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## White Lake school vote looms

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Supporters call it a much needed athletic and community facility that will spark local redevelopment, at no additional cost to taxpayers.

Opponents call it an expensive "country club" that should not be built in these tough economic times.

On Tuesday, voters in the White Lake school district will go to the polls to decide the fate of a two-pronged referendum that would construct a \$3 million community and school recreation addition and allow the district to exceed state-imposed revenue limits by \$200,000 annually for the next three years.

The referendum was approved by the board of education in July and reflects well over a year of study and work by an ad hoc committee made up of district residents from a wide variety of backgrounds.

The plan, drawn up by EDS Builders, includes the central recreational center, similar to a commons, an exercise room that could be used as a community space, men's and women's locker rooms and restrooms, team locker rooms and an expansive new gymnasium.

There would also be a concession area and remodeling to the existing shop and locker rooms.

Officials said the venerable 1938 gymnasium, considered a quaint landmark by many and host to thousands of programs, sporting events and graduations over the decades, would remain for use by elementary classes and as a community area for dances and other activities.

The new area would extend from the existing gymnasium along Center Street.

At \$3.58 million, the actual price tag is higher than the amount the board is seeking through the referendum. The balance of the project will be financed through the district's fund balance, a move that will save \$325,000 in interest and eliminate any additional tax impact.

If both questions are successful, district property owners would face an estimated mill rate of \$11.85 per \$1,000 of equalized valuation, which is less than the \$12 per \$1,000 they are paying now.

In its informational brochure, the committee stresses historically low interest rates and the ability of improved facilities to attract teachers and students. Members also point to reduced athletic travel expenses and late night practices.

The brochure calls the school "the heartbeat of the community, contributing to community pride and reinvestment and increasing student morale. And members of the committee note that it will serve as a compliment to a new clinic currently being planned as a cooperative effort between medical facilities in Lakewood and Antigo.

They said that now is the time for residents of the district to "pay it forward."

The brochure asks "don't our students and community deserve what other communities have? If we don't control our own destiny, someone else will."

The plan has not been enthusiastically endorsed by all.

In a letter to the Antigo Daily Journal, White Lake resident Les Boyd called the proposal "a referendum



**Engineer Doc Smith of EDS Builders reviews White Lake referendum plans at an informational meeting recently.**

to build a country club on school district property” and said the additional space would do nothing to enhance education.

And former White Lake board member Roy Moore said the region is more and more becoming a retirement community, strapped by tough economic times. He also questioned the educational aspects of the plan.

Polls open across the district, which encompasses much of eastern Langlade County, at 7 a.m. and will close at 8 p.m. The Antigo Daily Journal will monitor the count and will be open Tuesday evening to report on the tally.