Haskins floats idea for parks sales tax

By Steve Taylor
For the Leader

Jefferson County Councilman Brian Haskins wants county residents to vote in April 2020 on whether they want to institute a 3/8 percent sales tax devoted to parks.

Haskins (District 1, High Ridge) said the sales tax would generate an estimated $9 million, and according to his proposal, 27 percent of that revenue would go to cities for their parks and the rest would go to the county to maintain and expand its parks programs.

The sales tax, Haskins said, would complement the current property tax of 2.73 cents per $100 of assessed valuation that funds the county’s Parks and Recreation Department. That property tax funds almost all of the department’s $1 million

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Up in the air
County teen performs with circus as acrobat, aerialist

By Katelyn Mary Skaggs
For the Leader

For Jefferson County teenager Sabrina Skaggs, life is a circus, literally.

Sabrina, a Northwest High School sophomore, has been training as a circus performer since she was in fifth grade.

“I honestly can’t imagine my life without circus,” she said.

Sabrina, 15, the daughter of Rose and Robert Skaggs of County teen performs with circus as acrobat, aerialist

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Jefferson Foundation doles out $2.7 million to area organizations

By Tony Krausz
For the Leader

In its latest round of grant-giving, the Jefferson Foundation has awarded a total of $2,751,866.29 to 89 local organizations.

The foundation, which awards two rounds of grant awards each year, announced the latest group of recipients on May 8.

Executive vice president Missy Endres said 161 organizations requested about $8.6 million for the last round of grants.

“We are really proud of the grants we were able to make,” Endres said. “We have some really good ones in there.”

Mercy Foundation grant

The top recipient was Mercy Health Foundation Jefferson, which received $250,000 to recruit psychiatric specialists to the hospital.

“This $250,000 grant will really help us to fill some very significant gaps that we continue to have serving patients at

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Granted
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In summer, Skaggs usually performs every day -

Even with her hectic schedule, Sabrina always makes time for homework. She said her training and performances are physically demanding and sometimes she has pain in her knees. However, she said she knows her limits and takes breaks so she does not injure herself.

“No broken bones, but definitely sore muscles,” Sabrina added.

In addition to honing her skills as an aerialist and acrobat, Sabrina said her training includes a routine of sit ups, push ups, running and other exercises.

“I condition at home when I am not at circus, which is usually only Wednesdays and Thursday,” she said. “When I am at circus, we do conditioning after every class.”

Despite the hard work, Sabrina said she enjoys being a circus performer. She said one of her favorite parts of performing is watching people’s reactions.

“It’s so cool to watch their faces,” she said. “Some people might think I’m weird because I can bend myself in half.”

Sabrina said another thing she enjoys about circus performing is the chance to travel and experience new cultures.

“I really like meeting new people,” Sabrina said.

She said she has traveled to New York, New Jersey, Chicago and Puerto Rico.

The petite high-schooler said her biggest struggle is building strength.

“I am naturally flexible, but I need to build the muscles to support it,” she said.

Sabrina said she got interested in performing after Circus Harmony put on a show at the school she attended in fifth grade – Ames VPA Elementary School in St. Louis. Not long after that, Sabrina began training with the group.

Sabrina said Hentoff encouraged her to compete in the recent St. Louis Teen Talent Competition with a partner, Jahlan Baum, 16, of the Central West End neighborhood in St. Louis. The pair call themselves the Midnight Rose Duo.

The two were eliminated before the semifinals, but Sabrina said she enjoyed performing and getting feedback from the judges.

Sabrina hopes her training as a circus performer will someday take her to college, but not a traditional college. There are a few colleges around the world that specialize in circus performance and Sabrina hopes to get into one.

“I’d like to get into one of those colleges, but if not I will just audition where I can,” she said.

Rose said she supports her daughter’s passion, although she admitted that sometimes she has to turn her eyes away when her daughter is in the air.

Prenuptial agreements: Full and fair disclosure of assets and debts

An increasing number of individuals are interested in having a prenuptial agreement prior to getting married. The idea is that if the marriage does not work, the divorce can be simplified.

Many hear horror stories of divorces their friends or family members have gone through. They do not want to worry that this will take place if their marriage does not work.

It is true that parties can enter into a prenuptial agreement that deals with important issues in case of divorce. For example, a prenuptial agreement can address property and debt division, spousal maintenance and attorney’s fees.

While many are not aware of this, prenuptial agreements (also called antenuptial or premarital agreements) cannot address child custody and child support. This makes sense when you think about it. While not true for all parties, most enter into the marriage without having kids. Thus, it is impossible to address issues involving children who are not even born.

One format that many do not realize the importance of is a full and fair disclosure of assets and debts prior to the prenuptial agreement being signed. In other words, both parties are supposed to disclose all the assets and debts that they are bringing into the marriage. Disclosure income is also important for a prenuptial agreement.

Many parties in a rush to get married might want to bypass this step. They might not want to take the time to disclose the assets and debts they have. Others may not want their prospective spouse to know.

However, there are court decisions throughout the country where prenuptial agreements are being set aside because assets, debt and income were not fully disclosed. This is because a party cannot knowingly waive any rights they may have if they do not even know what exists.

This is why parties entering into a prenuptial agreements really ought to take their time. The financial statements should be completed properly. Values should be listed as accurately as possible. Identifying information such as account numbers and the companies holding these accounts should also be listed.

Parties are also wise to go back and look at statements concerning assets and debts. This ensures that they are not guessing as to values.

Parties who abide by this important step have a better chance of having the prenuptial agreement enforced if the marriage were ever to end in divorce. On the other hand, parties who try to side-step this important task face significant risks.

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