

Dear voter,

I would appreciate your support in the Republican primary in August for four more years as St. Charles County Executive. In contrast to my opponents, I have a long history of problem solving in my personal, educational, professional and political life. I have outlined some of the highlights below. We still have some problems to solve – in the county and especially in the St. Louis Region.

Steve Ehlmann

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PERSONAL HISTORY

Steve Ehlmann was born in St. Charles on December 6, 1950 to Erich and Beulah Ehlmann. He was soon joined by a sister, Karen, and a brother, Tom. Beulah was from a Catholic-Democrat farm family and grew up in Portage des Sioux, while Erich was from a Lutheran Republican family and grew up in St. Charles, where his dad worked at the shoe factory. Their children all attended St. Charles Borromeo Elementary School, where Steve remembers having his first political experience in fourth grade in 1960. Steve's dad must have done most of the talking at home when it came to politics because, when Sister Ferdinand asked those students whose parents were going to vote for Democrat John F. Kenney for president to raise their hand, most of them did. When she asked whose were going to vote for Republican Richard Nixon, Steve was the only one in the class that raised his hand. Steve was the first in his family to attend high school, attending St. Charles High School, where his favorite subject was history, his favorite sport was basketball, and he tackled his first major challenge.

THE PROBLEM - family financial challenges

Steve's goal was to be the first in his family to go to college but his sister and brother, right behind him in school, had the same goal. His parents were willing to sacrifice financially to make that happen for all three of them, but his dad was a milkman and he would not let his mom get a job until Tom was in high school.

THE SOLUTION – athletic scholarship for college

Steve committed himself to winning a full athletic and/or academic scholarship. He put in endless hours for the next three years perfecting his basketball skills and making friends at the St. Charles Boys Club, that named him Boy of the Year in 1969. Meanwhile he perfected his classroom skills and the teaching staff at the high school chose him to be a speaker at his graduation. He was awarded a basketball scholarship to attend Furman University, in Greenville, South Carolina, where he excelled at history much more than college basketball. Steve was just good enough to keep his athletic scholarship for four years; the team was good enough to appear in the NCAA Tournament; and Steve was good enough to play in that game. By his senior year, Steve had learned to be a good teammate, even as a bench warmer, and was not thinking about being drafted by an NBA team but by

the U.S. Army. With a draft number of ten, he assumed he would be drafted immediately after graduation and did not even apply to graduate school. When the draft was ended a month before he graduated, he applied to grad school in history at the University of Missouri in Columbia but was too late to receive any financial aid. He went to see basketball coach Norm Stewart who gave him a job as the academic advisor to the freshman basketball team, which he held until receiving a teaching assistantship the second semester that year. Karen graduated from the School of Nursing at Mizzou that year and Tom graduated from High School and received an athletic scholarship to play basketball at the University of Arizona. Erich and Beulah would have money to really enjoy their retirement. After obtaining his master degree, Steve began a series of experiences that turned him from a moderately liberal college student into a conservative adult.



Steve Ehlmann Took Circuitous Route To Become Lafayette Head Coach

By Russ Kirk
Of the St. Charles Post

One year ago, Steve Ehlmann was being forced to swallow a bitter pill. After completing his first year at St. Charles High School as a history teacher and assistant basketball coach, Ehlmann was given his pink slip when the school district cut back on teachers.

"It made you feel to be helpless," Ehlmann said. "It didn't matter how hard you worked or what you accomplished — that whatever you had done didn't hold any weight. It was strictly a matter of seniority, which is not all that bad." But for me, it was difficult.

Ehlmann had returned to the site of his high school heroics. Ehlmann was a basketball star at St. Charles. The 6-4 forward played as a sophomore three years under Joe Weis and then as a junior and senior under Lowell Lucas. He graduated in 1969.

He was named to all-district and honorable mention all-state teams in his junior and senior years. "He was a very good player," Gary Wacker, the Pirates' head coach said. Wacker was the B-team coach Ehlmann's senior year. "He was a very excellent shooter."

After a college career at Furman University in Greenville, S. C., and postgraduate work at the University of Missouri at Columbia, where he earned his master's degree in history, Ehlmann sought a teaching-coaching position.

He had high hopes of landing a position at St. Charles. "I was offered a job at St. Charles in 1976, but they didn't have any coaching openings. I wanted to go to St. Charles, but I wanted to be able to coach too."

So Ehlmann went to Hazelwood Central High, where he was able to do both. As the B-Team coach, he compiled a 13-11 record.

But then came the splitting of the St. Charles School District and another high school in St. Charles.

Ray Fisher, then Wacker's assistant, left for St. Charles West High, and Ehlmann came back to St. Charles. "It was kind of like a homecoming," he said.

Ehlmann coached the junior varsity and helping Wacker produce a varsity team that earned a No. 1 ranking in

Missouri before ending the season with a 25-2 record.

Then came the teacher cutbacks and the pink slip.

But for Ehlmann, the loss of his job at St. Charles was the start of something bigger.

On the recommendation of John Masterson, Normandy's basketball coach, and Wacker, Ehlmann landed a teaching job at Clayton High School. "It was just tremendous," Ehlmann said. "It was a good experience. They have tremendous academics there."

Also, Ehlmann worked under Clayton's veteran coach, Dawson Pikey, as an unofficial assistant coach. He was not paid, but got needed experience.

"What I didn't learn from Gary, I learned from him (Pikey)," Ehlmann said. Now, Ehlmann has earned a head coaching position.

He will be head basketball coach at Lafayette High School in St. Louis County this year. "Anytime you get a head coaching job, you jump at it, and I'm really enthusiastic. Basically, they've got a good athletic program, but they just never had the tradition in basketball. The potential is there, but it's going to have to be developed," he said.

Wacker believes that Ehlmann has a solid shot at success.

"He'll perform about like he played," Wacker said. "He's certainly a fine young man, and that's a big trait."

Beauchamp Hopes To Get Managing Job In Majors

CHARLESTON, W. Va. (AP) — Is Jim Beauchamp the best manager in minor league baseball?

There's no way to judge that, of course, but the folks in the International League aren't about to argue the point.

With the Charleston Charlies keeping their season-long lead in firm grip despite the departure of eight players to the major leagues since April, Beauchamp is being viewed as part-time magician and full-time miracle-worker. Though the Charlies of July barely resemble the Charlies of April, there they sit atop their league.

How does Beauchamp do it? "Jim Beauchamp knows how to handle players," said Dan Larson, a former Houston Astros pitcher hoping to pitch his way back into the big leagues. "He gives you a lot of confidence."

He also inspires loyalty. Bob Coluccio, an outfielder recently purchased by

the Cardinals from the Charlies, had a chance to return to the majors last season, but passed it up to help Beauchamp and the Charlies win the International League championship.

Now that Beauchamp, a former Cardinals bonus baby, has proved himself as a more than capable minor league manager, can the major leagues be far behind? He hopes not.

"I want to manage in the major leagues," he said. "I believe I have the ability. It's been my goal ever since I quit playing."

"You can never be content in this game. If I get a chance to manage in the majors, I won't be happy until we win the World Series. Then, I'll want to do it again."

"There are 26 major league teams out there. I just hope one of them will see that I'm a good manager."

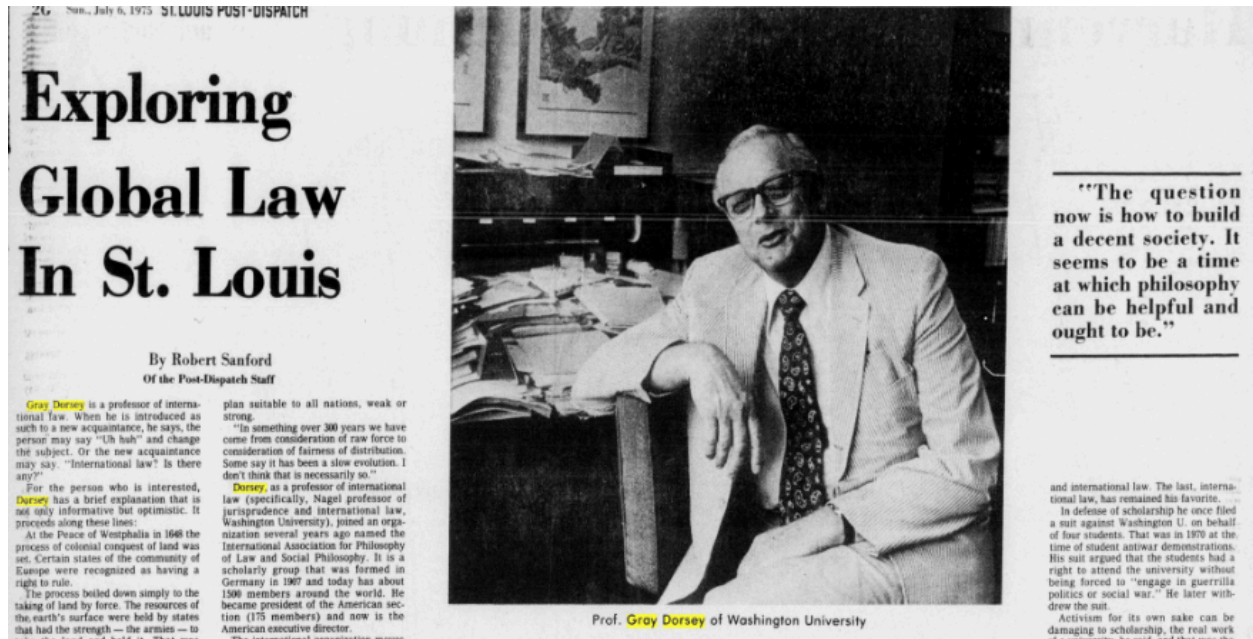


LEGAL CAREER

THE PROBLEM – teaching and coaching

Teaching history and coaching basketball at Hazelwood, St. Charles, Clayton, and Lafayette high schools, Steve discovered first, that his players and students did not

want to be as good as players and students as he did as coach and teacher. Secondly, the liberals running most of the schools in which he taught were more interested in developing self-esteem than intellect and character in the students, while demanding good teachers be paid the same as bad teachers.



THE SOLUTION – the practice of law

Steve left teaching and entered law school at Washington University in 1982. He was one of the few students to ever come out of that institution more conservative than when he went in, due largely to the influence of Professor Gray Dorsey, one of only two conservative professors at the school and an internationally-know expert on Jurisprudence, the comparison of legal systems. Steve took every course he taught and worked as his Graduate Assistant his third year. After graduation, he passed the Missouri bar exam and was sworn in at the Supreme Court in Jefferson City. He became active in the community, serving on the Boys and Girls Clubs of St. Charles County Bboard of Directors. While practicing law, he represented a levee district that had to fight radical environmentalist and liberal federal bureaucrats to protect their farms and homes. He became aware of how much the federal government had taken over land use regulation from the state and local governments in violation of the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and took a giant step toward his total conversion to a Conservative, while taking advantage of his first opportunity to become a solver of his client's problems.



Graduation from Law School at Washington University

THE PROBLEM – federal takeover of zoning in floodplains

A flood on the Missouri River in 1986 destroyed the KATY Railroad embankment, that had provided protection for farmers and residents in the North County Levee District (NCLD) that wanted to build a levee in its place and raise all the levees along the river. Congress, that had covered the cost of levee repairs in the past, had recently required those who benefited to pay 20% of the cost of repair. The district did not have a plan of reclamation that would have allowed them to assess property owners based on the benefit to them of the levee, so they had to raise the money through voluntary donations. Another problem was that Congress had given FEMA the power in the 1970s to limit floodplain development, traditionally a local zoning matter. County and municipal jurisdictions, through their zoning power, and under threat of losing all federal assistance during and after a flood if they fail to enforce them, passed the regulations required by FEMA. Under the regs, a floodway was established along each stream in which no new construction was allowed. Where FEMA drew the line, all the levees in St. Louis County were outside the floodway and thus could be raised while, in St. Charles County, all the levees were in the floodway and could not be raised. FEMA contended their

requirements applied to public as well as private property – to farm structures as well as residences and commercial buildings.

