

**Kennewick School District to Place Bond Referendum on March 20 Ballot
*Funds Requested to Move Forward with Ten-Year Facilities Plan.***

The Kennewick School District will be asking the community to invest in its public schools by voting on a bond referendum this spring. The district operates on a ten-year facilities plan cycle put together by its facilities planning committee. The committee is made up of community members and district personnel who project when we will need new schools and develop a timeline for renovating schools. They also project when to move forward with district wide improvements to things like roofs, HVAC systems, parking lots, and athletic facilities. The ten-year plan also addresses what we need to do to keep up with technology.

The district completed a ten year plan cycle in 2005 and we're ready to start the next one. The bond we're asking voters to approve would pay for the first phase of this next ten year plan cycle. There has been a lot of growth and crowding at schools on the west end of the district. Therefore, the plan calls for building a new elementary school out in the Badger Canyon area near Cottonwood Springs. We have five other elementary schools built between 1978 and 1982 that are scheduled for renovation.

The plan calls for modernizing one school per year beginning with Canyon View, then Southgate, Sunset View, and Cascade. Depending on available state matching funds, Lincoln would be the final elementary renovated in Phase I. A number of general improvement projects throughout the district may also depend on state matching money to complete. Projects identified in this phase include roofing at Southridge and Kennewick High, resurfacing of the tracks and tennis courts at Kennewick High and Kamiakin, parking lot improvements to several schools, HVAC and lighting upgrades and a systematic upgrade of network switches to help us keep up with increased internet and e-mail traffic.

The school district recently bought the former Food Pavilion building near Amistad elementary to serve as space for programs currently located at Fruitland. If the bond passes, the Fruitland building will be used to house each elementary school for one year as its building undergoes renovation. Two million dollars of the bond income would be used to retrofit the Food Pavilion building.

The district also recently completed a new set of specifications for all future elementary school remodels and new constructions. Highlights of the new specification include the addition of a 3,000 square foot multipurpose room, larger classrooms to accommodate small group instruction, and increased use of daylight inside the school. The multipurpose room would be used for breakfast and lunch service and would provide additional instructional space for special projects, an area for parent volunteers and PTO groups to store things, and a space for community user groups.

The specification also calls for a larger gymnasium with a regular wood floor. This again provides more space for both instructional and community activities—especially for youth sports organizations. The size of our elementary schools would increase by about

5,000 square feet. This is somewhat smaller than the elementary schools that surrounding districts are building. However, it is in line with the economy and scale the citizens of Kennewick have come to expect from us.

The Kennewick School Board has approved sending the voters a \$68 million dollar bond request. The estimate tax increase is \$0.30 per \$1,000 of assessed property value over the estimated \$1.49 per \$1,000 estimated tax rate in 2009. The current tax rate is \$1.63. Provided the bond passes this spring, between 2014 and 2016 the district will come back to the community with another bond request to fund the second phase of the ten year facilities plan. The second phase calls for modernizations at and Desert Hills Middle School, Westgate, and Eastgate.