

LIBERTY SUBURBAN CHICAGO NEWSPAPERS

# Reporter

[\[ Click to Print \]](#) [\[ Close this Window \]](#)

## Home rule authority should be maintained

"Shall the village of Downers Grove, Illinois, cease to be a home rule unit?" Our community will decide this referendum question March 21. Loss of home rule authority would produce a great many financial and administrative consequences that are quite uncertain at present. What is certain now is the great amount of village staff time and effort that would be needed to work through the details of the transition to non-home rule authority.

We need to keep our village staff's attention focused on very real current challenges, such as the strong real-estate market forces that are now driving residential teardowns and commercial changes throughout our village.

Let's look at two relatively clear negative consequences that loss of home rule would have for village finances.

Strong sales tax income has for decades permitted the village to hold down its property taxes. Downers Grove's home rule authority permits the village to use hotel tax revenue to finance economic development programs that help build the sales tax income -- at present about half of the hotel tax revenue, some \$500,000 per year.

If Downers Grove ceases to be a home rule unit, this use of hotel tax revenue would not be permitted. Non-home rule municipalities can use hotel tax revenue only for visitor and tourist promotion programs.

Tax increment financing plays a major role in the ongoing revitalization of our central business district and the Ogden Avenue corridor. Any Illinois municipality can establish a TIF district whether it is a home rule unit or not. A home rule municipality, however, has the substantial advantage of paying reduced interest rates on its bonds that finance TIF district activities, as Downers Grove has.

Be sure to vote in the nonpartisan home rule referendum. Keep taxes low. Vote no!

***Gordon L. Goodman***

*Downers Grove*

©2006 Liberty Suburban Chicago Newspapers. All Rights Reserved.

Please feel free to e-mail suggestions, problems, or other issues to [webmaster@libertysuburban.com](mailto:webmaster@libertysuburban.com).