

Libraries campaign against tax breaks

Letter warns officials against tax abatements

**By Scott Williams
Of The Examiner**

INDEPENDENCE — While tax breaks offer a potentially powerful tool for attracting new industry, the Mid-Continent Public Library District says they also represent a threat to its financial stability.

The Independence-based library district is taking steps to discourage tax breaks as economic-development incentives in the two dozen suburban communities where it has branch operations.

Those include Independence, Blue Springs, Grain Valley, Oak Grove, Lee's Summit, Raytown and Buckner.

In a letter sent this month to mayors, city managers and aldermen throughout the area, a Mid-Continent official warned of an "eroding away" of the \$11 million annual budget for the libraries.

Officials estimate that 90 percent of the library

district's revenue comes from property taxes collected throughout the district's three-county service region.

Business Manager Tom Lane said officials fear that economic development and community growth will place increased demands on the district's resources — while those resources are being cut off.

A widespread use of tax abatement to spur economic growth, he explained, could hamstring Mid-Continent's ability to keep pace.

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