



## Kingman County Commission

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### **Kingman voters narrowly defeat sales tax for new LEC**

Kingman County voters have narrowly defeated a proposed countywide sales tax to help fund construction of a new county law enforcement center. The sales tax was the only question on Tuesday's special election ballot.

The unofficial vote total was 802 to 749, with 24 provisional votes yet to be counted. Kingman County Clerk Carol Noblit said the vote will not be final until a canvass is conducted by the county commission on Monday, Nov. 4. However, the number of provisional ballots is not enough to change the outcome. Noblit said the turnout was slightly more than 25 percent of the county's registered voters.

The county planned to use the sales tax revenue along with annual payments from the Flat Ridge 2 commercial wind farm to construct the law enforcement center at an estimated total project cost of \$11.8 million. The LEC plan called for offices, storage space and training rooms for the county sheriff and Kingman police, an emergency operations center, 911 dispatch and a modern 32-bed jail.

Kingman County Commissioners are attending the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Kansas Association of Counties being held this week in Wichita but they released the following statement: "We are disappointed at the decision by voters. The problems with the current law enforcement center are still there and they can only be resolved with a new facility. We will have to carefully consider all of our options as we decide how to move forward."

Voters were asked to approve a new one-quarter percent retailers' sales tax for 20 years and to extend a current three-quarters percent sales tax, also for 20 years. The one-quarter percent tax would have started in July 2014 and the three-quarters percent tax would have started in 2021. A current three-quarters percent tax for road and bridge maintenance expires Dec. 31, 2020.

The current law enforcement center, which is located just south of the courthouse, was built in 1959. It is in a flood plain and does not meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. It includes the current jail, which has 13 beds. It is also home to the sheriff, Kingman police and the county's 911 dispatch center.

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