

EDUCATION IN McDONALD COUNTY

CHAPTER 6

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EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITY 6.1

Education Preface

Reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost. Reading and education are important for society as well as for the individual. Economics research has established that schooling is an investment that forms human capital - that is, knowledge, skill, and problem-solving ability that have enduring value. While a country receives a good return on investment in education at all levels from nursery school and kindergarten through college, the research reveals that the returns are highest from the early years of schooling when children are first learning to read. The early years set the stage for later learning. Without the ability to read, excellence in high school and beyond is unattainable. The National Institute of Education 1984

The McDonald County Planning Commission is charged with preparing a master plan of the county which, among other things, will bring about a coordinated physical development, insure efficient expenditure of public funds and promote the prosperity and general welfare of citizens. This plan many include studies and recommendations relative to the location, character and extent of public buildings, roads and schools.

It should be noted that the authority of the Planning Commission does not extend to the actual operations and management of the county schools. That responsibility belongs to the Board of Education, a representative body elected by the registered voters of the McDonald County. It is the purpose and the role of the Board of Education to exercise general supervision over the schools of the district, and to ensure that the schools are maintained as provided by the state statutes, the rules and procedures of the Missouri State Board of Education and/or the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the policies, rules and procedures of the school district. The Board of Education is accountable to the electorate, and responsive to the educational needs and the imposed financial constraints of the district.

Missouri Constitution Article IX

EDUCATION Section 1(a)

A general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, the general assembly shall establish and maintain free public schools for the gratuitous instruction of all persons in this state within ages not in excess of twenty-one years as prescribed by law.

Recognizing the importance of education to the well-being and economic prosperity of the citizens of McDonald County, this chapter is devoted to the knowledge and support of education, schools and students in McDonald County. Every effort will be made to coordinate the physical development of McDonald County with school district's needs and provide support for school programs and facilities, so that educational enrichment can be properly integrated with land use decisions. Transportation and land use guidelines should consider the school district's planning for facilities, bus route locations, etc. and to encourage the school district to acquire sites to meet future school needs

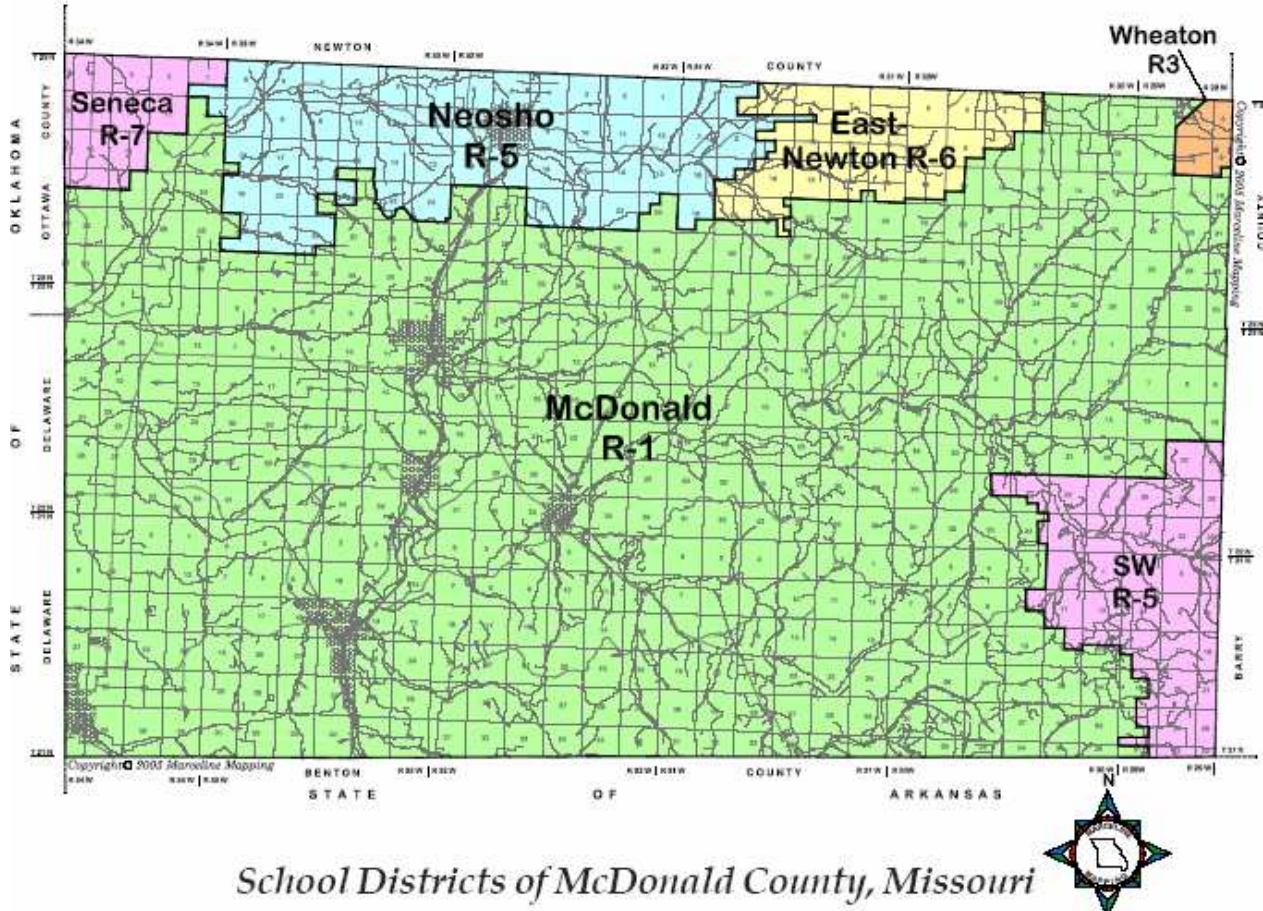
The goal of this chapter of the McDonald County Comprehensive Plan is to enhance educational opportunities and encourage academic achievement for the citizens of McDonald County.

PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE IN SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION 6.2

In accordance with state statute RSMo64.820, the Planning Commission requests that the McDonald County school districts' Boards of Education seek County Commissioners' recommendations when choosing the location for new schools in McDonald County. The Planning Commission takes a broad view of the effect that location has on the community.

The school districts serving McDonald County are: McDonald County R-1; Neosho R-5; East Newton R-6; Seneca R-7; SW Barry County R-5; Wheaton R-3

In planning for new school construction, roads serving such schools should be sited to be compatible with existing county roads and consideration should be given to the costs of new roads or improvements required for a proposed location. Recommendations and information should be readily available from the County Commission and may be viewed by the schools.



EARLY HISTORY OF SCHOOLS IN McDONALD COUNTY 6.3

In 1849 present day McDonald County was taken out of Newton County and established as an individual county. The county seat was established at Pineville in 1857. Because of the hills and hollows that make up much of the county, the population was slow to grow and no major



1926 Moss School

towns developed. This led to the establishment of many small communities and many small schools that served these communities.

In 1924 there were 51 one-room school schoolhouses in the county, thirteen two-room schoolhouses and six four-year high schools. The four-year high schools were located in the towns of Noel, Goodman, Pineville, Anderson, Southwest City and Rocky Comfort. The seventy plus schools in the county at that time offered many different levels and different kinds of education. One

of the schools only offered classes for a five-month period of time. The state did not consider this to be good for the students or the schools. This, along with other factors, led the county citizens to make a major change in the educational system in McDonald County.

The smaller rural school districts of McDonald County began consolidating in the 1930's. In 1964 each of the six high schools sent one board member to establish a committee, along with a representative from the State Department of Education, to discuss the reorganization of the county's school system. The idea of a single countywide high school met with resistance because each town was afraid of losing its own identity and its own sports program.



Southwest City High School

The first two school districts to consolidate were Pineville and Anderson, while the Goodman school district became part of the Neosho school system. Once Noel's school district asked to be included in the reorganized district the patrons of Anderson and Pineville were also allowed to vote to include Noel. Southwest City's

