

Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive



December 9, 2009

Dear Citizens of Waukesha County:

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Waukesha County 2010 Adopted Budget which is aimed at “Maintaining Excellence.” This budget is the result of countless hours of teamwork and dedication from the County Board, County Department Heads and employees, and the County Budget team. I am very proud that Waukesha County has been recognized throughout the state and nationwide as a leader that continues to maintain our commitment to excellence in all that we do. During tough economic times with unemployment still on the rise, the demand for County services becomes greater. It is the goal and intention of the County and this budget to maintain the excellent services we are known for while also maintaining our position as a low tax leader.

Waukesha County has a long tradition of “Excellence” when it comes to limiting taxes and spending. We continue to have the lowest county tax rate in the state among counties that have not implemented a county-imposed sales tax. Additionally, we continue to be one of less than 50 county government agencies out of more than 3,000 throughout the country to hold the coveted AAA/Aaa bond rating status and the only county in the State of Wisconsin. This status is reflective of our exemplary financial management practices and allows us to lower borrowing costs to the County and keep our taxes low.

TAX IMPACT ON HOMEOWNERS

One measure of the County’s property tax performance is to compare property tax control over time. Since being elected to serve as your County Executive, 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. For the 2010 budget, the tax bill on the average home now valued at \$272,100 is \$508, which averages about one dollar per year more over the last four years.

BUDGET DRIVERS

As we all work through this uncertain economic period, the County is faced with decreasing revenue streams and rising costs, many of which are greater than the rate of inflation. With more than 44% of the County’s budget dedicated to federal and state mandates, room for discretionary spending is at a minimum. The County must fund operational costs of jail inmates, snow removal and high road salt prices, while meeting the needs of at risk children and families, and the unemployed. Major revenue sources related to the downturn in the economy, especially the real estate market, together with reductions or elimination of federal and state revenue sources, have had a significant impact on this year’s budget.

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Some of the key revenue reductions or eliminations that are dealt with in this 2010 County budget are reduced or eliminated major revenues total over \$2.5 million.

This includes:

- Real Estate Transfer Fee revenues declined by \$775,000.
- Health and Human Service Community aid funding reduced by \$425,000.
- Investment Income reduced by \$400,000.
- Child and Family incentive funding of over \$250,000 eliminated.
- Parks and Land Use revenues declined by over \$250,000.
- State Transportation Aids decreased by \$167,000.
- State funding of \$112,600 for Economic Support Fraud investigation eliminated.
- State Shared Revenues reduced by \$150,000.
- State Court Support (\$1.1 million since 2000) declined by over \$35,000.

COOPERATION, TEAMWORK & EFFICIENCIES

A number of strategic partnerships and efficiencies are also included in the 2010 budget. This includes the implementation of a merger between the Department of Health and Human Services, the Aging and Disability Resource Center and Veterans Services Office and the creation of a Criminal Justice Collaboration Council task force to examine the future of the Huber facility and its programming. Additionally, a committee will study a strategic alliance between the County Airport and the Department of Public Works to identify ways to provide better service and support to airport users.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

The County has a legacy of prudent fiscal responsibility. To demonstrate “Maintaining Excellence,” the proposed 2010-2014 Capital Projects Plan strikes a balance between investments in our important infrastructure and delivering critical services to ensure the County’s growth and economic viability. The plan maintains the County’s vital infrastructure while still anticipating and planning for growth. Also, the plan introduces a number of environmentally sustainable initiatives that improve our impact on the environment while saving significant dollars over the long term. Investments in our facilities include the construction of a new secure connector to separate the public from inmate movement in the courthouse and the largest facility project to date, a new Health and Human Services Center beginning in 2012.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are ensuring that excellence is maintained for a sustainable future by focusing on our core service priorities, establishing strategic partnerships, and using teamwork to implement business efficiencies to achieve ongoing 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 me to prepare a 2010 County Budget that maintains excellence by delivering quality services and making investments for the future while ensuring low taxes.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive