

FOCUS ON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM THE DESK OF WAUKESHA COUNTY EXECUTIVE
DANIEL P. VRAKAS



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Dear Friends,

Last month, I introduced my Executive Budget to the County Board. I am extremely proud of this budget, which reduces spending and County taxes on a median valued home. In many ways, this accomplishment is due to Waukesha County's commitment to seeking partnerships to increase efficiency.

In the past two years, Waukesha County has saved local municipalities over \$2.0 million through partnerships and collaborations. Providing consolidated emergency dispatch services, signing municipal contracts for police patrols, and working together on highway and other projects have contributed to this savings.

Some key partnerships in next year's budget include:

- Joint Dispatch: In September, the County began providing 24 hour emergency 9-1-1 dispatching to residents of the City of New Berlin. According to an independent study, this will save New Berlin an estimated \$900,000 per year.
- Waukesha County will begin the design phase to migrate its trunked radio systems from analogue to digital. As part of the upgrades, the County is cooperating with Milwaukee County to jointly fund a study. We hope the study will result in a plan to increase public safety communication between our respective counties and save tax dollars for both counties.
- The Department of Public Works is working with the University of Wisconsin system to increase energy efficiency in order to save utility costs at UW-Waukesha. Through cost-sharing, the County will save significant dollars on the purchase of equipment while the college will save on energy bills.

I am confident that these partnerships, and many others, will continue to pay future dividends.

Sincerely,

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE AWARDS WINNERS

County Executive Dan Vrakas announced the 2012 County Executive Award winners recognized for the excellence they demonstrate as a successful organization in the community:

Business of the Year - Kolb+Co.

Large Non-Profit of the Year - The Women's Center

Small Non-Profit of the Year - Your Choice to Live, Inc.

Government Agency of the Year - Waukesha County Drug Free Communities Coalition

An independent panel of judges that includes business executives, community leaders and past award winners, select award recipients each year.

The winners will be honored at the seventeenth annual County Executive Awards Luncheon at the Country Springs Hotel, Waukesha, on Tuesday, October 16. Registration will start at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch at 12 p.m.

Craig Culver, owner and CEO of Culver Franchising System, Inc., will be the keynote speaker.

Reservations for the luncheon are available at \$45.00 per person, and corporate tables of 10 are available for \$450.00. For further information or to make reservations, contact Shirlene Hazelberg at 548-7902.

EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Waukesha County Executive Dan Vrakas introduced his 2013 Executive Budget, which reduces County taxes on a median valued home, to the Waukesha County Board at its September meeting.

"Last year we were able to freeze taxes on a median valued home. This year, through hard work and spending cuts, we are going a step further," Vrakas said. "This year, a County homeowner with a median valued home will see a \$2 decrease on the County portion of their tax bill."

A cut in Capital plan borrowing and spending played a major role in reducing 2013 expenditures to allow for the \$2 decrease. If the budget is approved by the County Board as is, the County will reduce capital borrowing by \$3 million and cut capital spending by \$12 million. Overall, the County will operate under a \$273.7 million budget, 3.8% less than the previous fiscal year.

"We operate our County like a business. When we invest in a building project, we put a minimum of 20% down, we receive the lowest interest rate available because of our AAA/Aaa bond rating and we pay off our bond issues in ten years or less," Vrakas said. "This is an extraordinary standard, for government or the private sector, and we should all feel proud."

Seeking partnerships between departments, other governments and the private sector to implement efficiencies, and ultimately save tax dollars, has been the key to Waukesha County's strong fiscal health.

With passage of the Proposed Budget, Waukesha County will remain a low-tax leader, ranking 70th out of 72 counties in the State for the lowest tax rate. County taxes on a business located in Waukesha County will be less than half of the County taxes on an equally valued business located in Milwaukee County.

The County Board will review Vrakas' 2013 Proposed Budget in committee with final passage expected in November.

"Waukesha County: Leading the Way ..."

OLDER AMERICAS ACT NUTRITION PROGRAM

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Elderly Nutrition Program (formerly called the National Nutrition Program for the Elderly) enacted on March 22, 1972. The program, which was included as a new title of the OAA, sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy, and signed by President Richard Nixon, has been providing meals to America's elderly since 1973.

Today's purpose of the elderly nutrition program is to reduce hunger and food insecurity, promote socialization of older individuals, and promote the health and well-being of older individuals. The Waukesha County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is promoting health and well-being by assisting older adults in gaining access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services. Access to these services will delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.

Join Waukesha County as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wisconsin Senior Dining Program on Wednesday, October 10, 2012. Call the ADRC of Waukesha County at 262-548-7826 to attend one of the 10 dining centers.

MINOOKA MASH HALLOWEEN EVENT

The Minooka Mash will be held Friday, October 19 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Minooka Park, 1927 E. Sunset Drive in Waukesha. This family friendly event is recommended for children 10 and under. The entrance fee is \$15 per carload, which includes all activities.

Children are encouraged to wear their costumes and "Do the Monster Mash" to the music played by a DJ at the barn dance.

Families can join a Retzer Nature Center Naturalist for an Owl Prowl as you hike the woods and search for animals amid the darkness and sounds of the night. Stop for a campfire story or take a Halloween Hike to visit the unhaunted scenes of a guided night hike. Each group of 25 people will have a guide lead them safely on a lighted trail stopping at scenes along the way. Learn about the different creatures including squirrels and spiders.

Each child will also be able to make crafts and bring home prizes from various games in the Children's Activity Area. Concessions will be available for purchase throughout the night. Most activities are held outside, so please dress for the weather, rain or shine.

Minooka Park is a part of the Waukesha County Park System, a natural resource based park system that demonstrates stewardship while providing recreational and educational opportunities. For more information, visit the Parks' Department web site at www.waukeshacountyparks.com.



Children dressed in Halloween Costumes at Minooka Mash.

"Waukesha County: Leading the Way ..."

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SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING CAMPAIGN

Governor Scott Walker and Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, launched the “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign in Wisconsin last month. The national public awareness campaign is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to encourage citizens to report suspicious activity.

The nationwide “If You See Something, Say Something™” public awareness campaign is a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime, and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to law enforcement.

Wisconsin’s campaign is being coordinated by the state’s two fusion centers. Both centers serve local, county and state public safety customers by sharing intelligence, offering training on the behaviors and indicators of terrorism, protecting Wisconsin critical infrastructure through risk assessments, and analyzing national threat information as it relates to Wisconsin.



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Executive Dan
Vrakas on Twitter!**

**Username:
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SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHTS

For the past several years, Waukesha County has been focused on promoting environmental sustainability efforts in order to save taxpayer dollars and help protect our natural resources. Below are some highlights of the County’s Sustainability Program:

- In 2011 and 2012 the County recycled 9,000 tons of concrete pavement and 10,000 tons of asphalt as granular base material.
- Areas of Fox River Park were naturalized with prairie grasses and wildflowers, resulting in a fuel reduction of 592 gallons.
- Reduced mowing frequency in select areas at Minooka Park, saving 4,268 gallons of fuel over the past 5 years.
- Occasionally, the Departments of Parks and Land Use and Public Works has the need to demolish buildings on County owned property. In September 2012, a series of buildings on park property were removed. Following the demolition, 93% of the structures was reused or recycled. All of the concrete and metal (100%) was recycled as well as 85% of the wood. This includes 210 tons of recycled concrete, 6.8 tons of recycled wood and 6.5 tons of recycled copper, aluminum and steel.

“Waukesha County: Leading the Way ...”