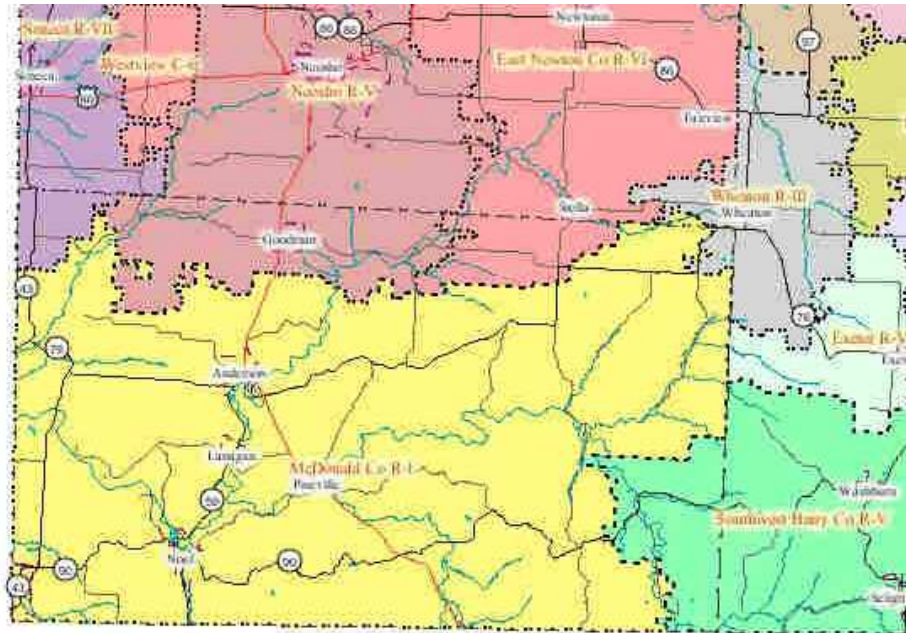
high school, with a population of 89 students, was located only miles from the Arkansas and Oklahoma border and had no choice but to join the newly consolidated McDonald County high school. Rocky Comfort, with a population of 107 students was much closer to the Wheaton

school in Barry County, but chose to join the McDonald County School District because of a long-standing resentment over basketball games.

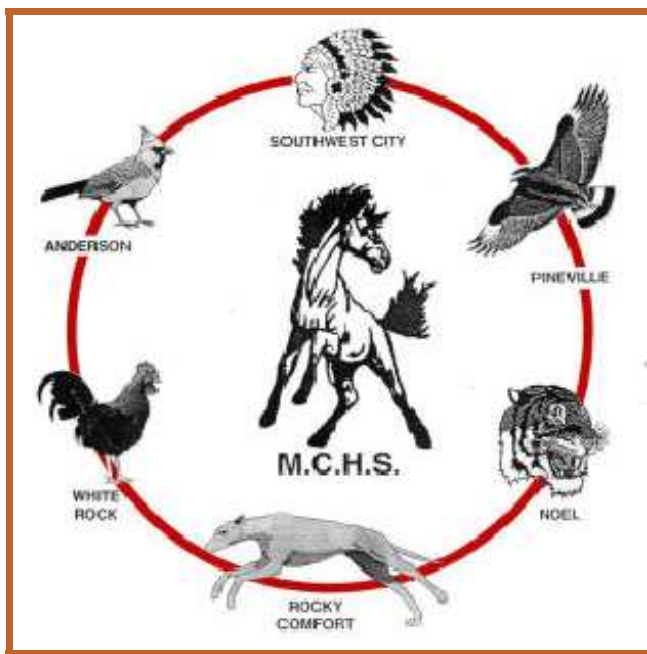
In summary, the consolidation of the schools of McDonald County came about to give many students a chance to receive instruction in classes that would not possible in smaller schools spread throughout the county.

McDONALD COUNTY R-1 SCHOOL DISTRICT 6.4

School districts in Missouri do not follow county lines. In order to provide the most efficient access to education, boundaries of school districts are established for the benefit of student transport and opportunity. It should also be noted that within public school districts are private schools, home schooled students and Christian schools which are not under the supervision of the Boards of Education.



As can be seen from the map to the right, there are a number of school districts represented in McDonald County. However, the majority of McDonald County's public school students attend classes in the McDonald County R-1 School District.



Like the population of McDonald County, the number of students enrolled in the R-1 School District has been rapidly increasing, from 2,374 in 1990 to 3,743 in 2006. A consultant hired by the school district in 2006 estimated the district would hit 5,000 students in five years and hit 10,000 student by 2020. Enrollment for the fall of 2007 indicated strong growth with approximately 100 new students, but not the explosive growth pattern predicted by that consultant.

Superintendent of Schools for R-1, Randall Smith, reported in an interview with the Joplin Globe on 12/22/06, McDonald County — which is considered part of the Springdale-Rogers-Fayetteville metro area — Smith is experiencing the growth firsthand. In 1982,

when he began teaching in the district, it had 2,442 students and 147 certified staff with an

SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION (*Comprehensive School Improvement Plan*)

The mission of the McDonald County R-I School District is: To offer an inclusive background of learning experiences. To instill a lifelong curiosity and interest in learning. To promote personal academic excellence. To promote an understanding, appreciation and respect for the diversity of all cultures. To develop and practice positive, social, physical and mental health skills. To provide the skills and requirements necessary for a productive future in an ever changing global society.

