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BGR MEDIA RELEASE

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BGR examines Jefferson transit tax propositions

The Bureau of Governmental Research today releases *On the Ballot: Jefferson Parish, April 4, 2009*. In the report, BGR examines two transit taxes up for renewal by voters. The report is available on BGR's web site, www.bgr.org.

One tax, at two mills, would be dedicated to the maintenance and operation of the parish's fixed-route public transit system. The other, at one mill, would be dedicated to operating and maintaining the Mobility Impaired Transportation System (MITS) for disabled individuals.

Voters last approved the renewal of the two taxes in 1999. Since then, the parish has rolled back the millage rates three times because of higher property tax assessments. As a result, the taxes were levied in 2008 at a rate of 1.3 mills for the fixed-route system and 0.65 mills for MITS. The propositions would bring the millage rates back up to the previously authorized rates.

"These taxes make the system go," said BGR Chairman Hans B. Jonassen. "Without them, public transit in Jefferson Parish would be reduced to a shadow of what it is today."

BGR Position:

For. The taxes are the principal source of funding for public transit in Jefferson Parish. If the taxes are not renewed, serious cuts in service will be necessary. Given the lack of other viable revenue sources, BGR recommends approving the renewals.

BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information call 525-4152 or visit BGR's website, www.bgr.org.

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