

Upping vehicle tax may help pay Incline property owners

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Washoe County residents could pay an additional 1 percent tax to register their vehicles to help pay Incline Village property owners \$17 million as ordered by the Nevada Supreme Court and to help balance the county budget for years to come, as proposed in a new study.

John Breternitz, commission chairman, on Tuesday told a review panel that the tax is one option commissioners will consider next week to pay tax refunds owed to 8,000 village residents for the 2006-07 tax year. The vehicle excise tax would generate \$8 million a year.

The Supreme Court ruled July 7 that former county treasurer Bill Berrum should have reduced their property taxes after the county board of equalization voted in February 2006 to roll back their property values to 2002-03 levels to comply with an earlier court case.

In a January 2006 ruling, the Carson District Court determined that former county assessor Robert McGowan's methods of appraising Tahoe views, beaches and other unique features were unconstitutional because they were not sanctioned by the state.

In February 2006, the state Supreme Court delayed enforcement of that district ruling calling for refunds while the case was being appealed. The Supreme Court also advised the county to follow the reasoning given by the district court judge, Bill Maddox.

The study by Management Partners, meanwhile, points to the vehicle excise tax as one means of balancing future budgets.

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