THE SOLUTION – protect local control of land use decisions

The issue of governmental immunity from zoning had been well established in Missouri courts. As the attorney for the NCLD, Ehlmann requested an Attorney General's Opinion that, when issued, explained that local zoning ordinances, including floodplain ordinances required by FEMA, were not applicable to public uses of property where a political subdivision (in this case, the levee district) has the power to acquire lands by the exercise of the power of eminent domain. Earlier, Ehlmann had served as a special assistant County Counselor and, to fulfill the county's obligations to FEMA, filed the case of *St. Charles County v. Dardenne Realty Co*, that was taken over after the county hired its first full-time attorney. The Missouri Supreme Court held that, under state law, county zoning "shall not be exercised so as to impose regulations or to require permits with respect to land used or to be used for the raising of crops," and St. Charles County could not require a floodplain permit from private levee owners who sought to raise their levees to protect their crops. Steve developed a Plan of Reclamation for the NCLD and got it through the courts and past a meeting of landowners. In future floods the district was able to pay its 20%.

While working to get those levees repaired, Steve developed a good working relationship with county officials and our legislative delegation in Jefferson City. He explained to State Representative Douglas Boschert that, while he wanted to run for his seat when he no longer wanted to serve, he wanted to run for a local office in the meantime to get some experience. Representative Boschert, who had served as Mayor of St. Charles and Presiding Commissioner of the county, told him, "Steve, Don't run for any of those local offices. It's all you do is make enemies." Boschert told Steve his wife had been urging him to retire and he would do that so he could run, which he did in 1988 and won. The following month Steve married Jean Poggemeier, a history teacher at St. Charles High School.

Levee District To Meet With Agencies

St. Charles County

Officials of the North County Levee District say they plan to meet with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before proceeding with a plan to unify the existing system of privately owned levees in the district.

According to **Steve Ehlmann**, an attorney representing the levee district, an approved "plan of reclamation" will enable district officials to collect a tax from area residents protected by the levees.

Levees in the district are currently owned by private individuals, many of them farmers. After a flood damaged most of the levees in October, levee owners have been forced to rely on voluntary contributions to pay for the repairs.

Ehlmann said that district officials will discuss the height limitations on levees when they meet with **representatives** from emergency agency and the corps. He said they will probably meet with federal officials before the next meeting of the levee district board of directors Feb. 11.

He explained that most of the levee owners would prefer to reconstruct the levees as high as possible to prevent additional flooding. However federal regulations limit the height of levees on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, **Ehlmann** said.

According to Steve Ehlmann, an attorney representing the levee district, an approved "plan of reclamation" will enable district officials to collect a tax from area residents protected by the levees.

Under the terms of an approved plan of reclamation, levee district officials could charge residents up to \$1 per acre for organizational costs and the consolidation of the levee district. **Ehlmann** said that the tax would be assessed to individual property owners, based on the amount of protection provided by the levees.

He added that some residents in the district are located in areas that do not require levee protection and would not be taxed.

Ehlmann explained that a corps plan for the L-15 Levee, a federally financed project that would protect most of the area, made a plan of reclamation unnecessary.

Since the plan for the L-15 has been dropped and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad embankment may be abandoned, **Ehlmann** said directors believe the district must develop a "comprehensive" plan for the levee district.

In other business, an ad hoc committee began reimbursing farmers in

the levee district for the cost of repair work on their levees.

Under the terms of a federal relief program, private levee owners, many of whom are farmers, have agreed to pay for 20 percent of the cost of repairing their embankments. Federal agencies will pay the remaining 80 percent.

According to **Ehlmann**, most of the farmers have opted to use their own equipment to complete 20 percent of the needed repair work. He said this work has been completed and that levee owners are waiting for the corps to complete the repair work.

Herb Wappelhorst, the treasurer of the North County Levee District, said that approximately \$25,000 in reimbursements had been approved and he expected to receive another 8 to 10 requests for funds. He said that the farmers were paid about \$25 per hour, depending on the size of the scraper plow and the type of tractor used.

Dan Kluesner, a member of the

committee overseeing the reconstruction of the M-K-T embankment, said that "no one was making money on the work," and added that the reimbursement is intended to cover the cost of fuel and wear and tear.

In his report to the board members, **Wappelhorst** said that approximately \$36,000 had been collected from residents in the district. **Wappelhorst** said these contributions bring the total amount of donations to nearly \$170,717, including those from area corporations.

He added however that only half of the residents in the area have responded to a request for donations. North County Levee District officials have asked residents to contribute \$2 per acre and \$25 per house to defray the cost of repairing the M-K-T embankment and reimbursing levee owners.

Wappelhorst estimated "at least another \$15,000" would be donated for the remaining work.

In addition to the \$25,000 in reimbursements for private levee work, **Wappelhorst** said that reconstruction of the M-K-T embankment will cost \$80,000. **Ehlmann** said that the **Dave Kolb Grading Co.** would complete the work "in a day or two."

Ehlmann said the remaining \$65,000 will be used for the improvement of the M-K-T embankment and the maintenance of the private levees.

THE MISSOURI HOUSE



THE FUN:

While serving in the legislature, Representative Ehlmann enjoyed playing basketball at the Highway patrol gymnasium with other legislators. Their team, the Capital Domes, played in charity games around the state. It was a great opportunity to make some close friends in both parties. While he was now no longer on the end of the bench, he made an effort to pass the ball to his teammates, especially if they were Senators. They also became teammates back at the Capital.

Legislature's team captained by John Schneider, silver-haired state senator from Florissant. Scouting report said Schneider, 52, was in great shape, having built endurance giving long, windy speeches. A Democrat, Schneider was nonetheless excited about election to House last year of Republican Steve Ehlmann of St. Charles. Ehlmann played varsity ball at Furman and was a graduate assistant basketball coach at Mizzou while in law school. In short, he was a ringer.

"The governor couldn't make it," Schneider apologized. "Too bad, he's a pretty good player. He's a sneaky little bleep, though."

Schneider also had Jay Nixon, Charles Barkley-sized state senator from Festus, at center. Having seen Nixon obliterated in last November's race for the U.S. Senate, we considered bringing in Jack Danforth to cover him, but instead assigned him to hockey writer. This was a terrible mistake.

Jay Nixon did to us what Richard Nixon did to George McGovern. So did Ehlmann and Dennis Smith, state senator from Springfield, and Rep. Jeff Schaeperkoetter of Owensville and Rep. Bill Clay Jr. from St. Louis and a couple of other ringers.

Kevin Horrigan of the *Post-Dispatch* wrote about a game between the news staff and the Capitol Domes.

THE WORK:

THE PROBLEM – FEMA'S legislation

After the *Dardenne Realty* Supreme Court case and AG opinion, FEMA went to the Missouri capitol seeking a change in state law to overturn the case that agricultural structures were exempt from county zoning and the opinion that public levees built by governmental bodies were also exempt.

THE SOLUTION – protect the state and county control of zoning in floodplain

Their bill, when debated on its merits, was soundly defeated in the Missouri House due in large part to the efforts of Representatives Joe Ortwerth and Steve Ehlmann. Before the legislative session the following year, FEMA sent a letter to every county commission and every state legislator informing them that sixty Missouri counties would be suspended from eligibility for the flood insurance program if the legislature did not pass the legislation FEMA wanted. With this threat hanging over it, the General Assembly passed FEMA's bill after a fierce debate in which even those who voted for the bill complained about FEMA's coercive tactics. Told it would take an act of Congress" to get the relief for our constituents, Representatives Ortwerth and Ehlmann worked with U.S. Representative Jim Talent and Senator Kit Bond to get an amendment on a bill to allow the NCLD to raise its levees to provide a 20-year level of protection and appropriating \$250,000 for the corps to study the problem. They were also able to persuade FEMA to allow 18 percent of the land in an additional "density floodway" across the county to be developed. While they could not block the federal government from taking over floodplain zoning, they had lessened the impact on property owners.

THE PROBLEM – involuntary annexations

For many homeowners outside the floodplain in unincorporated St. Charles County, the enemy was not the federal government but the neighboring municipality. Only in first class charter counties like St. Louis County, (St. Charles was not a charter county at the time). did the majority of the voters in an area to be involuntarily annexed have to vote for its approval for the annexation to take place. In other counties, including St. Charles, residents of unincorporated areas argued it was unconstitutional to allow annexation when the majority of those affected opposed it. When a bill before the General Assembly, requiring a majority vote in the area to be annexed, failed, a compromise bill passed providing, where majorities were not obtained in the city and the area to be annexed on the first vote, the annexation could be approved by a second combined two-thirds vote of municipal residents and those in the area to be annexed. This was not a problem for the cities because they sought only to annex areas that would bring in more revenue than their maintenance would require them to spend, and thus benefit

existing residents. The policy continued to be controversial as St. Peters attempted to involuntarily annex 2,500 acres in 28 different subdivisions.

Voluntary annexations also continued, and when a Charter was drafted to present to the voters of the county in 1996, mayors were able to include language that prohibited the county from challenging the legality of annexations that did not meet the “contiguous and compact” requirement. Because neighbors were not willing to finance a court challenge, the circuit court, hearing no objections, approved several illegal annexations in the county. So many unchallenged illegal annexations created a checkerboard map.

THE SOLUTION – ensure the majority rules

In response to the involuntary annexations, along with the entire county legislative delegation, Representative Ehlmann co-sponsored an amendment to the annexation statute by Representative Joe Ortwerth granting St. Charles County residents what the people in the charter counties of St. Louis and Jackson already had - the right to determine by majority vote whether they would be annexed. While cities complained that the amendment would stop growth, supporters of the amendment said it ensured majority rule. Claiming there were 72 unincorporated “islands,” that made it difficult to provide municipal services, cities tried for years to repeal the amendment. Ortwerth and Ehlmann explained the majority should rule, and Steve opposed efforts to repeal the amendment suggesting that cities quit complaining and “create incentives for residents to want to come into the city.” He also explained the unincorporated islands were often the result of cities maneuvering to take in commercial areas, where no one lived to vote “no,” and pointed out this meant that a store’s customers who lived in an adjacent unincorporated residential subdivision received no return on the city sales tax they paid.

THE PROBLEM – ethics enforcement

Representative Ehlmann was a member of the House Ethics Committee when federal charges were filed in June 1990 against Representatives Dewey Trump for selling illegal drugs and E.J. “Lucky: Cantrell for conspiracy to embezzle money from a Union. During the same period there was concern about transparency, ethics, campaign finance and conflicts of interest in the General Assembly and local subdivisions of the state.

THE SOLUTION – push Democratic Speaker of the House to act

After the charges were filed, Ehlmann, along with Representative Doug Harpool, a Democrat, as members of the Ethics Committee, filed charges against Crump and Cantrell. Ehlmann went further and opposed the Democratic speaker, pushing for the committee to appoint a special counsel to investigate the charges. Ehlmann was a member of the three-person subcommittee that recommended Representative Dewey Crump lose his seat. Crump later resigned from office in September after he was convicted of federal cocaine distribution charges.

Panel Studies Lawyer In Crump Probe

Rep. Steve Ehlmann, R-St. Charles, considered that a committee lawyer could study public documents, such as those involving evidence gathered at Crump's apartment.

