

SPRINGDALE  
**THE MORNING NEWS**

## District To Form Millage Group

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SPRINGDALE — The community should be engaged and informed as the school district decides whether to seek a property tax increase during challenging economic times, Superintendent Jim Rollins said Tuesday.

To gain feedback, the district will form a committee to evaluate the issue and recommend to the school board how to proceed, he said during the school board's regular meeting.

Rollins listed Feb. 24, March 18 and April 15 as tentative dates for when the committee could meet. Administrators will try to find 50 people from across the Springdale to be represented on the committee.

The group will be expected to recommend whether to seek a millage increase at the end of its April meeting.

Any millage election should be held in September, Rollins said.

"The school board needs to make a decision by the June meeting," he said. "We could delay it to July, but I'd rather not do that."

The district is considering the millage election to raise money for a new middle school and junior high school.

A major factor driving the discussion is partnership funding from the Arkansas Department of Education. The state set aside up to \$17.9 million for the projects through its partnership program on school construction, according to the department's Web site.

If the projects are not started by Jan. 31, 2011, then the offer expires.

In addition to the committee, school representatives will meet with parent

teacher associations, booster clubs and local civic organizations to discuss the issue, he said.

Any increase request will likely be between 1.4 to 1.9 mills, Rollins said.

In December, the board approved issuing bonds to build a new elementary school in Sonora and address growth on east side schools. Officials have said this is the last new school that can be built without a tax increase.

The Washington County Planning Board approved the site plan for the new school at a meeting last week.

Bids for the dirt work will be taken next month, Assistant Superintendent Ron Bradshaw said.

“We’re going to (build) it in 15 months. That’s a real challenge,” he said.