The district has a Board-approved Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) guided by the mission statement and based on the district's fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning. This plan serves as the district's foundation for allocating resources, developing policies and procedures, and selecting and implementing instructional programs designed to raise student achievement.

The CSIP was developed through the combined efforts of Board members, staff, administrators, students, parents/guardians and community members and is ongoing. Goals, outcomes or objectives are provided in sufficient detail to direct the improvement efforts of the district for at least a five-year period. The CSIP is evaluated and updated as necessary.

assessed valuation of \$15.7 million. Today, it has more than 3,700 students, nearly 300 certified staff and an assessed valuation approaching \$171 million.

But it's where it's going that has everyone hopping. A consultant hired last year estimated the district would hit 5,000 students in five years and that a student entering the elementary school this year would see the district hit 10,000 students before graduation.

"The problems that poses for a district are many", said Smith, "not the least of which is finding staff." But, sitting closest to the bull's-eye of growth — studies show Northwest Arkansas adding 1,100 residents a month — Smith has learned a few lessons. The notion that

districts should approach construction piece-meal doesn't work, he said. "I don't think you can have that philosophy anymore. People want that long-range plan." **Cost is less an issue than putting together a comprehensive plan**, he said.

"Your patrons want your kids to have a good education and good facilities." The district passed a \$15 million bond issue last April to pay for all that construction now getting under way. There's one other lesson Smith would offer to area schools looking at growth: Buy land when it is available. The assessed valuation that has risen more than 10-fold in his district is a reflection of the competition for land, and means that prices are climbing.

http://www.joplinglobe.com/archivesearch/local_story_356230647.html

MCDONALD CO. R-I			Enrollment (2006)		
	Schools	Certificated Staff	Residents	Non-residents	Total
Elementary Schools	6	241	2724	0	2724
High Schools	1	69	1019	0	1019
Total	7	310	3743	0	3743

Elementary and middle school students in McDonald County R-1 attend classes in their respective community schools of Anderson, Noel, Pineville, Rocky Comfort, Southwest City and White Rock (Jane). The McDonald County High School is centrally located near Highway 71 in Anderson. Students who live more than one mile from their school are entitled to

transportation by school bus.

Rocky Comfort has a new school financed by a 15 year \$3.5million bond issue passed in 2004 which added 25cents/\$100 assessed value to property tax in the district. In 2006, voters passed a \$15million bond issue which added 35cents/assessed value to the district property tax. This bond issue provided for the following school improvements:

10,000-square-foot expansion at McDonald County High School in Anderson. That project, valued at about \$1 million, was completed in August of 2007. It is now being used for vocational agriculture programs.

New 45,000-square-foot middle school to be built in Anderson. That \$5 million project was completed several months ahead of schedule to open in November, 2007.

A 20,000-square-foot elementary building in Pineville to house pre-kindergarten through second-grade pupils. The completion date for the project, with an estimated value of \$2.75 million, is February 2008.

A 5,000-square-foot expansion at White Rock Elementary School near Jane has been completed. The district added four classrooms and four restrooms at the school.

A 25,000-square-foot addition at Noel Elementary School for pre-kindergarten through second-grade classes set for completion in August 2008.

Security and other work at the elementary school in Southwest City, including 4,000 additional square feet, completed in December, 2007. A secured entrance is completed. Two full classrooms and four multiuse classrooms will be added.

The McDonald County R-1 School District's general-fund levy is \$2.75. The owner of a \$70,000 home who was paying \$399 a year in school property taxes will see that bill rise by \$55.86, to \$454.86 as a result of the most recent 2006 bond issue.

Dramatic changes are taking place in the assessed property values in McDonald County. The greatest of these is the personal property tax placed on the Wal-Mart data processing center which will add in excess of \$3 million in tax each year for schools. Expanding retail and commercial development is taking place throughout the county, but is most apparent near the 71 Expressway at the state line in Caverna. Retail tax does not support schools, but the real and personal property taxes on those businesses are dedicated to schools. With this strong growth in assessed values, it is possible that future school expansions may not need additional increases in property tax.

