

Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive



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Contact: Shawn Lundie – Chief-of-Staff, (262) 548-7902

VRAKAS CUTS SPENDING; TAXES DROP ON HOME AS PART OF 2013 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

WAUKESHA, Wis. – 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 monthly meeting this evening.

“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.

Several major projects will conclude in 2013 including the largest building and road projects in County history with the completion of the new Health and Human Services Building and the expansion of Janesville Road in the City of Muskego respectively. Due to a favorable bidding climate for materials and labor as well as great construction weather, the County will save \$1 million on the projected construction cost of the Health and Human Services Building.

The completion of Muskego’s Janesville Road is highly anticipated by the City and is critical for economic development and public safety. In total, since 2001, Waukesha County has invested over \$37 million in Muskego.

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“Vrakas cuts spending; taxes drop on home as part of 2013 Executive Budget,” continued ...

“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.

“I’m proud to say that during the past two years, Waukesha County has saved local municipalities over \$2.0 million through partnerships and collaborations,” Vrakas said.

“Providing consolidated emergency dispatch services, signing municipal contracts for police patrols, and working together on highway and other projects have contributed to this savings.”

Key partnerships included in the 2013 Proposed Budget include:

- The City of New Berlin joining County emergency dispatch: Earlier this month, the Waukesha County Communication Center 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 the City of New Berlin an estimated \$900,000 per year.
- Digital Radio Upgrade: Waukesha County will begin the design phase to migrate its trunked radio systems from analogue to digital. As part of the upgrades, Waukesha County is cooperating with Milwaukee County to jointly fund a study to layout a possible road-map where our two counties will share a new, state-of-the-art digital radio tower system. This, in turn, will increase public safety communication between our respective counties and save tax dollars for both counties.
- Income Maintenance Consortium: After the successful creation of a consortium with four other counties last year, the Health and Human Services – Income Maintenance Division, which assists low-income families, will improve efficiency by sharing call center duties, document processing and client interviews.
- Energy efficient upgrades at UW-Waukesha: 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.

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.