

Whose hand is in your kid's pocket?

Recent Published Quotes on School Funding:

- News Journal , May 12 ,2006 Delaware Voice column by Robert Baker of Middletown , President , Delaware Farm Bureau : "The state and counties can't afford to pay for infrastructure...**Homeowners who create the need for more roads , schools , parks , sewers , and police are not being charged enough .**"
- News Journal , May 21 , 2006 article on the \$9-13 Million finance deficit in the Christina School District , quotes Board Member John Mackenzie " The lack of clarity really points to the complexity of school finance . *We need to rethink the way we finance public education in Delaware .*"
- County Comments publication of the New Castle County Civic League, April 2006, by architect Charles M. Weymouth "For generations County government has been able to side step responsibilities and *capital costs*.....
....."priorities between state , county , federal agencies have been avoided ..."
" Absent are County responsibilities for roads, *schools*....."
"The County, after the problem is impacted, points to the state."
- News Journal, May 3 , 2006 article by Alison Kepner on the (Appoquinimink) "*district's growing pains ..a case study of how some Delaware districts can't build fast enough to stay abreast of enrollments swelled by a decade long housing boom .*" The article went on to list another \$144 million in soon to be needed school construction projects . (**This does not include** (2) projects underway , the new *Appoquinimink High School* , a 210,000 square foot, 1600 student building @ \$51,919,300 and the *Alfred G Waters Middle School* , 113,000 square feet , 1000 student building @ \$23,290,900).

As listed in page one of this series, there is a yearly tracking of assessments within each school district compiled by the Delaware Department of Education. The latest 2005-2006 figures show some rather startling statistics. From the previous year (FY 2004-2005) the combined increase in the (4) northern districts (Brandywine, Christina, Red Clay and Colonial) showed a property valuation addition of \$154,382,847 - value taxed to finance and operate schools within these districts. The breakdown of that total was:

Residential - \$66,302,944 or **42.9%**

Non residential - \$88,069,903 or **57%**

Recall back on Page One the term "Balanced Tax Base"

Now for the yearly increase in Appoquinimink:

Total increase FY 2004-2005 to FY 2005-2006 - \$97,118,752

Residential : \$87,501,952 or **90.09%**

Non residential : \$9,616,800 or **9.901%**

The last bit of information for Page Three is the latest impact fee amounts now being applied under HB 383:

- Brandywine , Christina and Red Clay - \$ 4388
- Colonial - \$ 3620
- Appoquinimink - \$ 3181 . or , **where the growth is most dramatic, the lowest impact fee applies???**

How effective have impact fees been to date in Appoquinimink?

The total new construction cost listed in Page Two was \$25,185,300 for (3) schools, plus we have to add another \$7,200,000 for the 2003 addition to Middletown High School, with a grand total of \$32,385,300. Of that amount, and for the 4000 new students added to Appoquinimnk's enrollment since the implementation of HB 383 in 1999, Appoquinimink tallied \$1,791,152 in impact fees, or **5.53%** of the total construction cost of those projects last listed herein. Guess who pays the rest!! Or should we heed the comment by Robert Baker....

And the title of Alison Kepner's article from May 3rd " **Building needs put pressure on state, schools, homeowners** "

What have the folks in Kent County been screaming lately?

Now for some history: On **April 25, 1996**, a report was issued through the Delaware Department of Agriculture and the University of Delaware. The summary page graphically listed the deficit between expected revenue and expenses caused by residential development, listed the economic benefits of farmland preservation, the need to stabilize the tax base in Appoquinimink, and, in stating the need for impact fees "Our case study indicates the new developments are largely 'free riding' on the existing overburdened infrastructure." The co-author of this report: University of Delaware Associate Professor John Mackenzie, now also a member of the Christina Board of Education.

So how accurate are the quotes listed at the beginning of this page?

Please note that these quotes are only portions of the listed items. Page Four will appear on this site within another month.

Please contact us with any additional information germane to the topics listed. The SNCCA may be reached at Cemulholland@gmail.com or via other links under "Contacts" at www.sncca.org.