The challenges faced by education are many as the federal No Child Left Behind Act becomes increasingly more stringent with each passing year. Many educators consider it to be impossible to meet with an unrealistic goal of 100 percent student proficiency in math and reading by 2014 and some difficult sanctions for public school districts failing to meet year-by-year improvement goals.

In McDonald County, the Hispanic population has increased from less than 1% in 1995 to over 10% in 2007, bringing many English Language Learners into the McDonald County R1 School District. Noel School, where the Hispanic population exceeds 60%, was placed on Missouri's School Improvement Program in 2002 for failing to make "adequate yearly progress" on the MAP Test which measures yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Program.

Finance Report, 2002-2006 MCDONALD CO. R-1

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Fall Enrollment	3,346	3,471	3,554	3,640	3,743
Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	3,266.35	3,391.03	3,509.51	3,575.38	3,663.35
Rate of Attendance (%)	92.40	93.30	93.60	93.50	93.50
Total Expenditures	\$18,142,480	\$21,181,150	\$24,537,248	\$29,336,470	\$30,226,930
Total Current Exp.	\$15,598,293	\$18,373,068	\$19,968,327	\$23,223,388	\$23,517,932
Current Exp per ADA	\$4,775.45	\$5,418.14	\$5,689.78	\$6,495.36	\$6,419.79
Percent of Revenue in Operating Funds Note: Local includes Local, County and Prop C Money					
Local (%)	33.94	33.20	32.68	33.25	35.90
State (%)	54.31	53.94	51.52	50.50	48.36
Federal (%)	11.74	12.86	15.80	16.25	15.74
Assessed Valuation	\$115,150,367	\$118,120,245	\$128,401,635	\$148,219,956	\$158,642,429
Tax Rates					
Tax Rate Ceiling					
Operating Funds	\$2.8448	\$2.8500	\$2.7989	\$2.8335	\$2.7500
Adjusted Tax Rate					
Incidental	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.75	\$2.7500	\$2.7500
Teachers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
Debt Service	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.25	\$0.2500	\$0.2500
Capital Projects	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
Source: Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Core Data as submitted by Missouri Public Schools Data as of December 6, 2006 (in 2007 add \$0.3500 in the debt service column)					
http://dese.mo.gov/schooldata/four/060077/finanone.html					

Noel School, for example, with hard work by students and faculty that school was taken off the 'school improvement' program in 2007 after two years of meeting "adequate yearly progress" on MAP scores.

The McDonald County R-1 School District hosts a comprehensive website to provide information for interested parties. <http://www.mcdonaldco.k12.mo.us/> The District's comprehensive school improvement plan is among the documents at that website. Complete district data is readily available from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education online at their website: <http://dese.mo.gov/planning/profile/rc060077.html>

The Planning Commission gratefully acknowledges the McDonald County Press for the excellent coverage of the activities and accomplishments of the students in McDonald County Schools, contributing to the esteem of the young people and the success of future programs.

McDonald County R-1 School District Sues the State of Missouri

The McDonald County school districts is a current member of the Committee for Educational Equality, a group that is suing the state for what the school districts contend is inequitable funding. The McDonald County district has spent \$22,203 over the past four years to support this law suit. Superintendent Randy Smith explains: "When some school districts can spend \$10,000 more than we can, there are inadequacies there," he said. "It's hard to explain to our mothers that their children are not as valuable as children in those other districts." To pay for the suit an assessment to the school districts of \$1 is multiplied by its average daily attendance.

After the school districts filed suit in January 2004 challenging Missouri's school-funding method, the Legislature passed a revised funding method during its 2005 session to address the funding disparity between Missouri's richest and poorest public schools. The new formula considers the expenditures per average daily attendance of the 100 districts meeting all state standards. From those figures, an average of \$6,117 per student was reached. "We found what successful schools were spending, so the goal was to get every school to that number," Governor Blunt said. "This addresses that disparity."

But, several schools in Missouri have expenditures of more than \$14,000 per student, according to figures from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A key component of the new formula is a district's operating levy. Many Southwest Missouri school districts, including McDonald County, have operating levies of \$2.75 per \$100 assessed valuation, but the new formula recommends \$3.43. A district that assesses a lower levy receives less money from the state. That doesn't address the growing inequality between the state's rich and poor districts.

