

# MVTHS approves tentative tax levy

*Truth in taxation  
hearing set for Dec. 19*

**BY JASON SILVEY**  
SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Officials at Mt. Vernon Township High School are expecting a realistic property tax increase of between three and four percent to be extended in 2012.

On Tuesday, the Board of Education approved its tentative 2011 property tax levy to be extended in 2012. The estimated property taxes to be levied total \$7,283,950, a 12.95 percent increase over the previous year, but as Superintendent Mike Smith explained, that will be whittled down to a much lower actual rate under the county's tax cap.

"If we don't know what the [property value] growth is, you've got to estimate high because that's the only place you're going to gain any ground," he said.

For example, the district last year levied a 15.65 percent increase in order to capture any property growth that might occur but the real increase over the prior year was only 3.62 percent. The difference in last year's levy total versus what was actually extended to the district amount of more than \$877,000.

Under property tax caps, a school district is only entitled to five percent over the previous year or the consumer price index, whichever is less.

"And it hasn't been five percent for years and years. Last year is was 2.7 percent," Smith said.

The district is estimating a total

Please see **MVTHS**, Page 3A

## MVTHS:

*Continued From Page 1A*

2011 equalized assessed valuation for all properties in Mt. Vernon of \$352,821,879. Between new and existing property, Smith estimated the district would only likely be entitled to an extension increase of \$288,000. The total overall levy, he noted, is really "a little bit less than what we asked for last year."

Smith and the board acknowledged it was sometimes a challenge to explain to the public why the district would levy ballooned rate increase when it will really

only receive a fraction of that under the tax cap.

"That's what you have to do because if you miss big property [growth] you leave money on the table," Smith said.

However, the district has been able to keep functioning despite the lack of substantial growth in local property values.

"Even in years when there is less than three percent CPI and limited property growth, we've been able to manage this district. The taxpayers are getting a very reasonable rate and we are able to maintain our programs and our responsibility to them," Smith said.

A truth in taxation hearing will be held on Dec. 19.

[jsilvey@morningsentinel.com](mailto:jsilvey@morningsentinel.com)

11/16/11  
Sentinel