"There may be enough admissions in those" to proceed with a House hearing, Ehlmann said. "I'm sure the committee is not going to give anybody a fishing license" to question people at random.

Ehlmann suggested Gordon Ankney, a former special prosecutor in St. Louis city and county, and St. Charles Prosecutor Donald L. Kohl for the special counsel's job.

But Harpool objected, saying the subcommittee should interview the candidates first. "Iran-Contra took three years, not three months," Harpool said. "It takes time to do things right."

Harpool also noted that if Crump was convicted of a felony, he would be expelled automatically from the House. "The second that he's convicted, we throw him out," Harpool said.

The subcommittee took no action on a complaint against Rep. E.J. "Lucky" Cantrell, D-Overland. Cantrell faces labor corruption charges in federal court in Kansas City.

THE PROBLEM - ethics regulations

The following year, the first significant ethics reform bill by the General Assembly was sent to a Conference Committee to work out the differences in House and Senate versions, to which Ehlmann was appointed. While the House has passed a strong bill, the Senate version was much weaker. The Conference Committee

meetings were long and contentious, as some opponents of the Bill hoped to just run out the clock, as the end of the session was approaching.

THE SOLUTION – campaign finance reform and State Ethics Commission

After meetings lasting a total of 43 hours, the committee finally agreed to a bill at 2 a.m. on the last day of the session. Their Ethics Bill called for, among other things, reporting of lobbyist expenditures and campaign contribution that were limited to a specific amount. At that time an ethical lapse had to rise to the level of a criminal offense, that only the local Prosecuting Attorney could file. It also established an Ethics Commission to deal with ethics complaints against state and local elected officials that could impose fines and penalties or refer serious matters to a prosecuting attorney for possible criminal charges. Among the most recent cases the Ethics Committee would consider was a complaint against Senator Bill Eigel for a questionable fundraising scheme during his run for governor in 2024.

Lawmakers Hail Ethics Bill Vote

By Edward H. Kohn
St. Charles Post Bureau Chief

Two legislators from St. Charles County who helped persuade members of the House and Senate to pass an ethics bill in the Legislature's final hours said Monday that they were extremely pleased with the result.

Rep. Joseph Orwerth, R-St. Peters, said the measure is "tough but fair" and "sends a clear message... that corruption, collusion and conflict of interest" will not be tolerated in government service.

"The bill that was passed reflects everything that I ever hoped we could get," he said.

Orwerth has sought ethics legislation for four of the nine years he has spent in the House. He said he believes Gov. John Ashcroft will sign the bill and that the governor will choose the members of the statewide ethics commission before the end of the year.

State Rep. **Steve Ehlmann**, R-St. Charles, said House members demanded — and ultimately got — a much tougher bill than that favored by the Senate.

"We talked the thing to death," he said. "In the end, the Senate basically agreed with the House position."

Ehlmann said he spent 46 hours in House-Senate conference committee meetings devoted to the bill. "This was the mother of all conference committees," he said.

Orwerth said he believes the bill will accomplish three goals:

- Restore public confidence in the government.
- Elevate the standard of conduct by public officials and government employees.
- Change the way state and local governments function by "breaking up influence peddling and the prostitution of power" by lobbyists and public officials.

The bill sets up a six-member commission — three Democrats and three Republicans — to enforce ethics laws for public officials.

Members of the commission would be appointed by the governor from nominees sent by congressional district committees of both parties.

The commission would hire former judges to investigate complaints against public officials who violate conflict-of-interest or disclosure laws.

In addition, the law allows the appointment of special prosecutors to file charges against officials.

Ehlmann and Orwerth said that step is important, because local prosecutors — who themselves must stand for re-election — often are reluctant to bring charges against other officeholders.

They noted that financial disclosure statements were required.

6:30 a.m., announcing that she thought she was going into labor. Confirmation came an hour and a half later from Jean Ehlmann's father, Dr. William Poggemeier, a physician.

"I think the baby may come early this afternoon," Poggemeier told his son-in-law by phone.

Ehlmann said he raced over to his office at the Capitol building to retyp portions of an ethics bill. He said he wanted to be sure to sign the bill, which had undergone last-minute changes in a conference committee.

"I sat there from 8 to 9 a.m. proofreading for errors. Then I went by the budget committee, where I wanted to testify on getting an additional Circuit Court judge for St. Charles County," **Ehlmann** said.

Time was running out, and he knew it. "I needed to get home," **Ehlmann** said. He arrived at St. Joseph Health Center in St. Charles at 11:30 a.m.

It turned out to be a long wait. Brendan Erich put off his arrival until 6:24 p.m. He weighed in at 8 lbs., 8 oz. He is the first child for the Ehlmanns.

Session's End, Son's Beginning Make For A Hectic Day For Rep. Ehlmann

By Ralph Dummit
Of the St. Charles Post

The final day of the Missouri legislative session is always hectic. But Brendan Erich **Ehlmann** succeeded Friday in making the day unusually hectic for his father, state Rep. Steven E. **Ehlmann**, R-St. Charles.

It was Brendan Erich's day to be born.

The elder **Ehlmann** got to bed at 2 a.m. Friday after putting finishing touches on bills that were up for passage in the final session. But his wife, Jean, called him from St. Charles at

L.T. Spencer/St. Charles Post

State Rep. Steven E. Ehlmann and wife, Jean, holding their newborn son, Brendan Erich, at St. Joseph Health Center Monday. Brendan was born on the last day of the legislative session.

MORE AREA NEWS

- Mental health experts say suicides in St. Charles County last year more than doubled from the year before. And the experts say they're hard pressed to explain why. See story in the main section of the Post-Dispatch.

Representative Ehlmann ran for the newly created 23rd Missouri Senate District in 1992 and was elected.

MISSOURI SENATE

THE PROBLEM - airport governance

After the W-I-W runway alternative for airport expansion through Bridgeton had been approved by the FAA, with the support of city, county and business leaders, Senator Ehlmann complained, “I’m tired of all the talk about regionalism,” adding, “We were not even in the room when the decision was made to go with W-1-W.”

THE SOLUTION – regional control legislation

With the support of all my Republican and Democratic colleagues from St. Louis, Jefferson, Franklin and St. Charles counties, Senator Ehlmann passed a Senate amendment in 1998 establishing a Missouri Regional Airport Commission. Representative Quincy Troup called Ehlmann and the people of St. Charles County “racists,” when Senator Ehlmann echoed the sentiment of the *Post-Dispatch* editor, claiming the airport could not be a “world-class facility so long as only the residents of St. Louis were allowed to work there.” Despite the bi-partisan support in the Senate for the concept of regional governance, the city relied on the Democratic leadership, which killed the bill containing my regional airport governance amendment. As airport governance remained a hot topic of debate, hoping to blunt the controversy, the Airport Governance Study Commission, created a permanent seat for St. Charles County on the commission in 2000.

Troupe's comments, as Ortwerth sees it, "reflected his level of frustration on the lack of harmony on certain regional issues, such as the airport and affirmative action regarding state contracts."

Troupe's words, aired on KMOX, were undeniably volatile. He said **Ehlmann** "just needs to put on his hood and declare himself the grand dragon or the imperial wizard."

Jo MANNIES ON POLITICS

"R" words uttered by Troupe didn't shock some colleagues

When the bipartisan St. Louis area legislative caucus convenes for its monthly meeting on Tuesday, everybody already knows what agenda item will touch off the most fireworks:

The recent radio railing by state Rep. Charles "Quincy" Troupe, D-St. Louis, who blasted St. Charles County in general and certain state legislators in particular.

In his attacks, on the radio and afterward, Troupe used what are arguably the two hottest "R" words in the St. Louis area — racism and regionalism.

And they're words that Troupe has bandied about a lot.

Troupe, 63, has been in the Legislature for 22 years, and the 1st Ward Democratic committeeman for even longer. He's a former bus driver who is now vice president of the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents many Bi-State workers.

In his second term, Steve was elected floor leader by his fellow Republicans



THE PROBLEM – school safety

Steve's wife Jean, pictured above, was a high school history and government teacher, who kept her husband abreast of what was going on in the schools. A Gang Awareness Task Force in St. Charles County identified some of those same problems in the schools. Students were bringing a gun to school to impress others; mental health and criminal records were not following a transfer student timely to

the new school; school officials were not reporting all criminal activity to law enforcement; and schools were not honoring suspension or expulsion of a student from another school.

THE SOLUTION – require all schools to take measures

Senator Ehlmann introduced the Safe Schools Act - that contained several provisions suggested by the Task Force, for three straight legislative sessions. After a troubled recently-transferred male student at McCluer North High School, whose records had not yet been received from his prior school, murdered a female student, Ehlmann passed the bill in the Senate. But the Democrats did not even take it up in the House of Representatives since it had a Republican sponsor. The following year, Governor Carnahan pushed almost the identical bill through both chambers of the General Assembly. Timely records transfers were required; all criminal activity was required to be reported; and suspensions and expulsion were required to be honored.

THE PROBLEM – abortion providers

The state budget passed by the pro-life Legislature had cut funding for family planning organizations connected in any way to an abortion provider. The Carnahan administration took the position money was available to Planned Parenthood as long as it did not use it for abortions. The Attorney General's duty was to defend the legislature as well as state agencies and he chose to represent the state agency.

THE SOLUTION – defend the pro-life position in the courts

Senators Ehlmann and John Schneider persuaded the AG to appoint a Special Attorney General to represent the legislature and, after the Circuit Court agreed with him on the underlying issue, the case went to the Supreme Court, where the legislature raised that there was a conflict of interest for the AG and the court agreed with them. The Supreme Court ruled that the AG had a conflict and had to choose. He chose to defend the state and dismissed the appeal. For this and other Pro-Life efforts Senator Ehlmann received the Protector of Life Award from Missouri Right to Life.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD Choosing sides

MISSOURI Attorney General Jay Nixon could have saved the state a lot of time and hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees if he had decided three years ago to forthrightly defend the decision to fund Planned Parenthood's family planning clinics.

Instead, Mr. Nixon took a tortured, confusing legal position that left him on both sides of the controversial issue. That is, until Tuesday, when the Missouri Supreme Court unanimously told Mr. Nixon to "choose a side." Mr. Nixon announced immediately after the decision that he was dropping the suit against Planned Parenthood, acknowledging that he didn't consider the lawsuit "a high point" of his career.

The decision is a victory for Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Planned Parenthood of Mid-Missouri, as well as the thousands of women to whom they provide reproductive health care. The decision wipes out a ruling by Judge Byron L. Kinder that had cut off state funding and required the organizations to repay \$105,750 the state previously had given Planned Parenthood.

Not all of the responsibility should fall on Mr. Nixon, however. Anti-abortion legislators — including Sen. John D. Schneider, D-Florissant, and former Sen. Steve E. Ehlmann, R-St. Charles — also deserve a big share. They led the 1999 effort to cut off state funds to family planning clinics that share names, facilities or staff with abortion providers. Dr. Maureen Dempsey, the head of the Missouri Department of Health, decided that Planned Parenthood still qualified for state funding as long as state money was not spent on abortions. That infuriated anti-abortion legislators, who pressured Mr. Nixon to appoint St. Louis attorney Jordan Cherrick to press for a funds cutoff. Mr. Cherrick has run up several hundred thou-

sand dollars of legal fees in the process. The state also spent thousands of dollars to defend Dr. Dempsey's position.

The result was that Mr. Cherrick argued, as a special assistant attorney general, that state money couldn't go to Planned Parenthood, while Mr. Nixon argued it could. That put Mr. Nixon on both sides of the case — a position strictly prohibited by legal ethics. Judge John C. Holstein said that ethical prohibition applies to the attorney general, just as it does to any lawyer. The court held that, "By representing two opposing sides in the same litigation, the attorney general at best confuses the public and at worst undermines and contorts the adversarial system."