Districts that seek to be responsible to taxpayers suffer a penalty of less funding from the state. The required minimum operating levy is \$2.75. Because an operating levy of \$3.43 is only a target, the new formula passes the blame from the state to the school districts. If the state wants us to spend \$3.43 per student, they should pass a law saying that. The new formula increased funding somewhat, but it didn't fix the problem which over the next few years will increase the inequality significantly."

CROWDER COMMUNITY COLLEGE 6.5



Founded in 1963, Crowder was established as a Community College serving the Junior College District of Newton and McDonald Counties with 46% of current students from these counties. Over 2,900 students enrolled at Crowder College in the fall of 2006. Crowder enrollment has increased by 65% since 2000, making it one of the fastest growing state-assisted colleges in Missouri. Crowder is a two-year community college serving southwestern Missouri, granting certificates and associates degrees in over 40 fields of study. Eleven percent of the property tax collected (40 cents per \$100

in assessed value) in this county goes to support Crowder College which is located in Newton County to the north of McDonald County.

Although Crowder is supported in part by local property tax, much of the budget for that college comes from the State of Missouri and the federal government as well as student

tuition. Missouri's support is predicated on Crowder providing community college classes throughout a larger area of SW Missouri. As a result, Crowder has opened a campus at Cassville, Webb City, Nevada, and Joplin. Classes are offered in McDonald County at a variety of locations. (see insert) Crowder has purchased a site to establish a campus in McDonald County along Hwy 71 in the Jane community.

*Where Your McDonald County
PROPERTY TAX DOLLAR Goes:*



A medical careers program is planned near Caverna in the southern part of McDonald County in conjunction with a new medical center to be opened by Freeman Health. Crowder's current nursing program is straining at the seams with 120 students in Neosho and another 25 at the campus in Nevada. Lab space is in short supply. As it is, Crowder now has to turn away three out of every four students who apply for the nursing program. While the need for this campus is recognized and in the plans, it must wait for the Freeman Health facility to be constructed in Caverna.

Crowder 2007 fall semester:

“Students are recognizing that Crowder College is a great opportunity to get credit that will either lead to a go-to-work degree or to transfer to another institution of higher learning,” said Dr. Alan Marble, Crowder president. “They recognize they can do that in an institution that offers smaller classes. They can get the type of education they're looking for at a lower price. Our reputation with the students is strong. People realize they can start here and go anywhere.”

Enrollment at Crowder's branch campuses is also up. McDonald County - which holds classes in various locations - saw a 35 percent increase. McDonald County offerings have been expanded. Classes there are offered at various locations, including McDonald County High School in Anderson. “At the high school, we have an on-line assistance center, which helps students with their on-line classes,” Riggs said. (Jim Riggs, director of admissions) “If they have questions, there are instructors available to help.”

<http://neoshodailynews.com/articles/2007/09/21/news/02crowder.txt>

A Crowder Campus in McDonald County will benefit our students in a number of ways. With the price of fuel becoming expensive and time valuable, limiting the need to travel to Neosho to attend class will greatly improve the ability of students to attend college. Those transitioning to a four year college will have more support at a small college to help them adjust to the academic demands of higher education by attending local college classes.

General Classes (per credit hour) for Crowder College 2006
In-District Resident \$63 Missouri Resident \$89
Out of State \$116

\$23/unit savings paid for by McDonald County property taxes
 \$780/semester savings X4 semesters equals about \$3000 savings per graduate:

- 1) A student is considered to be in-district if he/she "permanently resides" inside one of the five sending school districts making up the Crowder College district (East Newton, Diamond, McDonald County, Neosho, Seneca).
- 2) All other Missouri residents (not living in one of the five school districts listed above) are considered to be out-of-district students for the purpose of calculating tuition and fees.
- 3) Permanent residency is determined by the locale in which the student (or parent) pays property taxes.

High School Dual Credits program – Students Pay the special dual credit/dual enrollment course fee of \$60 per credit hour (which waives all facility use, lab and technology fees).

Rural community colleges prepare adults of all ages and backgrounds for new opportunities. They also lay the foundation for a stronger economy through strategic planning and leadership development, entrepreneurship education, workforce training, and small business assistance. It is this commitment to economic development, workforce training, educational access, and technology which will help build long-term prosperity in McDonald County.

One of the most valuable assets for economic growth is a trained and educated workforce

Colleges do more than educate and train citizens for better jobs and businesses, they actually become a major business which supports the community. As one of the largest employers in the area, it brings hundreds of jobs to the community. These jobs are considered "recession proof" and help maintain the local economy during economic downturns.

