

City of Monett  
P O Box 110  
217 Fifth Street  
Monett, Missouri 65708

James Orr,  
Mayor

Jerry Dierker,  
Commissioner

Mike Brownsberger,  
Commissioner

Dennis Pyle,  
City Administrator

Building Inspector  
235-5306

Casino Reservations  
235-3544

Cemetery  
235-3495

City Administrator  
235-3355

City Clerk  
235-3763

Fire Non-Emergency  
235-7799

Golf  
235-6076

Human Resources  
235-3763

Municipal Airport  
476-5112

Municipal Court  
235-4677

Police Non-Emergency  
235-4241

Street/Sanitation  
235-3495

Utilities  
235-3300

Waste Treatment Plant  
235-7455

Website  
[www.cityofmonett.com](http://www.cityofmonett.com)



January 2012

# Frisco Line News

## Barry Co. E-911 Tax — February 7, 2012 Monett's Perspective

The Barry County Emergency Services Board, also known as Barry Co. E-911, is again asking voters to approve a tax increase to fund their operations. This is the same ballot measure defeated by voters on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Voters in Barry County (including Monett south of Cleveland Ave.) will go to the polls on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at the Park Casino to vote. The Monett City Council believes it has an obligation to the voters of Monett to educate the public on these and other tax issues and how the residents of Monett may or may not benefit from paying higher taxes.

Here are the basic facts:

- 1) **Monett's residents do NOT receive service from Barry Co. E-911.** The City of Monett's Communications Department located at the Monett Justice Center provides emergency dispatching for all of Monett.
- 2) Monett's residents already pay a 1/4 cent sales tax on all purchases in the Barry County portion of Monett (all businesses located south of Cleveland Ave.) to fund the operations of Barry Co. E-911 without receiving service.
- 3) This new proposed tax would increase that amount to 3/8 of a cent.
- 4) Barry Co. E-911 has struggled financially the last two years and needs to either reduce expenses or increases taxes to maintain service.

Sales tax revenues have gone down but the primary reason Barry Co. E-911 is struggling, we believe, is due to their legal expenses. Barry Co. E-911 has stated that these legal expenses are due to Monett filing suit against them to collect revenues that are required to go to the Monett TIF. This is partly true. The Court later denied E-911's arguments and found that the Monett TIF was entitled to those revenues. **But Barry Co. E-911 filed a counter-suit against Monett in an attempt to void a successful TIF that was established in 1996. This counter-suit, filed 13 years after the TIF was formed, has prolonged the litigation and led to significant expenses on both sides.** Even after the ruling in favor of Monett and despite a worsening financial situation, the Barry Co. E-911 board elected to continue the litigation by appealing the Court's decision. **We believe the board is now asking voters to approve an additional tax to off-set their legal expenses incurred by suing Monett. Presumably, these new taxes would help pay for their continuing appeal of the case.**

What is the cause of the dispute between the City of Monett and Barry Co. E-911?

City of Monett  
P O Box 110  
217 Fifth Street  
Monett, Missouri 65708

James Orr,  
Mayor

Jerry Dierker,  
Commissioner

Mike Brownsberger,  
Commissioner

Dennis Pyle,  
City Administrator

Building Inspector  
235-5306

Casino Reservations  
235-3544

Cemetery  
235-3495

City Administrator  
235-3355

City Clerk  
235-3763

Fire Non-Emergency  
235-7799

Golf  
235-6076

Human Resources  
235-3763

Municipal Airport  
476-5112

Municipal Court  
235-4677

Police Non-Emergency  
235-4241

Street/Sanitation  
235-3495

Utilities  
235-3300

Waste Treatment Plant  
235-7455

Website  
[www.cityofmonett.com](http://www.cityofmonett.com)

## Monett's Perspective on Barry Co. E-911 Tax (cont'd)

Monett started providing E-911 service in 1993 after voters in Monett and parts of rural Barry and Lawrence counties approved a 911 surcharge on all landline telephones within the 235 and 236 telephone exchanges.

In 2005, the Barry County Commission proposed establishing a 911 service for Barry County and funding it with a ¼ cent sales tax. After discussions with Monett city officials, **Barry County officials committed to only providing service to those parts of Barry County not already being served by Monett's system. They also agreed that Monett's system would be held harmless from any loss of revenue caused by Barry County's tax.** Monett city officials decided not to oppose the County's ¼ cent E-911 sales tax with these assurances that it would not affect their system.

With the adoption of a countywide sales tax for emergency services dispatching, all 911 surcharges on landline phones were abolished when the system became operational. This impacted the 911 surcharge that supported Monett's system within Barry County. **Monett officials made formal requests to the Barry Co. E-911 Board to simply replace this loss of revenue as promised by Barry County prior to the election. The Board rejected Monett's request.** The loss of revenue amounted to \$60,000. This represented only 6% of Barry Co. E-911's revenues at the time.

Barry Co. E-911 states that they won't share any revenue because they could provide service for Monett. **This isn't a solution because it won't provide service to all of Monett's residents.** What happens to those Monett residents that live north of Cleveland Avenue? What happens to those residents of rural Monett, Freistatt, and Pierce City that also receive E-911 service from Monett? **Barry Co. E-911 has responded that they cannot or will not provide service to them.** It does not make sense for Monett to have two 911 providers that may have different levels of service and response times. Could these residents be served by Lawrence County 911? Possibly, but Monett has provided excellent service for almost 20 years and why risk a decrease in service and response times?

**We'll admit that Monett is unique. We straddle a county line and work with two counties that have different 911 capabilities.** We have experienced communications officers and excellent equipment in a new facility. **We don't believe that it's right to have two different levels of service within our town based solely on where you live.** Monett should be allowed to continue to operate its emergency dispatch system and have Barry County share the tax revenues that are generated from Monett to help fund it.

**We want to reiterate that we're not opposed to Barry Co. E-911 providing service to the other parts of Barry County.** We believe that they provide a quality service. Our disagreement is based on the need for one 911 provider for all of Monett and if that isn't possible, replace the lost income so we can continue to provide service.

It seems like a simple request for us to be able to work together for the benefit of Barry County's citizens.

We encourage all eligible Monett voters to be informed about the issues and to vote on February 7th.