Anti-abortion forces have a number of ways to continue their fight. One would be a taxpayer suit challenging the health department contracts with Planned Parenthood. Another would be for the GOP-controlled Senate to use its confirmation power to prod Dr. Dempsey's successor into cutting off Planned Parenthood funding. Another would be to entirely cut off state money for family planning.

But this drastic approach would exact a heavy toll on the legislative process — not to mention the organizations that exist to protect women's health and the women themselves. The state funds used to fight endless legal battles — and the time spent arguing about abortion that could be used more productively on other urgent state issues — would be better spent on family planning services. Fees of \$200,000 would pay for about 1,400 pap smears.

Twenty-nine years to the day after *Roe v. Wade* made abortion legal, it is highly ironic that the state money at issue is used to provide family planning services that reduce the need for and number of abortions.

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THE PROBLEM – TIF abuse

In 1982, the legislature passed Tax Increment Financing (TIF), that allowed a municipality to divert the additional property taxes generated for up to 23 years by all the jurisdictions, not just itself, serving a "blighted" development area that would never redevelop "but for" TIF. The legislature left it to the courts to define blight, while the courts waited for the legislature to provide the definition. In 1990, the legislature expanded the TIF statute to allow the developer to also capture one-half of the increased sales tax generated by a development. As a result, the focus of TIF shifted from manufacturing to retail developments, as municipalities that had become overly dependent on sales tax over the previous two decades, were now willing to give away half of any new revenue in order to convince a retailer to locate there.

THE SOLUTION – a proposal for legislative definition of “blight”

Senator Ehlmann was a member of a special committee at East-west Gateway that published *Initiative for a Metropolitan Community* that concluded, given the fiscally punishing competition municipalities engaged in to lure retail projects away from each other, the net benefit to the region was minimal. A Senate bill to reform the use of TIF in the region, filed by Senators Ehlmann and Good passed the Senate, but when it went to the House of Representatives, developers from the region convinced County Executive Westfall to withdraw his support and the bill died. While the legislature did amend the statute to establish county-wide TIF Commissions in 2007 to approve or deny proposed projects, municipalities could still approve them with a two-thirds vote of the Board of Aldermen.

But some think TIF is really little more than a Pied Piper

BY JOE ORTWERTH, FRANCIS SLAY, STEVE EHLMANN AND WAYNE GOODE

THE new millennium has plenty of room for lessons from the past. The Pied Piper of Hamelin has a good one for us. Remember him?

A traveling piper came to the aid of local officials whose city was plagued by rats.

The piper strolled the streets of Hamelin playing a tune so enticing that he lured the rats out of the town and into the river. But when the job was done, city officials refused to pay what they had promised for the piper's services. So the piper used his magical music to lead all the town's children away.

The mayor and the city council members watched, helpless, as the children vanished.

Readers who have been following the St. Louis region's growing obsession with tax increment financing may recognize some common themes. In the modern-day story, a fanciful tune has our region captivated and headed astray. This tune is the jingle of coins dropping into the cash registers of the newest, largest, most state-of-the-art retail establishments money can buy. Profits are up! That's good. But a portion of what's jingling is tax money, yours and ours — paid by the good people of the city and surrounding counties.

Through tax increment financing, tens of millions of local tax dollars are diverted from city, county and special-purpose district budgets in the St. Louis region every year into the coffers of private developers in the name of what sounds like (cha-ching!) economic development. Civic leaders who experience very dramatic and positive fiscal results are as happy as the leaders of Hamelin when they first thought their problem had been solved.

But the story is not finished yet, for the increase in local revenue is often the product of commercial development and retail sales that have been lured from one jurisdiction to the next.

And most of the gains for the local community (a sizable portion of the “tax increment”) is used to pay the developer's costs. This payment is sometimes exacted unwillingly from neighboring or overlapping jurisdictions, including counties, municipal-

TIF Reform

The focus of the TIF reform proposal is to use plain, measurable, objective standards to determine where this public subsidy can be used.

Requirements will include:

1. The community in which a proposed development area is located is one of pervasive poverty, unemployment, low fiscal capacity or general distress.
2. The redevelopment area is not growing and developing through private investment, and would not be expected to develop in any economically productive fashion without public investment.
3. The proposed development is in the public interest and will produce economic benefits, area-wide. This cost-benefit analysis will be conducted by an independent third party and will include economic, social, environmental and fiscal impacts on the host jurisdiction as well as affected and neighboring taxing districts and communities.

Where there are disputes about the TIF proposal or objections by businesses, citizens or taxing districts that are adversely affected, there should be a process for judicial review of the decisions made by the TIF Commission or the City Council. The current law provides no means to appeal these decisions, regardless of how far-reaching their impact.

ties, school districts, fire districts and others in the complex political map that makes up St. Louis.

RESIDENTS who depend on services provided by these jurisdictions can be very unhappy — as were the parents of Hamelin.

Is this really “economic development”? We think not. In fact, we believe the region places the fiscal foundation that makes our communities strong at serious risk with our propensity to wantonly blight-and-TIF for quick improvements that may glaze over long-term problems. Similarly, the foundation of the private market is eroded when we grant subsidies to a few developers and leave others who may have made long-term investments in surrounding communities unfairly disadvantaged to compete.

We do not mean to imply that every proposed TIF project is unworthy of public support.

For communities that are so economically distressed that a boost from the government side is required to get the private market working to create jobs and wealth, TIF can be a very important tool. A number of successful redevelopment projects in truly “blighted” areas of the region bear witness to this fact.

But for each of these good projects, at least three more do nothing but shift precious public resources around in a maddening competition between our cities and counties for big-box, and then bigger-box, retail.

We are convinced that the need for reform in the Missouri TIF statutes is so immediate and so compelling that we have committed our energies to a bipartisan committee of elected officials and civic leaders who intend to propose change during the upcoming legislative session.

Although carefully researched and crafted, our proposal will not provide the perfect fix for all the problems associated with the current misuse of tax increment financing.

But it will provide an important starting point to unite urban, suburban and rural interests in the pursuit of things in which we all believe: the creation of household wealth and strong local neighborhoods; responsible patterns of development; and a vibrant and competitive regional economy.

Without a rational method to guide the investment of public resources in economic development and a system of mutual accountability between jurisdictions, we are all too easily distracted and led astray. And when it comes time — as it always does — to pay the piper, the true costs may well exceed the benefits we actually derived.

Joe Ortwerth is St. Charles County executive. Francis Slay is president of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, Steve Ehlmann, a Republican from St. Charles, is state senator representing the 23rd District. Wayne Goode, a Democrat from Normandy, is state senator representing the 13th District.

THE PROBLEM – Voluntary Inter-district Transfer Program in St. Louis Public Schools

Most members of the General Assembly complained about the cost to the state of the Voluntary Inter-district Transfer Program in St. Louis and Kansas City and wanted to see it end. However, it was clear to the federal courts that the St. Louis Public School (SLPS) could not continue to support itself under the state formula for school funding when, as DESE predicted, it would soon become unaccredited. The state auditor pointed out that, despite the state's expenditure of over a billion dollars for court-ordered desegregation up to that time, SLPS test scores still lagged far behind the state average and the graduation rate had plunged from 47 percent a decade earlier to 26 percent, compared to the statewide average of 73 percent, under the elected school board.

THE SOLUTION – financial reform and charter schools in the city

When a bill made it to the Senate floor intended to be the basis for a settlement of the desegregation case by increasing funding to the SLPS, Senator Ehlmann passed an amendment to put the mayor of St. Louis, instead of the elected school board, in charge of the SLPS, as the Illinois legislature had recently put the mayor in charge of Chicago Schools. The sponsor pulled the bill before a final vote was taken and an interim committee was appointed to study the issue. At the beginning of the 1998 session legislators were told that non-accreditation was imminent, in which case the SLPS would have to pay for city students to attend St. Louis County schools. Senate sponsor Ted House wanted bi-partisan support for the bill and approached Senator Ehlmann for Republican support. Seven Republicans agreed if the bill allowed charter schools and established a Special Administrative Board (SAB) appointed by the mayor, the president of the Board of Aldermen and the governor, to replace the elected School Board ninety days after the district was declared non-accredited by the State Board of Education (SBOE) which they had communicated was eminent. Senate Bill 781 passed the House and the Senate, where all the Senators from the St. Louis region voted for it except Senator J.B. “Jet” Banks, and Governor Carnahan signed it.

THE PROBLEM – cost of parochial education

Parochial schools had been forced for years to increase tuition as the number of teachers belonging to religious orders drastically declined, and the lay teachers

replacing them demanded much higher salaries. Opponents of school choice still believed, even after the Supreme Court ruling in *Zelma v. Simmons-Harris* in 2002, that certain school voucher programs providing assistance to the parents of both public and parochial school students did not violate the U.S. Constitution, that the Missouri Constitution's prohibition on the state or any of its political subdivisions to "pay from any public fund" to directly or indirectly aid any non-public school, had built a higher wall of separation between church and state.

THE SOLUTION – tax credits instead of direct assistance by state

The issue of state support for the parents of parochial school children remained alive in Jefferson City only as part of the "school choice" movement, that was propelled largely by poor performance by public schools in inner cities. In 2000, Senator Ehlmann was the first to sponsored a bill creating "opportunity scholarships" for parochial school children with a financial need. To avoid the specific prohibition "to pay from any public fund" in the Missouri constitution, individuals or corporations were to receive a fifty percent state tax credit for contributions to a charity that could then award scholarships to needy students to attend any school they wish. Nothing would be paid out because the tax credit only relieved the donor of the duty to pay in. The bill did not pass until 2023 and the program was significantly expanded two years later.

JUDICIAL CAREER

THE PROBLEM – family responsibilities

Senator Ehlmann loved serving in the Missouri Senate and could have run for a third term in 2000, as term limits did not become effective until after his first election to the Senate. However, his service called for great sacrifice by Jean, who needed help raising Brendan and Will.

THE SOLUTION – run for an office in the county

Steve ran for associate circuit judge, was elected, and was sworn in by his friend Judge Stephen Limbaugh. While serving as a judge, he published *Crossroads*, a

History of St. Charles County. He also served a day on the Missouri Supreme Court as a visiting judge. Two years later he was elected to a six-year term as Circuit Judge. After serving for one year, Judge Ehlmann left the bench to become Director of Administration for St. Charles County, giving up five years of his six-year term and taking a pay cut because, as one of his colleagues suggested, he “Still wanted to be a players rather than an umpire.” He served his friend and former colleague County Executive Joe Ortwerth, with whom he addressed and solved several problems while they were in the legislature.



COUNTY EXECUTIVE

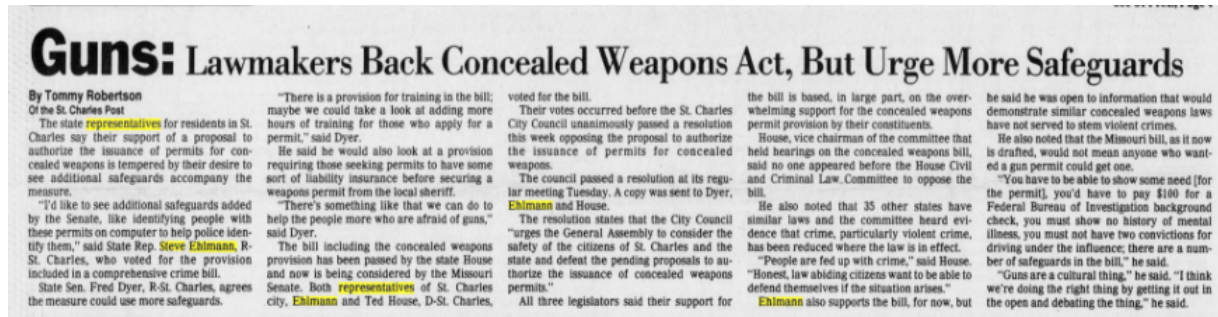


THE PROBLEM - no conceal/carry permits

After it was passed by the legislature, opponents filed lawsuits to block implementation in Missouri of the Conceal/carry Bill, alleging violation of the Hancock Amendment, because the statutory fees for a permit to carry a concealed weapon did not cover the actual cost to sheriff departments of issuing the permit, an unfunded mandate prohibited by the Hancock Amendment, and a circuit judge in St. Louis issued an injunction against issuance.

