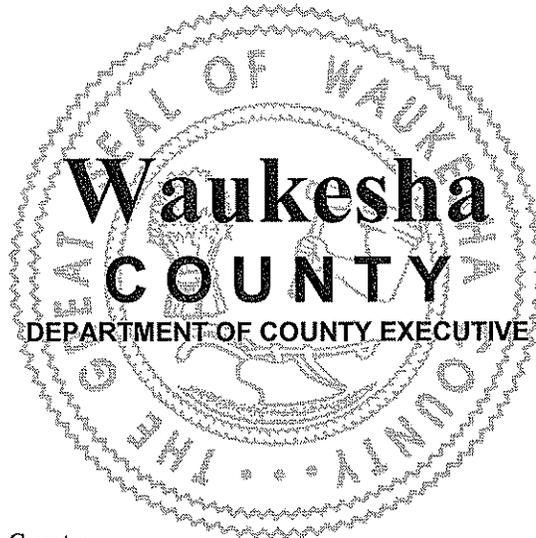


Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive



December 5, 2008

Dear Citizens of Waukesha County:

With overwhelming support and approval from our distinguished County Board Supervisors, it is an honor to provide you with a 2009 Adopted Budget that truly is "Committed to Excellence". Waukesha County is recognized across the State and throughout the nation as a public sector leader and innovator, and I am proud to say that our commitment to excellence is inherent in all that we do. This commitment ensures that we are able to pass a budget that limits spending to four-tenths of 1% over last year's budget, and maintains a tax rate of \$1.79 per \$1,000 in equalized value.

Waukesha County has a long tradition of being "Committed to Excellence" when it comes to limiting taxes and spending. We continue to have the lowest county tax rate in the state for counties that have not implemented a county-imposed sales tax. Yet, even when comparing our County to those with an enacted sales tax, it pleases me to share with you that Waukesha County ranks 70th out of 72 counties in the state for the lowest tax rate. Additionally, we are one of approximately 40 county government agencies out of more than 3,000 throughout the country to hold the coveted AAA/Aaa bond rating status, which is reflective of our exemplary financial management practices and allows us to lower the County's borrowing costs and keep taxes low.

TAX IMPACT ON HOMEOWNERS

A true measure of the County's property tax performance compares property tax control over time. Since being elected to serve as your County Executive, I am pleased to share with you that our residents have benefited from the County's ability to control taxation. When I took office in 2005, the County portion of the tax bill on the average home of \$256,700 was \$504. In partnership with the County Board, my administration has been able to maintain our low tax rate so that the County portion of the tax bill on today's average home of \$281,100 will be \$503.

BUDGET DRIVERS

During an economic slowdown, the County is faced with increased demands for service and rising costs for their effective delivery, many of which are greater than the rate of inflation. With more than 40% of the County's budget dedicated to delivering federal and state mandated services, discretionary spending is at a minimum after the cost-to-continue these operational needs have been funded: jail inmate costs, snow removal and road salt prices, workers compensation claims, and energy cost increases. There are also a number of major federal and state revenue sources that have been reduced, eliminated, or frozen for several years, which have a great impact on this year's budget. Some of the key government revenue losses that must be sustained in the County's 2009 Adopted Budget include:

Reduced or Eliminated Revenues:

- E-911 grant to sunset in 2008
- Alcohol Treatment Court grant of \$100,000 ends in 2008
- Homeless grants for jail transition and treatment programs

Frozen Revenues:

- State Court Support grant (\$1.1 million since 2000)
- State Human Services Community Aids/BASIC County Allocation (\$11.4 million since 1996)
- State Transportation aids (\$5.4 million currently)

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PARTNERSHIPS AND EFFICIENCIES:

As we plan for the future, the Adopted 2009 County Budget identifies a number of business efficiencies that will be accomplished through strategic partnerships that enable us to leverage resources and reduce operational costs while providing new or better service. Some of the recommended projects are highlighted below:

- Establish a cost effective pilot project for transit van pool service or alternative transit options with partnering businesses to bring workers to jobs where traditional bus routes are not sustainable.
- Decentralize record imaging and reduce record storage and retrieval costs for Circuit Court Services and the District Attorney’s Office.
- Complete the State of Wisconsin’s Long Term Care reform to Family Care through the Department of Health and Human Services and the Aging and Disability Resource Center by jointly assessing client needs and determining eligibility for benefits. By the end of 2008, staff will transition 1,200 existing waiver-funded client cases to two Managed Care Organization partners, and will begin addressing service eligibility for nearly 800 additional individuals on Long Term Care service waiting lists.
- Through the Department of Administration, implement the first phase of a county-wide cashiering system to consolidate nine stand-alone systems into one enterprise application for these departments during the second half of 2008 and into 2009: the Treasurer’s Office, the Department of Parks and Land Use, the Medical Examiner’s Office, and the Waukesha County Airport.
- Study potential strategic alliances with the Aging and Disability Resource Center, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Veterans Service Office, as well as between the Departments of Public Works and Parks and Land Use.
- Designate a dog exercise area at Nashotah Park through a partnership between the Department of Parks and Land Use, the Waukesha Kennel Club, and local municipalities.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

In continuing Waukesha County’s legacy of fiscal responsibility and its commitment to excellence, capital projects planning efforts strike a balance between maintaining our important infrastructure and delivering critical services, which ensures the County’s growth and economic viability while holding taxes at a minimum level. About 57% of our infrastructure spending is dedicated to highway improvements, such as repaving roads, repairing bridges, and making safety improvements. The plan also calls for making strategic investments in our facilities, which includes: construction of a new secure connector to separate the public from inmate movement in the Courthouse; general maintenance of the existing Courthouse facility and its equipment until a major infrastructure renovation happens in 2016; the planning for a new Human Services Center; expanding space at the Medical Examiner’s Office to address current and projected County and contracted service needs; and upgrades at the UW-Waukesha Campus and throughout the Parks System.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Being “Committed to Excellence” ensures a sustainable future. By focusing on core service priorities, establishing strategic partnerships, and implementing business efficiencies, we are able to achieve real, on-going cost-savings. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Waukesha County’s devoted employees, entrusted appointed representatives, and capable elected officials for their professionalism and dedication in helping Waukesha County advance a 2009 Adopted Budget that delivers important services and invests in critical infrastructure while maintaining a low tax rate. As a taxpayer, I know you appreciate our diligence.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive