



**FIND OUT** what's in store for spring weather in Teton Valley **B1**



**OLD SHOES**, rusted bottle caps, shoedars and envelopes that would have gone straight from the mailbox to the trashcan are repurposed into art at a new display at The City Gallery. **B11**



**RECAPS HATS** recycles old clothing into chic head pieces and is the latest business to set up shop in the Driggs Industrial Park. **A14**

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# TETON VALLEY NEWS

*empowering the community*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2013

104TH YEAR 8TH WEEK

75¢

## Why is school funding so uncertain?

### Property owners help shoulder shortfall

*Part three in a series on school funding*

**Ken Levy**  
TVN Staff

How did we get to this place? When then-Governor Jim Risch worked with the Idaho legislature to shift school-funding sources from property to sales taxes in 2006, "we were fuming mad about the whole deal," said Doug Petersen, Teton School District board president.

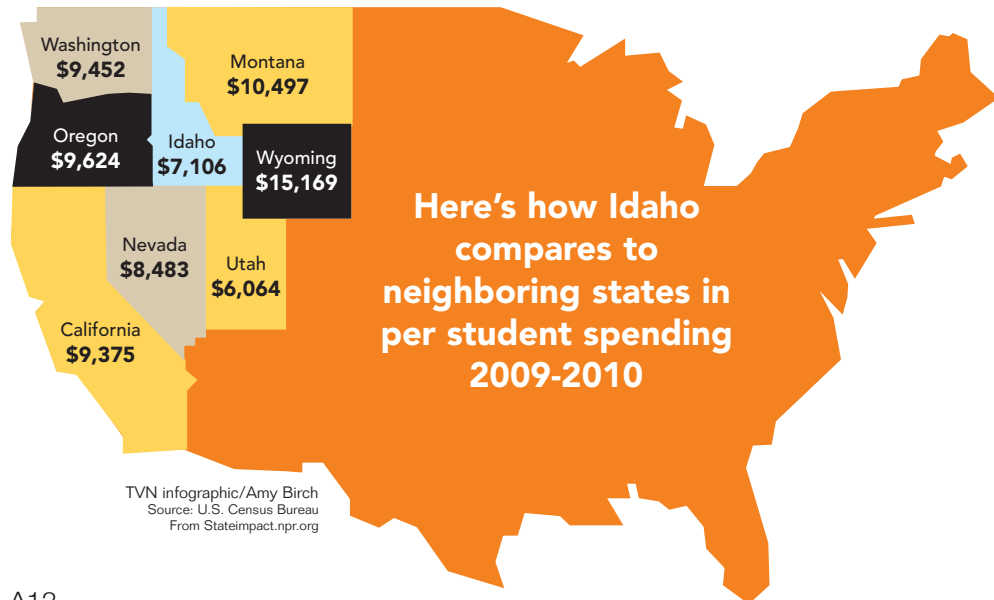
That's because sales taxes are an unstable and unreliable funding source, espe-

cially in recessionary conditions. With less sales tax revenue came less funding for schools, said Petersen. The difference has been made up since 2007 with supplemental levies "that put it back on property owners," he said, to help keep current educational programs relatively intact.

As the current recession hit, and the economy went down, sales tax revenues went down and school funding from the state dropped as well.

The state is not bringing in sales tax revenues as projected to pay for schools, said board member Nancy Arnold.

She urged voters to tell the legislature to restore full funding to schools, and increase it, as the economy



TVN infographic/Amy Birch  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
From Stateimpact.npr.org

**School funding** continued on A12

**School funding** continued from A1\_ improves. The state may have to look at other means of funding to achieve this, she said.

But the district has been better off financially than many of the surrounding districts, said TSD Superintendent Monte Woolstenhulme.

Woolstenhulme, who has served the TSD about 3.5 years, said the district forestalled its present budget situations with a combination of using the funding it had, drawing down its reserves and using local levies.

The latter is up for renewal at \$3.1 million, up from \$2.6 million in 2011, in front of voters March 12.

“We’ve been able to delay a lot of [budget-cutting decisions] 2-3 years later than most of the school districts in eastern Idaho have already had to do.”

The reality, said Woolstenhulme, “is that we can’t sustain it at that level without either dramatic cuts, dramatically raising the levy or looking at other solutions.”

That meant discussions on where to tighten the budget, cuts and reductions.

“If we’d started more cuts sooner, we’d probably be in a different place than we are today, but we’d have started them 2-3 years ago,” Woolstenhulme said. “We’ve made less dramatic and painful cuts previous to now, reducing some positions, some operating budgets, but nothing to this extent based on where the budget is right now.”

The district probably won’t know what the state plans with its school funding until March, including whether it will fund education at last year’s level, Woolstenhulme said. The district could lose an additional \$90,000 if the state approves eliminating personal property taxes in phases. The legislature is looking very closely at that possibility during the 2013 session.

Last year the district cut 11 paraprofessionals, 25 percent from its supply budget and 50 percent from equipment funding.

TSD records from its 2012-13 budget indicate local funds cover about \$2,800 per child of the overall \$7,059.83 the district funds per child.