THE SOLUTION – use county’s charter powers

While Ehlmann was Director of Administration, the St. Charles County administration used its charter power to allow the county sheriff to issue the permits to county residents for the amount in the statute, under which the applicant was disqualified only if they had a felony conviction, a misdemeanor conviction involving a firearm, a dishonorable discharge from military service, an Order of Protection against them or involuntary commitment to a mental health facility.



The bill including the concealed weapons provision has been passed by the state House and now is being considered by the Missouri Senate. Both representatives of St. Charles city, Ehlmann and Ted House, D-St. Charles,

THE PROBLEM – TIF abuse in the floodplain on property never developed

The City of St. Peters used TIF to blight agricultural property in the floodplain along the 370 Corridor and to pay for a levee construction without getting the proper permits from the Corps of Engineers.

THE SOLUTION litigation, legislation and negotiation

While Steve Ehlmann was Director of Administration, the county joined Great Rivers Habitat Alliance (GRHA) in a lawsuit challenge the use of TIF for industrial development, as opposed to redevelopment, in the floodplain. They lost that lawsuit in the Supreme Court but GRHA was able to pass legislation in the General Assembly prohibiting TIF in the floodplains of St. Charles County, but not elsewhere. After he was elected County Executive Ehlmann, a board member at East-West Gateway, convinced the staff to research and publish a study of TIF use in the region over the previous fifteen years and found that what had been billed as economic development had been only economic relocation. Municipalities in the region had approved more than \$2.8 billion dollars for retail development over the previous 25 years, while the number of new retail jobs created was a mere 1,300,

an increase of .08 percent, one-tenth the increase in population over the same period. When HB1434 passed overwhelmingly in the Missouri House and unanimously in the Senate in 2016, it placed the final decisions on TIF approval in the hands of county-wide commissions, that the county executive was authorized to appoint, with the advice and consent of the County Council, that would consider the benefit of the project to the entire county and its political subdivisions, not just a single municipality. An agreement was reached with St. Peters and Great River Habitat Alliance on Premier 370 which laid the groundwork for a Salt-River Road extension.

THE PROBLEM - lack of north-south arterial roads

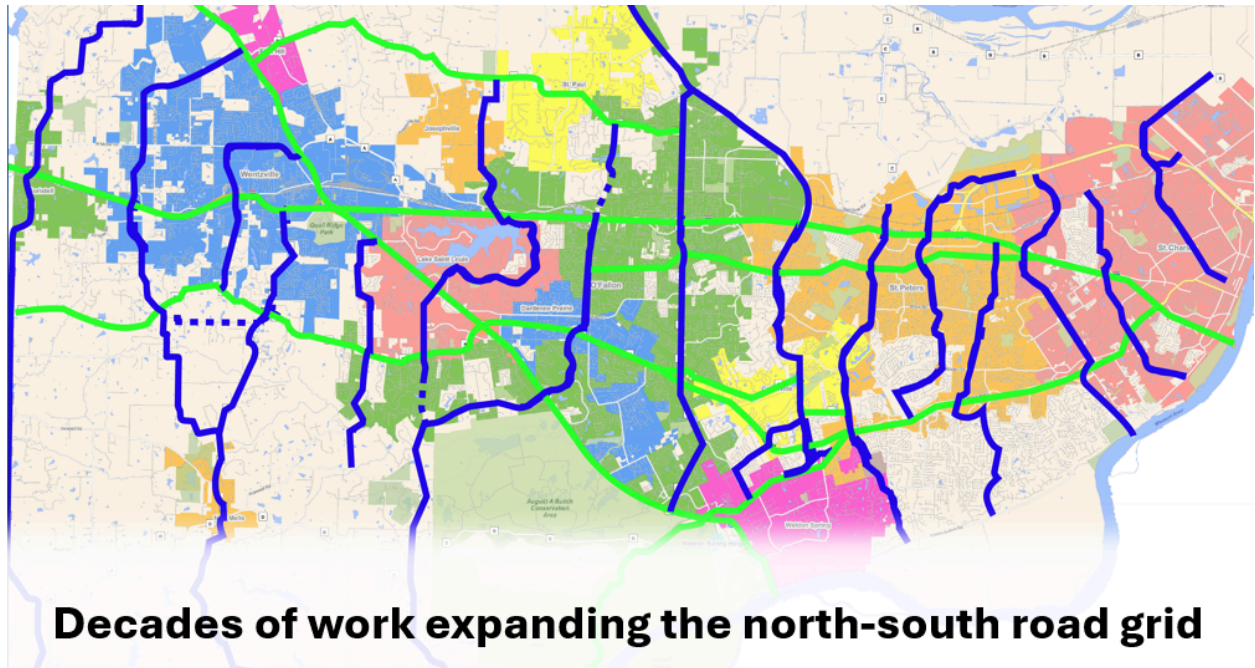
Due to the country's history of westward expansion most of the early roads in the county were east-west routes like the Booneslick Trail (Highway N) and the Salt River Road (Highway P). and Mexico Road. Later highways followed a similar path and the county convinced MoDOT to buy right-of-way to widen I-70 under the railroad bridge in Wentzville. As the county became a suburb and subdivisions were built off these routes, north-south arterial became necessary as development moved west.



THE SOLUTION – County Road Board

The County Road Board began to upgrade old and build new north-south routes beginning in the eastern part of the county and moving west. Twice during the

tenure of Executive Ehlmann he led the effort to renew the road board tax to fund these roads, that the voters approved by over 75% at the ballot box.



THE PROBLEM – Phase III of Page Avenue Extension

Construction began in 2007; Steve Ehlmann's first year as County Executive on Phase II of the Page Avenue Extension project. MoDOT announced that by 2009 all funds would be used for maintenance and paying off bonds and no money would be available for funding the last legs of the extension. Diving by Missouri residents would drop five percent between 2000 and 2012, and there would be less money from the per-gallon fuel user fee to fund ever more expensive transportation projects. Vehicles had become more fuel efficient, while the fuel user fee per gallon had not increased in almost twenty years, causing MoDOT's purchasing power to decrease by more than fifty percent.



THE SOLUTION – if MoDOT and legislature fails the county must act

When Conty Executive Ehlmann put together a plan where County government, along with municipalities in the county, teamed together to fund one-quarter of the cost by submitting a single request, rather than several from the different jurisdictions, for funds from the federal government, the MoDOT District Engineer called it the “St. Charles Miracle.” Another quarter of the cost was paid by the St. Charles County Road Board’s Transportation Sales Tax, while MoDOT paid the other one-half of the costs of Phase III. A contract was signed in 2013 on a route that largely followed the old Booneslick Trail, and the roadway opened in November 2014. Before the legislature met its obligation to fund transportation by raising the user fee, St. Charles County had spent \$191 million on MoDot’s system, including Muegge Road project and engineering for the I-70/I-64 intersection. We did such a good job that most members of our delegation voted against the increase.





THE PROBLEM – airport revenue

Years after Senator Ehlmann had attempted to establish regional control of Lambert Airport, an entirely new approach to airport management, privatization, was possible after the FAA selected Lambert as one of five participants in its Airport Privatization Pilot Program in 2017. The most important regional asset, Lambert Airport, should have been an additional opportunity for regional cooperation, but the city, that had not financed improvements to the airport with government obligation bonds for over fifty years. The plan could be approved by the St. Louis Board of Aldermen and the city could spend all the revenue derived from a facility that had been built with revenue from federal taxpayers and airport users. Neither the Airport Commission, designed to allowed airport patrons from outside the city to keep abreast of developments at the airport, or the Missouri-St. Louis Metropolitan Airport Authority, that was still authorized by statute, but no longer allowed state funding, much less any surrounding jurisdictions, were part of the potential privatization decision-making process. The city pledged at least a billion dollars from the lease proceeds toward improving the blighted North City. n

THE SOLUTION – THE SOLUTION – keep money raised in the airport to improve the airport

City Alderman Cara Spencer, who opposed privatization of the airport but cared about its future, suggested, “Now is the perfect time to have that regional conversation and for us all to be at the table.” County Executive Ehlmann requested discussions begin at East-West Gateway and in the state Capitol. While

the Board of Estimate voted to kill privatization in January 2020, the question remained as to whether the revenue from privatization could be spent outside the airport; whether a purchaser could continue to collect the \$6.5 million in taxes the city received annually from the airport; whether the General Assembly could limit the authority of the city to manage the airport or raise taxes there; whether the FAA could require the consent of the city to any state legislative change in governance; and whether a two-state agency could manage all the airports in the region. When County Executive Ehlmann, as chairman of the East-West Gateway Board, brought the study up at a meeting in late February, Aldermanic President Lewis Reed urged the board to abandon the idea, citing an email from former Mayor Schoemehl to Executives Ehlmann and Page, that had nothing to do with the proposed study, in which he commented on airport governance, writing “the issue is very delicate with the Black aldermen” and counseled “a few private dinners, some orchestrated ego stroking, etc., which President Reed claimed was “backroom politics” with “racial overtones” and showed “a dismissive racially biased approach to working with people of color,” causing the board to table the proposed study. Someone called it “the weakest race card ever played;” it blocked an opportunity for the region to work together before Lewis Reed went to prison for corruption.

THE PROBLEM - air quality regulations

East-west Gateway was ready to approve its Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) that had met the Air-Quality Conformity goals but was informed by the interim director of the EPA that it could not proceed because there was a slight chance that the legislature would over-ride the governor’s veto of a bill that took St. Charles, Franklin and Jefferson counties out of the program.

THE SOLUTION – quit “moving the goal post”

The Gateway staff refigured for conformity, assuming the emission stations were gone, and the TIP still met the standards. Members of the board of directors did not understand why the region still had to have emissions testing stations if the region met the standards, assuming they were not there. The following year, the region was found to satisfy the planning and attainment requirements based on ambient air quality monitoring data from 2019-2021, with all of the monitors in the nonattainment area in compliance with the 2015 ozone standard. The Missouri Attorney General has challenged it in court and Executive Ehlmann and his staff have met with the AG’s office and offered to intervene if needed. The *Post-Dispatch* incorrectly reports “Air quality remains poor” but correctly reports the good news that “new regulations face uncertainty under Trump.”

St. Louis faces tighter ozone rules

Air quality remains poor, but new regulations face uncertainty under Trump

JACOB BARKER
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS COUNTY — After several years of no improvement in St. Louis area's air quality, the region is facing tighter environmental restrictions that could mean more red tape for polluters in order to cut back on smog that is particularly harmful to children, the elderly and outdoor workers.

But the stricter regulations, pushed through in the last days of President Joe Biden's administration, face an uncertain

future under President Donald Trump's Environmental Protection Agency and pushback from Missouri Republicans.

Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey has already sued in federal court to challenge the rules meant to curb harmful ozone pollution in St. Louis, the only region of the state affected by the regulations. His office did not respond to a request for comment.

