition. He said they also had many volunteers who assisted with getting signatures.

The hospital says the tax proposal would provide about 50 to 70 percent of necessary funding to replace the hospital's aging equipment.

Proceeds from the tax proposal, which would generate around \$700,000 annually, are earmarked solely for the Hiawatha hospital.

If approved by voters, collection of the sales tax would begin April 1, 2020.

Brown County voters during a special election in May defeated by a 29-vote margin a sales tax proposal that would have provided funding for health care services in the county.

Many Signals Communications