

***By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor***

Taxpayers rejoice! The school buildings on East 9th Street are paid off.

With a vote at the board meeting Tuesday, a check for \$362,455 for the final bond payment was approved.

No tax askings for that bond were included in the 2009-10 budget, helping to drop the district's tax askings under the \$1 figure (per \$100 valuation) for the first time in several decades, 1982 to be exact.

The 2008-09 budget included 9.18 cents (per \$100 valuation) for the buildings' bond fund. This coming year it's zero.

I'll have to commend the board, too, for another aspect of the budget they voted on Tuesday night.

The proposed '09-10 budget included 3.7 cents levied for the building fund. After considerable discussion Tuesday, board members cut that request in half to 1.85 cents.

That will still generate \$101,000 for the building fund (vs. \$202,000 that was proposed). The building fund now has \$430,890 in it, which will grow to over \$530,000 this coming year.

The building is 18 years old now, and that means some aging has occurred. Those building fund dollars will be important as some of that maintenance work will likely soon become necessary. It's a responsible move that the budget includes additional dollars added to the building fund.

It's important to note that the school can use some cash reserve funds for building projects, too. The school board added another \$250,000 to the cash reserve as part of the '09-10 budget, increasing that fund to \$1,750,000.

While the levy to support the Chase County Schools budget is considerably lower for the coming year, that doesn't necessarily mean everyone's taxes will drop. Ag land saw some major valuation increases the past year, so that will offset the levy drop in some cases.

Board members in all governmental entities need to remember that it's still important to keep tax askings down as much as possible even in "good" years.