The tighter rules are already forcing more industrial companies to apply for emission permits from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and motorists in counties surrounding St. Louis aren't likely to see an end to vehicle emission tests any

Please see OZONE, Page A4



A hazy view of the downtown St. Louis skyline is seen Thursday morning, April 24, 2025, as drivers travel Highway 40 (Interstate 64).

CHRISTIAN GOODEN,
POST-DISPATCH

THE PROBLEM – rural socialism in Missouri legislature

When the legislature allowed courts to assess a three-dollar fee as court cost in criminal cases to fund the Sheriff's Retirement System in 1983, at least the revenue stayed in the county where it was collected. The legislature later passed the Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund (DSSSF), assessing litigants an extra \$10 fee across the entire state for service of process by deputy sheriffs. The fee was to augment the salaries paid by individual counties to their deputy sheriffs. A committee composed of ten rural sheriffs appointed by the governor determined which departments got how much. By 2016, the citizens of St. Charles County had contributed over \$8.2 million since 2011 to deputy sheriff salaries around the state, while receiving back only .21% (point two one percent) of that amount for their own deputies. For two consecutive years, St. Charles County received no funds since only deputies making less than a \$35,000 annual salary were eligible. During the same period the legislature refused to give MoDOT an increase in its fuel user fee yet allowed it to do only maintenance, all the rural areas of the state needed. The share the St. Louis Region received continued to drop each year.

THE SOLUTION – do not subsidize rural areas that will not tax themselves

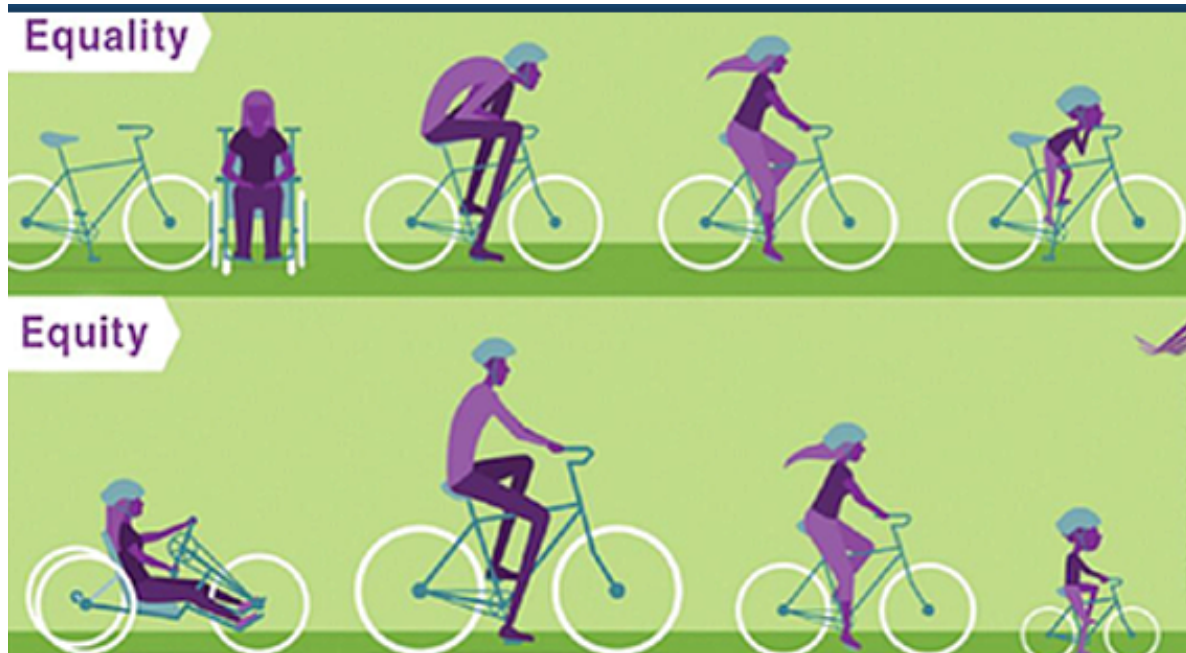
County Executive Ehlmann complained, "We already send a lot more revenue to Jefferson City than ever comes back to the county. We cannot afford the 'Robin Hood' approach of House Bill 2224. We should not reward taxpayers in those rural counties who choose not to tax themselves enough to pay their deputies a decent salary." Ehlmann joined St. Louis County and filed suit in 2008, complaining the state-mandated fee was a tax on local governments in violation of the state constitution, and that money collected in their jurisdictions would

essentially be used mostly to subsidize deputies in other counties. Parts of the suit were dismissed, while the rest was declared not ripe for adjudication since no funds had yet been distributed. The General Assembly has failed to amend the statute, continuing its “Robin Hood” approach to funding salaries for deputy sheriffs in rural counties. Legislators, including Senator Eigel, demagogued the issue calling the user fee on gasoline a “tax.” It is a fee that you pay only if you drive. If you want a cut it, drive less. To make up for the lack of funding by the state for its roads, St. Charles County invested \$191 million in MoDOT’s road system.



THE PROBLEM – use of “equity” to impact groups of citizens on funding

In January 2021, President Biden issued an Executive Order admitting that, “equal opportunity” is the bedrock of American democracy,” but calling for “an ambitious whole-of-government equity agenda...” By proposing the advance of “equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity, it is clear that “equity” had come to mean something more than “equal opportunity.” It called for policies “designed to advance equity for those communities,” rather than equal opportunity for individuals in those communities. Biden’s *Executive Order* shaped documents coming out of East-west Gateway that was required by federal law to develop a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) every four years. The LRTP suggest future funding to “disadvantaged areas” as a form of reparations, stating. “The equity efforts of the USDOT include actions to thoughtfully address historic inequities and positively impact historically underserved or overburdened communities.” The City of St. Louis, with 17 percent of the population, got 29 percent of federal transportation dollars. Below is the drawing used by East-west Gateway to demonstrate the difference between equity and equality.



THE SOLUTION – use “equal opportunity” for individual drivers

The drawing may have some relevance if East-west Gateway’s purpose was to provide vehicles for everyone and decide what type of vehicle each individual should have. But, so far, the federal government has not funded such a program. It does fund the construction and maintenance of the surfaces the vehicles ride on and who is in or on the vehicle should not matter. Steve Ehlmann, with the support of the other Republican member of the East-west Gateway Board, argued transportation funding should have nothing to do with race or the neighborhood the road runs through, and offered an amendment to eliminate “equity” as a factor, but lost on straight party-line votes. In November 2024, Donald Trump was again elected president and the East-West Gateway staff made a presentation on possible changes by the Trump DOT and included a list of words that it had indicated were potential red flags for the new administration. Among them, the word “equity,” that appeared 63 times in the region’s LRPT.

THE PROBLEM – increase in personal property taxes

2022 was a year of rising costs on just about everything, including the vehicles you drive. That resulted in a much higher personal property tax bill the next year. While the County receives no personal or real property tax revenue for its General Fund, all of which go to cover only the county government’s expenses, the county does

levy a tax for the County's Road & Bridge fund, half of what it collects goes to maintain county roads and the other half goes to the cities for the same purpose. There is also a Dispatch & Alarm tax that provides 911 service for calls to county police, but also every other first responder department in the county.

THE SOLUTION – voluntary rollback of county rates

Rather than accept a windfall of over \$800,000, the County elected to voluntarily roll back its tax rates to offset this windfall for the last three years. The new rate has allowed County government to collect the same amount for those three years. County Executive Ehlmann wrote a letter asking other jurisdictions to do the same but only the City of O'Fallon did, rejecting half the windfall.



THE PROBLEM – school shootings

Shootings in schools around the country have been a problem for the last two decades. Many police had not been properly trained and schools were not prepared.

THE SOLUTION – coordination of resources

The County Police department has coordinated MACTAC training for all law enforcement agencies in the county. After the Sandy Hook school shooting tragedy, Executive Ehlmann formed a Schools, Mental Health and Law Enforcement Task Force to improve school safety in 2012. It discovered all three groups had studied the problem but never discussed their strategies with each other. One result was providing each principal's office with direct radio contact with the

closest police car. After the shooting in the grade school in Texas, the county took some of its ARPPA money from the federal government to pay for SROs in the elementary schools in the unincorporated areas of the county. The county planned to use the Marijuana Tax receipts to fund SROs until court held that, while every other tax the county has been authorized by statute to assess was considered a county-wide tax, The language the Marijuana industry put in the Missouri Constitution allowed it to tax only in the unincorporated areas of the county. Sellers will receive the tax not claimed by buyers and the county is asking them to donate their windfall, or a part of it, to the school for SROs.

Court: Counties can't add a tax to pot sales

At issue is a concept called 'tax stacking'

KURT ERICKSON
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that St. Louis

County and St. Charles County cannot add their own tax on the sale of marijuana on top of local municipal sales taxes.

In a 6-1 decision, the high court reversed a lower court's 2024 ruling allowing both Florissant and St. Louis County to both impose a 3% sales tax on marijuana products.

"The counties' ordinances are valid to

the extent they impose a 3 percent sales tax on non-medical marijuana sold in unincorporated areas, but they cannot be enforced within incorporated cities, towns, and villages," Judge Mary Russell wrote for the majority.

Please see POT, Page A5



THE PROBLEM – closing businesses due to COVID

On March 13, 2020, Governor Michael Parson declared a State of Emergency due to COVID. Instead of considering legislation to deal with the emergency, legislators took almost a month off due to concerns over their possible contact with the virus. Governor Parson issued an executive order on March 21st banning gatherings of more than ten people. With no action by the legislature directing its policies and no emergency rule changes by the department, Health and Human Services (DHHS) continued to offer Departments of Public Health (DOPHs) “guidance,” which were unenforceable, on how to interpret its rules. Regional leaders formed a Pandemic Task Force to consult with each other but each DOPH made its own decision on how to proceed. DOPHs in St. Louis city and county decided exactly what businesses were “essential” and allowed them to stay open, while requiring those the county declared “nonessential” to close, prompting small business owners to object that determinations favored those larger businesses able to exert political influence.

THE SOLUTION – individuals free to choose

On the other hand, the St. Charles County DOPH, at the direction of Executive Ehlmann, ordered its citizens to patronize only businesses they, not county government, believed to be “essential,” thus leaving the decision to customers and also to “the conscience of the businessmen themselves,” an approach the city had adopted during the Spanish Flu Epidemic in 1918. Mandatory business closings caused St. Louis County’s sales tax collections to decline by nine percent that year, while St. Charles County’s collections increased by five percent.



THE PROBLEM – COVID mask mandates and quarantines

Likewise, when COVID cases spiked in July 2020, St. Louis city and county officials issued mask mandates, while the Missouri collar counties, knowing they did not have the man-power to enforce, did not. Selling the public on masks would have been very difficult after partisans began using the public health crisis to promote a political agenda. In June, with Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests proliferating in the region after the death of George Floyd, an SSM doctor explained on KMOX radio that protests were so important participants should not worry about wearing masks. The failure of the Pandemic Task Force to disagree and take a strong stance against such a sentiment destroyed any chance of convincing some of the people in those Republican-leaning counties to wear a mask. When COVID cases were reported to the DOPH, state law required them to order the individual to quarantine, but again, the county had no way to enforce its order. While the teachers' unions convinced school boards to close the school buildings but still pay them to teach on the internet, St. Charles County school boards gave the parents a choice of whether to send their children to school, that now did have the authority to enforce quarantines required by regulations passed by state law. Parents came to protest to the County Council, which had no jurisdiction over the matter and the legislature did nothing to amend the statutes.

No relief was unavailable until a circuit judge declared one of the applicable laws unconstitutional.

