

## County tax statements show drop in local school tax rate

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

### BLS Commitment To Sustain Tax Rates While Building New Schools Reflected On Statements

There was good news for thousands of Deschutes County residents in the Bend, Sunriver, and La Pine areas that opened their county tax statements this month – their tax rate for Bend-La Pine Schools (BLS) went down. “We knew that through careful planning and strategic fiscal investments we could sustain or reduce the current tax rate our community is investing in Bend-La Pine Schools,” said Superintendent Doug Nelson. “The tax statement is a testament to the great work that our team of community volunteers and staff did to make that commitment a reality.” “We’ve been able to reduce the tax rate for schools while delivering much needed projects to extend the life of our buildings,” said Assistant Superintendent of Operations John Rexford. “I was pleased to see the rate drop from \$1.62 per thousand assessed value last year, to just \$1.56 per thousand assessed value this year.” Rexford said that an in-depth, thorough assessment of the potential cost to taxpayers was done prior to asking the community for a \$119 million bond to build new schools, expand others and complete more than 170 much needed improvement projects in 2006. “We found that we could ask the community to help us build new schools without raising the tax rate,” Rexford said. “Our community believes that strong schools make a strong community, they proved this during the last election.” Rexford says that the dollars generated through the 2006 bond issue are already benefiting students. “We are making good on our promise to the community – several projects are complete, many underway, and dozens of others will begin in the months to come,” he adds. “We are the fastest growing school district (of those over 10,000 students) in Oregon,” said Nelson. “Just this year alone we grew by an additional 552 students. The new school’s, additions, and renovations will help to create much needed capacity to ensure a positive learning environment for our more than 15,800 students.” “We just can’t thank our community enough for what they are doing for our students and the overall livability of our community,” said Nelson.

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