College also has an overwhelming economic impact on the communities it serves and is one of the largest

Solar Decathlon - Crowder College has achieved worldwide recognition for its innovative Alternative Energy program. Crowder designed and built the first solar-powered vehicle to successfully complete a coast-to-coast journey across the U.S. in 1984. Since then, Crowder has continued to distinguish itself in world and national solar energy competitions, most recently the Solar Decathlon in Washington D.C., where the Solar House entry from Crowder was selected as the "People's Choice" and placed 6th overall in the competition. Crowder College competed in both the 2002 & 2005 Solar Decathlon in Washington, D.C. against such prestigious schools as University of Michigan, University of Texas, Universidad Politécnic de Madrid, Washington State University, New York Institute of Technology, Dartmouth, Cal-Poly, Carnegie Mellon, Tuskegee Institute, & Auburn to name a few. Crowder was the only community college in the competition. This award-winning house is now located on the Crowder campus. The Solar Decathlon is an international collegiate competition where student teams compete to design, build, and operate highly energy-efficient, completely solar-powered houses that incorporate building integrated photovoltaics (BIPV).

business operations. The College's operational budget creates a huge economic stimulus as college salaries and operational expenditures ripple throughout the economy. Higher education generally leads to a better life style, which can decrease the cost of taxpayer-supported social services. Add to all this the infusion of millions in construction projects over the next decade, and clearly the college can be seen as a driving force in the local, regional and statewide economies.

McDONALD COUNTY LIBRARY 6.6

The McDonald County Library provides education, recreation, information and cultural enrichment for the citizens of McDonald County. Computer and internet access are important contributions to these pursuits. A professionally selected and well-organized collection of library materials is available at the main library in Pineville and a branch location in Noel. The library staff is trained to assist patrons in finding the information they need. Taxes support the library as an educational component of county government at the rate of 2.79% of real and personal property tax collected.



Every Thursday morning at 10 a.m. (except during holidays and library closings) toddlers are

invited to Story Time. There is a fun 30 minutes of stories, puppets, songs and rhymes, crafts and snacks to introduce children to the joy of learning. Each summer, the library hosts weekly children's programs for children ages four to twelve to encourage reading all summer long. Programs are available at both locations.

Library materials or personal papers may be copied or faxed at the Pineville Library for a nominal fee. The library's community room, at the Pineville Library, is available for use by non-profit groups and organizations of a civic, cultural, or educational



character.

You must apply for use of the community room and pre-schedule all meetings.

The library has an extensive genealogy section which focuses on McDonald County and Southwest Missouri including some very rare records that are specific to McDonald County. One example is the Sturges History of McDonald County printed in 1897. This book is in the public domain and is made available for download from the library website. Information on area cemeteries is available online for those interested in genealogy. Area Obituaries are also available in an online data base hosted on the library website.



One of 20th Century Fox's most successful early Technicolor movies, entitled: "Jesse James" - was filmed here in McDonald County in 1938. Many local folks appeared as extras in the film, and thousands of tourists flocked to the area to see their favorite Hollywood film stars in action up close and personal. The McDonald County library has held a special collection of photographs and memorabilia from that time, and that collection has been and continues to grow larger and even more interesting. Recently, much of that collection has been "digitized" (scanned into computers) so that it can be easily viewed by the entire world over the Internet, without any further damage to the originals caused by physical handling.



Southwest City is working to establish a library in that community. Land and money has been donated to start that library and the community is working to raise the remaining funding necessary to build that library branch and has requested the county library system take over the operations of the new library when completed.

As shown by the dollar example on page 7 of this chapter, McDonald County property taxes support schools at 85%, Crowder at just over 11% and the library at under 3%. Unlike schools, however, the library falls under the Hancock amendment and requires taxes to be rolled back when assessments increase. As a result, the library is serving more people on a rolled back budget, rather than benefitting from the property value increases taking place in the county. There are no retirement benefits for employees or retirement programs.

The library is not under the jurisdiction of McDonald County government. Like the schools, a separate Library Board is appointed to oversee the operations of the library. The McDonald County Library is doing admirable work on a such a limited budget. However, needs within the county are growing and citizens have voted a specific tax for the library. The library is requesting legislation to remove the Hancock restrictions from the its budget and restore the tax revenue that voters in McDonald County have approved.



Early Bookmobile visits Cyclone

The Planning Commission considers the library crucial to education in McDonald County and supports the library in its efforts to restore funding.