THE SOLUTION – keep our meetings open and refuse to mandate masks

While the spike in cases in November 2021 caused Jefferson and Franklin counties to finally impose temporary mask mandates, St. Charles County never did, polling showed only a three percent difference in percentage of people wearing a mask. During the COVID pandemic, the St. Charles County Council was the only body in the region that continued to have open meetings and allow citizens to speak during a comment period, even though they needed to be talking to their legislators. The St. Charles County death rate was the lowest in the region. Unlike in the city and county of St. Louis, police departments in the county controlled the Black Lives Matter protests effectively.

Education Rather than Coercion

The collage features several educational materials:

- work together. help save lives.** A poster with three icons: social distance (Stay at least 6 feet from others...), wash hands (Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds...), and wear a mask (Wear a cloth face covering in public spaces when social distancing is not possible...).
- Take care in the new year.** A purple graphic with the year '2021' and the text 'Extraordinary times. Extraordinary people. ST. CHARLES COUNTY.'
- MASK UP ST. CHARLES COUNTY pick-up** A sign for a mask pick-up event on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2020, from 12-7 p.m. at St. Charles Community College, 4601 Mid Rivers Mall Dr., Cottleville, MO 63376. It states 'Each person will receive 10 free disposable masks.'
- HEALTH ADVISORY** A red banner with the text 'Put on a mask. Distance from others. Limit your contacts.' and the St. Charles County logo.
- Extraordinary times call for extraordinary people.** A speech by Steve Ehlman, St. Charles County Executive, dated 10/15/2020. The text discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the county's response.
- Anne RN** A video frame showing a healthcare worker in a mask and scrubs, with text: 'Anne RN, ICU Step-Down Unit, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles'.

Community Education Samples

COVID Deaths: March 2020 – April 2022

	St. Charles County	St. Louis County	St. Louis City	Missouri
COVID-19 Deaths	924 (228 per 100k)	3,325 (333 per 100k)	750 (249 per 100k)	20,199 (328 per 100k)



Letter to the Editor in P_D

Stop laughing, he is serious.
 I guess the folks in St. Louis and St. Louis County couldn't be wooed so easily because they have a mask mandate. I can hear the conversation now: Honey load up the kids, we are going to St. Charles County for a mask-free shopping and dining experience. And be sure to give the kids some cough drops before we go because they have been making a bit of noise.

Ehlmann is emulating his buddies, President Donald Trump and Gov. Mike Parson. This is definitely political. **Ehlmann** is putting the pressure on local businesses. They have to be the bad guys and enforce mask requirements with no help from local government. But **Ehlmann** apparently doesn't want to take away anyone's personal freedom. Apparently, he doesn't share the same deep concern with our lives. The rest of us should wear our masks.
Robert Black • St. Peters

THE PROBLEM natural disasters

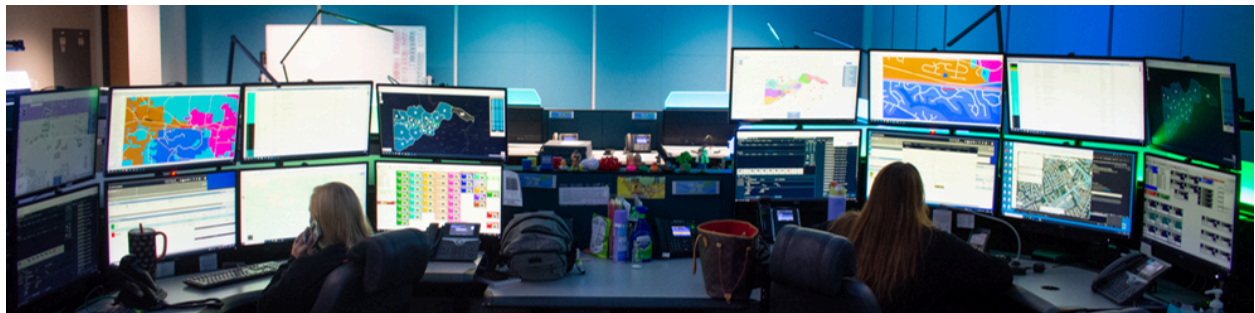
On the first weekend Steve Ehlmann was county executive there was a major ice storm, and there would be more. Its location at the confluence of two major rivers, meant St. Charles County had double the chance of major river flooding, while the region is in "tornado alley." All such events required prompt emergency response, clean-up and rebuilding, while personal emergencies had to be dealt with on a daily basis by the county's 911 operation.



THE SOLUTION – professional management of emergencies and better facilities

County government put Emergency Management under the sheriff, and later the police, departments to ensure professionalism. It used the design-build model to

build an Emergency Operations Center next to the Police Department headquarters in O’Fallon to house it with the latest technology.



THE PROBLEM – auto theft

During COVID the number of car thefts skyrocketed, as more thieves came to the county from other jurisdictions.

THE SOLUTION - Multi-jurisdictional Car Theft Task Force

The chief of the County Police Department joined with other police chiefs in the county to create the St. Charles County Multi-jurisdictional Car Theft Task Force. They have decreased the number of thefts for five straight years. Up to 70 percent of those arrested have been from outside tSt. Charles County.



VEHICLE CRIME — Going down for five years straight

VEHICLE THEFTS			ITEMS STOLEN FROM VEHICLES		
Year	Number of crimes	Change from prior year (%)	Year	Number of crimes	Change from prior year (%)
2021	537	▼ 15%	2021	677	▼ 21%
2022	399	▼ 26%	2022	557	▼ 18%
2023	397	▼ 0.5%	2023	429	▼ 23%
2024	305	▼ 24%	2024	249	▼ 43%
2025	248	▼ 19%	2025	188	▼ 24%

THE PROBLEM – proposed Metrolink expansion

While Metro had reduced bus service in March 2022, November 2022 and June 2023, in 2024, it asked the East-West Gateway Board of Directors to approve a proposed north-south route for Metrolink expansion in the city along Jefferson Avenue before heading west on Natural Bridge. It cited the “diverse” economic

development that had led to changing commuter patterns, forcing alteration of the previously proposed route.

THE SOLUTION – buses whose routes can be changed as people move

David Stokes of the Show-Me Institute pointed out such changes in development makes buses better since their routes can be adjusted. He further explained that Metro insists on expanding a light-rail model designed to serve not only a pre-pandemic St. Louis but a pre-World War II St. Louis. For just a fraction of the local cost of expanding Metrolink, the region could restore cuts from its bus system and construct several BRT lines in its long-range transportation plan. St. Charles County Executive Ehlmann made a motion to table the proposal with a suggestion that Metro start running buses on the same route and see how many rode them, the motion failed on a vote of eight to eleven and the proposed route was approved. While the city has sent Bi-state \$10 million in 2024 to move the project forward. Cara Spencer was elected mayor in April 2025 she asked for proof that federal funding would be there before spending any more local transit funding on the project.

PROBLEM – MoDOT's continued lack of funding

The curve under the railroad bridge on -70 in Wentzville was the 35th worst traffic bottleneck in the nation; the Foristel interchange was inadequate and in need of replacement; and Highway N needed to be widened and improved to serve the many new homes built or to be built in the corridor.

THE SOLUTION – continued assistance and, finally, additional state funding

The County lent a million dollars to MoDOT to do the engineering on the I-70/I-64 interchange and Executive Ehlmann made sure the new railroad bridge was included on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) at East-west Gateway. However, construction was delayed by COVID and funding shortages. The legislature passed funding for bridges but our delegation was not able to get funding for any in St. Charles County. It passed an increase in the fuel user fee, but allowed motorists who applied for it a rebate on any increase in costs, for which Senator Eigel voted no, calling it a tax rather than a user fee that it was. Before it adjourned, the legislature approved \$2.8 billion to widen I-70 to three lanes across the state. The railroad finally signed off on the project to build a new railroad bridge in Wentzville in July 2023, the same month the MHTC met there to appoint a chief engineer for the projects and to announce they had decided to put eastern Missouri second in line for construction. Wanting to not inconvenience motorist twice, the curve and third lane were to be built at the same time, along with a third

lane on I-64 as it approached a new interchange with I-70. The design-build team and plan were approved by the MHTC, that awarded the most expensive projects in the history of the state in November 2024 and construction began in March 2025. The third lane on I-64 out to the I-70 juncture opened in December, 2025. The county also paid for engineering and environmental work of Highway N and Ehlmann was able to qualify it as a Great Streets Project at EW Gateway, and is working to get it on the TIP this year.

New Interchange at Foristell





THE

PROBLEM – crime in the city of St. Louis affecting the entire region

Given the polarization on criminal law enforcement, many wondered how consensus could ever be reached by the East-west Gateway Board on best methods for crime prevention. To bring participants representing the diversity of opinion in the region at EWGCG, including the Progressive Democrats and MAGA Republicans, both a carrot and stick approach were necessary. The prevention measure required social workers to meet with “potential shooters” to try to convince them there is no future in their violent behavior, with accompanying law enforcement providing the threat of the stick. Thomas Abt has written, “Choosing one approach over the other runs counter to the research and risks, fracturing the coalitions that are vital to sustainably stopping violence.” While 137 of the respondents to a survey cited “Enforcement” as the greatest need in violence prevention “Prevention and Social Services,” was cited by only 99. Such disparate numbers suggested that those favoring the latter were definitely over-represented. Abt had admitted that prevention might work for teens but not people in their late twenties and thirties. The Plan to Plan recommended one group on the governing board include senior law enforcement officials and prosecutors; a second group consisting of government, nonprofit, business, and public health executives; and a third group of representatives from impacted communities and leaders of community and faith-based organizations. It was obviously intended that law enforcement be outvoted two to one. The composition of this board would determine the agenda going forward and ultimately the final outcome and

recommendations. The authors of the plan suggested Mayor Jones and County Executive Page chair the regional board.

THE SOLUTION – equal emphasis on police and social workers

County Executive Ehlmann offered an amendment requiring law enforcement officers to constitute half the members to guarantee traditional law enforcement techniques and strategies get one-half the attention and that one co-chair represent each of the two competing philosophies on how to address crime. He offered another amendment that would have prohibited the collaborative from hiring a social worker until the city had hired ten police officers. When Megan Green, President of the Board of Aldermen, asked Ehlmann if he believed law enforcement officers were ten times more important than police officers, he said, “No, we just need ten times as many.” To get her support, he withdrew his amendment and offered a substitute that required only one police officer be hired for each social worker. She still voted no and the amendment failed, as the previous one had. He also wrote the following:

Regional crime plan won't succeed without more police

STEVE EHLMANN

When St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones suggested at an East-west Gateway Council of Governments (EW-GCOG) board meeting almost a year ago that we have a regional discussion on crime, I was supportive but skeptical.

Given the polarization on criminal law enforcement today, how could we ever reach any meaningful agreement among the region's leaders? Most of our decisions at the board involve transportation — like a route for Metrolink expansion that was approved last month after a vigorous debate — rather than the kind of “Plan to Plan” on violence reduction that has been under discussion.

Despite my skepticism, I was encouraged when the EWGCOG staff suggested Thomas Abt lead the discussion. I had read his book “Bleeding Out” and he seemed like a reasonable fellow — in print, at least.

His book spelled out how there are two main ways to fight crime: punishment and prevention.

“Punishment-oriented approaches appeal to those who trust authority and demand accountability for criminal acts,” he wrote. “Prevention-oriented ones appeal to those who are suspicious of authority and believe criminality is created by root causes. To bring a whole community together, both ap-

proaches are necessary.”

