



## Kingman County Commission

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### **Kingman County rejects 1 percent sales tax**

Kingman County voters have defeated a proposed countywide sales tax to help fund construction of a new county law enforcement center. The 1 percent sales tax was the only question on Tuesday's special election ballot.

The unofficial vote total was 772 to 678, with 11 provisional votes cast. Kingman County Clerk Carol Noblit said the vote will not be final until a canvass is conducted by the county commission on Monday, April 14. However, the number of provisional ballots is not enough to change the outcome. Noblit said the turnout was slightly more than 26 percent of the county's 5,491 registered voters.

The ballot question asked voters to approve the tax for 20 years starting in October 2014, "for the purpose of financing costs of capital improvements including a new law enforcement center to serve the County and to provide general property tax relief."

The county has been working to get a new law enforcement center since 2010. The county hired BG Architects in January 2013 to design a new facility. The estimated cost to build BG's initial design was \$11.8 million. In October 2013, county voters turned down a sales tax to pay for a new LEC. That measure failed by 49 votes.

After the October vote, county commissioners worked with BG to reduce the costs of the project by \$1.3 million. But in mid-March, commissioners voted to abandon the BG design altogether amid public concern that the revised \$10.5 million price tag was still too high. The design included offices for Kingman police, the Kingman County Sheriff, 911 and emergency management, as well as storage space and a 32-bed jail.

Commissioners instead decided to focus on funding. They pledged to use proceeds from the proposed 1 percent tax as the budget for a new LEC. The 1 percent tax was expected to raise \$576,849 annually for the county. Revenue from the tax also would have been shared with the county's seven incorporated cities.

"This outcome is disappointing," said Kingman County commissioners in a prepared statement. "The problems with the current law enforcement center are still there and they can only be resolved with a new facility. We will carefully consider all of our options as we decide how to move forward."

The current law enforcement center, which is located just south of the courthouse, was built in 1959. It is in a flood plain and does not meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. It includes the current 13-bed jail and also is home to the sheriff, Kingman police and the county's 911 dispatch center.

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