According to the district’s Main Summary Points report on the budget, the increase in the supplemental levy request

from \$2.6 million to \$3.1 million includes the board considering an estimate of \$537,000 in cuts, along with \$463,000 in increased revenue and a cushion of \$37,000 to adjust for other cuts if needed, to meet an anticipated budget shortfall of about \$1 million.

The board has not decided to make any of these cuts to these specific programs. According to the district Web site, [tsd401.org](http://tsd401.org), information was developed by the administrative team, with the following directives and assumptions:

1. make the cuts as far from the classroom as possible
2. focus on essentials and priorities, not just great programs

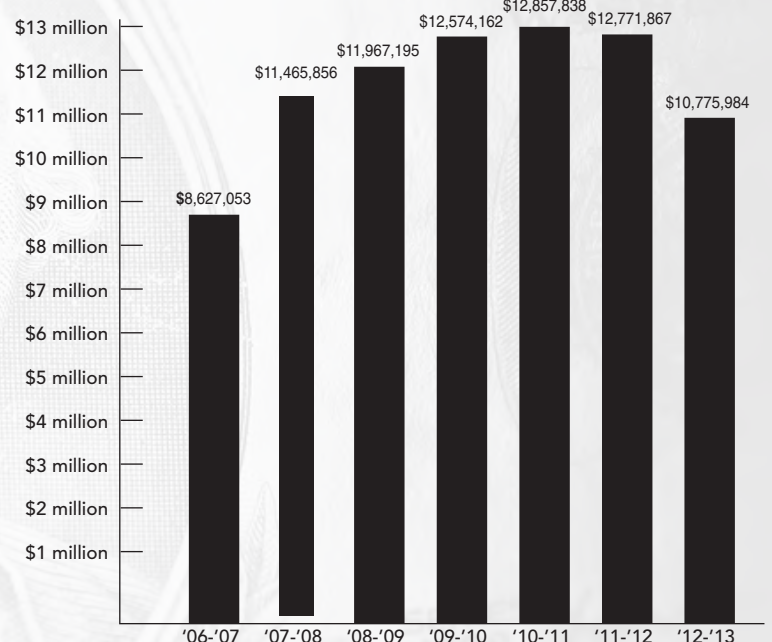
### Supplemental levy meetings

Monday, Feb. 25,  
7 p.m., at the Teton  
School District  
Office board-  
room, 445 N. Main,  
Driggs

Monday, March 4,  
7 p.m. at Victor  
Elementary



### Teton School District General Fund budgets



TVN infographic/Amy Birch, Source: U.S. Census Bureau, From Stateimpact.npr.org

Note: The budgets for '09-10 and '10-11 include temporary federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

3. everything is open for consideration
4. assume that state funding will be the same for next year
5. assume student enrollment will be the same for next year
6. prioritize by what benefits the most students, and what is outside the classroom and regular school calendar
7. hope for a balance of cuts and revenue, not just all cuts

Below are the proposed cuts for the 2013-14 school year. These are just a first run at solutions and the list is not all-inclusive, said Nola Bredal, board vice chairwoman, at the Feb. 11 board meeting.

“No matter what we cut we impact students’ academic lives,” she said. “It’s about academics, being ready to compete in a global economy with one million less dollars. I’m not sure how we’re going to do that.”

- Eliminate Summer School: \$45,000
- Reduce Extracurricular activities: \$10,000
- Eliminate Yellowstone program: \$23,000
- Eliminate field trips: \$10,000
- Eliminate winter sports: \$3,000
- Reduce substitutes: \$5,000
- Reduce classroom supply budgets: \$5,000
- Eliminate the half-day Kindergarten bus: \$5,000
- Reduce Kindergarten to half day or consider fee for full day: \$100,000

- Eliminate five snow days: \$205,000
- Eliminate one paraprofessional position per building: \$126,000

Previous district cuts include 25 percent to supply budgets; 50 percent to equipment budgets, 10 percent in extracurricular activities including coaching positions and additional games, and one part-time teacher. Considerations continue on where to find cost savings.

The district will also realize an \$800,000 savings over 20 years due to bond refinancing.

Supplemental levies require a majority of 50.1 percent of the vote to pass.

### TVN en Español

*El distrito escolar de Teton falta fondos para seguir financiando todos los programas. El superintendente del distrito, Monte Woolstenhulme, y los socios de la junta del distrito puso la culpa en las decisiones del gobierno estatal de Idaho. En 2006, Idaho cambio los impuestos que financian las escuelas de impuestos sobre la propiedad a impuestos sobre la venta, según Doug Peterson, el presidente de la junta. El problema es que los impuestos sobre la venta no son fuentes estables de financiación y en 2008 la economía entreo en recesión. Desde 2007 el distrito has recuperado los fondos perdidos por un por un exacción fiscal sobre propiedad específicamente para el distrito escolar. En esta manera los impuestos sobre propiedad siguen financiar la educación. Renovar la exacción fiscal para las escuelas se pondrá antes los votantes en Marzo.*