The prevention measure Abt proposes requires social workers meet with “potential shooters,” to try to convince them there is no future in violent behavior: “During these meetings, law enforcement officials provide the accountability component of the message,” by telling the attendee if the violence does not stop, law enforcement will “come down” on them.

Referring to this carrot-and-stick approach, Abt has written, “Choosing one approach over the other runs counter to the research and risks, fracturing the coalitions that are vital to sustainably stopping violence.”

When Abt spoke at our first meeting, he was specifically asked which of the two was more important and he quickly answered, “They are equally important.”

Later, I spoke with him during a break and asked, if we adopted what he was recommending, “How many people would the city have to hire, and how many of them would be police officers and how many social workers?” He did not say we would not have to hire, or even discuss hiring, more police officers, but explained he would need to know more about St. Louis before he could answer that question.

In preparation for a Practicum last December, 137 of the respondents to an EWGCOG



DAVID CARSON, POST-DISPATCH

Police gather evidence at the scene where two people were shot in the 5600 block of Wells Avenue in St. Louis on Nov. 28.

survey cited “Enforcement” as the greatest need for violence prevention, and only 99 cited “Prevention and Social Services.” Based on those numbers, those favoring the latter were over-represented at the Practicum.

Abt has admitted prevention might work for teens, but not people in their late 20s and 30s. More importantly, Abt has written the prevention approach “will do nothing to reduce the violence being perpetrated by young men and adults currently caught up in the cycle of deadly aggression. Enforcement-oriented strategies are necessary to

address the crime and violence that is happening right now or has just happened.”

“Many of the most effective anti-violence strategies described in this book depend heavily on the active involvement of the police,” Abt has written.

If St. Louis’ police force is so understaffed and overworked they are unable to station an officer in front of the Shell Station on Tucker Boulevard, as the Post-Dispatch has suggested, to “address the crime and violence that is happening right now,” are they going to have time to attend meetings with “potential shooters” in the future?

The final draft the “Plan to Plan” that we will be soon be asked to approve makes no mention of hiring any new police officers.

Many who applauded the mayor when she supported substantial raises for police don’t want to see “defund the police” replaced by “distract the police.”

The Plan to Plan recommends one group on the governing board include senior law enforcement officials and prosecutors. A second group would consist of government, nonprofit, business, and public health executives. A third group would consist of representatives from impacted communities and leaders of community- and faith-based organizations.

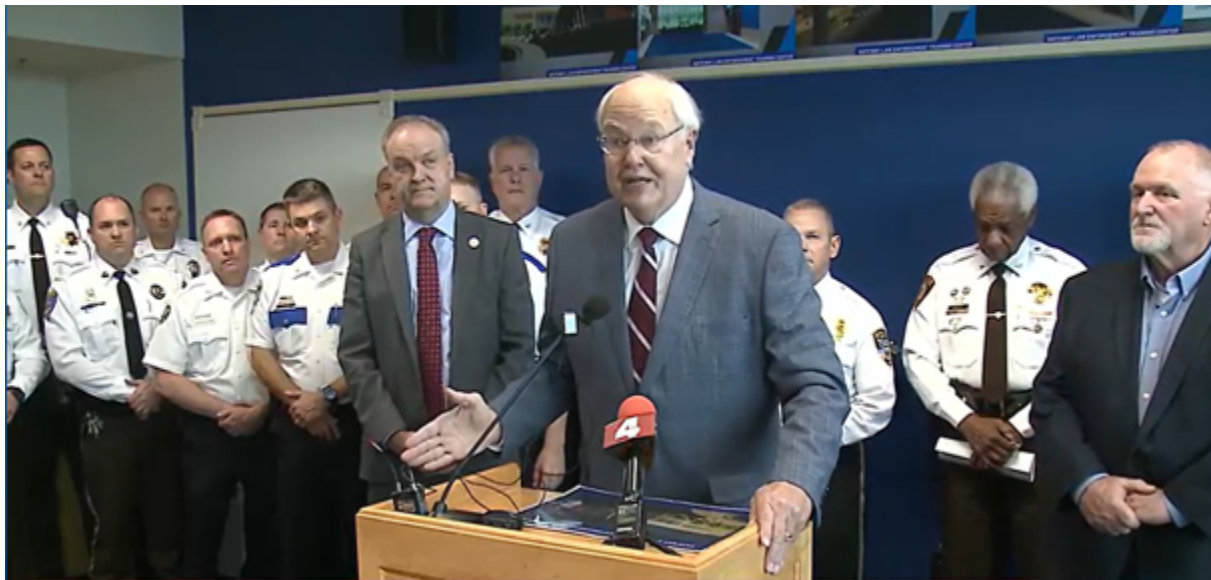
The document then instructs: “Board membership should be spread roughly evenly across these three groups,” and identifies organization that would provide members to meet the quotas.

Because the composition of this board will determine the agenda going forward and ultimately the recommendations, with law enforcement officials in the minority, traditional law enforcement will likely continue to be ignored. Law enforcement should make up half the members of the governing board.

Ehlmann is the St. Charles County executive.

THE PROBLEM – lack of police training in the region

In 2021-22, Bob Brinkmann asked Ehlmann if the county would like to participate in an effort with the city and county of St. Louis. Ehlmann explained the county had no funds to contribute at that time. In 2023, the mayor of O’Fallon, Missouri announced at a luncheon with mayors and administrators that his city intended to build a training center in the floodplain along Highway 79. At that time, no other entity in the county was asked to participate and the city was able to persuade the legislature, during the 2023 session, to appropriate \$7 million for the project. However, after Governor Parson vetoed that line item and heard nothing from O’Fallon officials about returning the next year to Jefferson City, when Ehlmann received a call from the County Executive Sam Page asking if St. Charles County would like to work on a regional facility, Ehlmann asked if it was the facility Brinkmann had talked to him about a few years earlier..



THE SOLUTION – state-funded Regional Training Center by county appointees

Told that it was, Ehlmann recruited the Jefferson and Franklin County executives and the four began working to fund and build the facility Bob Brinkmann had proposed but been dropped due to a lack of agreement about training curriculum. The County executives were able to get a \$50 million appropriation that the governor signed. When the 2024-2025 budget line for O’Fallon was vetoed again, Governor Parson cited the effort by the counties and the fact that the two Senators from St. Charles County, including Senator Eigel, had not even voted for the budget bill that contained the money for O’Fallon. The executives believed the facility should be run by the police chiefs and sheriffs of the four counties and be paid for, not by municipal taxpayers, but by the state. The Missouri Department of Public Safety awarded the \$50 million for a Gateway Regional Training Facility in

April, 2025 to Jefferson, Franklin, St. Charles and St. Louis counties. The board to run the facility had its first meeting in October 2025 and wants to bring the city police department into the agreement.



THE PROBLEM – outdated and overcrowded jail

The St. Charles County Jail is almost forty years old and, even if built a few years later, would have been constructed differently. We now have more hardened criminals and more inmates have an addiction or other mental health issue. Our capital sales tax was due to run out, and the legislature owed us money and what they gave us did not come close to the cost of housing defendants waiting for trial in the state court.

THE SOLUTION – no new taxes but opioid settlement, ARPA, and renewal of existing tax

When the county received ARPA funds from the federal government a large share of them went to jail renovation and expansion. The taxpayer reauthorized the capital sales tax two years ago and it is available to fund improvements. The county filed a lawsuit against the drug companies and will receive 18 million a year from the Opioid settlement that will fund a drug treatment unit in the jail, that will have a maximum capacity of 573 beds.

State Owes Missouri Counties Over \$35 Million for Holding, Transporting State Prisoners



The average cost to house a prisoner in a state facility in fiscal year 2019 was \$71.14 per day... Missouri is only reimbursing counties at a rate of \$22.58 per day..."

Arrearages reported include:

St. Louis Co.	\$3,958,451
St. Louis City	\$3,563,697
St. Charles Co.	\$994,543
Jefferson Co.	\$639,772
Franklin Co.	\$428,362



THE PROBLEM - county government needs more room for judges and strays

Every time the legislature gives our Circuit Court another judge it has cost county taxpayers over a quarter of a million dollars to build out a courtroom. After we build out the two we are now planning there will be no more room for additional courtrooms. Likewise, we need more room in our pet adoption center, but the property it is located on is too small for an addition.

THE SOLUTION – renovation of city hall and new Pet Adoption Center

The City of St. Charles has deeded its City Hall to the county in return for additional funding for the Main Street extension and relief from conditions associated with its Road Board contract funding streets in additions to the Streets of St. Charles. The county plans to move most offices, including Prosecuting Attorneys who take up the entire sixth floor to a renovated city hall building. The alternative would have been to extend the courthouse to the north at a far greater expense. The county is also planning to build an additional Pet Adoption Center on vacant land it owns next to the National Equestrian Center in Lake Saint Louis.

St. Charles Co. to take over St. Charles City Hall

BY JIM HAMILTON FOR THE ST. CHARLES PRESS

Ehlmann clarified on Wednesday the county is not giving the city any additional money. Instead, it is releasing money already approved by the county and expediting when it is available to the city.

"It is going to be a plus for the city, for the county, and for taxpayers elsewhere," **Ehlmann** said.

Meanwhile, county leaders say St. Charles County needs the current city hall at 200 N. Main Street because the courthouse is "bursting at the seams."



Pet Adoption Center

- Celebrating 20th anniversary in fall 2019.



THE PROBLEM – meeting the goal for park land

When County Executive Ehlmann first took office, he set a goal of building a County Park System to equal that in St. Louis County. He asked his park director how many more acres we needed to have the same ratio of acres to people as St. Louis County. She gave him a number which we passed several years ago, but because we have continued to grow, we are still a little short of the goal of a same ratio..

THE SOLUTION – buy and accept donations of additional land

The county has developed the following parks over the last 19 years that Steeve Ehlmann has been executive.



Townes Park playground



Heritage Museum



Hays House renovation



The Bluffs Park



New Melle Lake Park with Landhouse on the lake



Veterans Memorial Park



Lindenwood Parks included the Boone Home was donated by the University



Park on the Dardenne Slough of the Mississippi River Shooting Range



Center

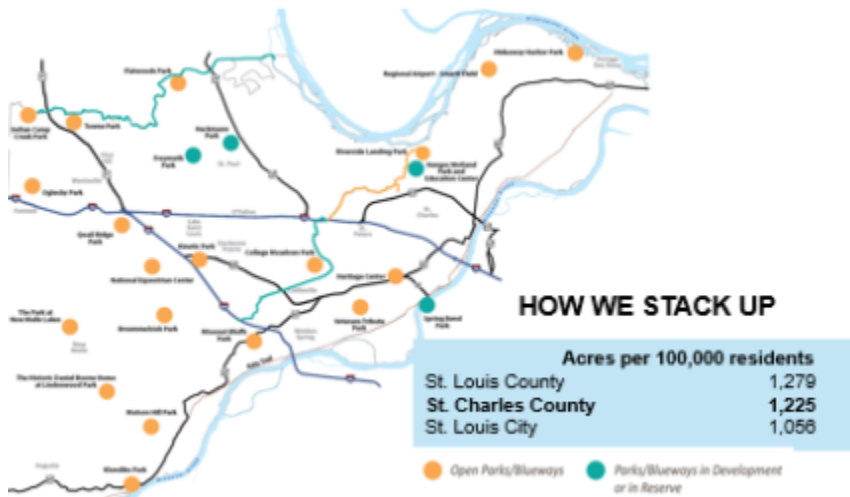
National Equestrian



Kinetic Park



Dardenne Blueway



The county has plans to develop Henges Park and Conservation area with GRHA in the Mississippi Flyway to bring us very close to St. Louis County in park acres per person. It will be used for hunter instruction during season and a park for the rest of the year.

