

METRO DIGEST

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Body

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Metro subsidy gets tentative OK

CLAYTON - The St. Louis County Council by a 6-1 vote on Tuesday tentatively approved providing \$47.4 million to the **Metro** transit system in the fiscal year that began July 1.

The total includes \$47.2 million for a transit subsidy and \$190,000 to reimburse **Metro** for the value of the Sutton Loop in Maplewood, which the transit agency no longer needs and Maplewood wants to acquire. Councilman Greg Quinn, R-Ballwin, opposed the appropriation.

The subsidy is \$1.9 million larger than the one for the fiscal year that ended June 30 because the county ties the growth of the subsidy to the federal Consumer Price Index for Urban Areas, which rose 4.2 percent in the fiscal year that began in May 2005.

Black Jack park will open in winter

BLACK JACK - While applying for another grant for Harold Evangelista Park, the city's only developed park, Black Jack council members agreed Tuesday night that the park would not be fenced during the winter while restrooms are shut down and locked.

Signs will indicate that facilities are not available, even though the park will be otherwise open. Some council members said they had received requests for the opening from nearby residents. The water facilities will be shut down Nov. 1 through April 1.

The proposed grant, from the Municipal Parks Commission, will total up to \$295,000 and be used for parking and playground resurfacing and resealing. Prior grants of \$155,000 and \$25,000 under the program provided equipment at the park.

Senate campaigns appeal to vets

MAPLEWOOD - Campaigns for both candidates for U.S. Senate in Missouri were in the St. Louis area on Tuesday appealing to the state's veterans.

Retired four-star general and former presidential candidate Wesley Clark stumped for fellow Democrat Claire McCaskill in front of veterans at the American Legion Hall in Maplewood.

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Outside the hall, two state representatives -- Jim Avery, R-Crestwood, and Jack Jackson, R-Wildwood -- stood in for McCaskill's opponent, incumbent Jim Talent. Avery and Jackson, both veterans, wanted McCaskill to apologize for calling Talent "a false patriot," according to the Jefferson City News Tribune.

"Even John Kerry did not call President Bush unpatriotic," Jackson said.

McCaskill did not repeat the charge in remarks to veterans in Maplewood. She did not make a public apology.

Valley Park begins work on trail

VALLEY PARK - Valley Park is beginning work on its three-mile section of the Meramec River Greenway, a paved hiking and biking trail, partially sponsored by the Great Rivers Greenway District, which is supported by a tenth of a cent sales tax in St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County.

The city has completed an aerial survey and is planning grading work. At a meeting Monday night, City Engineer Tom Weis said the area will be ready by November for planting of hardwood trees, at the request of the Army Corps of Engineers. Weis said the city's section of the trail will cost about \$69,000. The city will use tax increment financing funding and support from the sales tax.

The full trail will be 12 miles and connect Kirkwood's Green Tree Park to Castlewood State Park in Ballwin. Valley Park will also build a sports complex near the trail with six soccer fields.

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

Utility tax rebates are available

O'FALLON - Qualifying older people and the totally disabled will soon get a break on part of their monthly bills due to a utility tax rebate program the City Council approved last week.

Officials expect the average qualifying recipient to save about \$124 a year on combined electric, natural gas and telephone bills. For more information, call the city's Citizens First Center, 636-379-5553.

ILLINOIS

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

No deal expected in salon slayings

BELLEVILLE - The teenage suspect in Belleville's salon slayings appeared briefly in court Tuesday, three months after his arrest, but lawyers say the case won't be ready for trial until at least next spring.

A trial, rather than a plea agreement, is likely for the suspect, Darrell Lane, 17, of St. Louis, sources said Tuesday. Lane was arrested in June and has pleaded not guilty to the first-degree murder charges.

Lane is charged with fatally stabbing hairdresser Michael J. Cooney, 62, and two of his clients, sisters Doris J. Fischer, 79, and Dorothy E. Bone, 82. The three were found in March 2005 in Cooney's house on West Main Street in Belleville.

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