



The Leon County LINK

Connecting Citizens with Leon County Services

Leon County Crafts Preliminary FY2007/2008 Budget

Reductions Made in Light of Property Tax Reform

Last week, the Board of County Commissioners faced a unique challenge in crafting the fiscal year 2007/2008 preliminary budget. The new property tax reform law passed during the recent special session requires Leon County to "rollback" taxing rates to the previous year, as well as reduce an additional three to five percent – the final percentage will be determined by the Department of Revenue on July 13. The Legislature's property tax reform package also includes a constitutional amendment to be placed on the January 29, 2008 ballot for voter consideration. The amendment provides for a super homestead exemption, and, if passed, would result in substantial revenue loss for the County.

In anticipation of the property tax reform, the County Administrator recommended and the Board approved a hiring freeze in February to create vacancies. They also froze millions of dollars worth of capital improvements. Due to the hiring freeze, the Board was able to eliminate positions without laying off a single County employee. Employees who occupy services that were cut will be transferred to vacancies in other County divisions. The Board carefully reviewed non-mandatory services when considering options.

The first public hearing/town hall meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 4, at 6 p.m. in the Leon County Courthouse, located at 301 S. Monroe St., and citizens are encouraged to attend to provide input on the preliminary budget before it is finalized. The second and final public hearing will be held on Sept. 18 at which time the Board will adopt the final budget.

Program and Service Reductions:

- a. Reduce the general revenue subsidy to the Solid Waste fund by \$862,502 by changing the operating hours of the Apalachee Solid Waste Management Facility to 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Saturday; reducing the planned allocations to the FY08 Solid Waste Capital Improvement Program in the amount of \$403,000, and reducing the hours of operating the Rural Waste Collection Centers to four days a week.
- b. Authorized the shifting of cultural resource funding for the Council on Cultural Resources to the Tourist Development Council in the amount of \$526,350 as specified in Budget Discussion Item #6.
- c. Delay the implementation of the Sheriff's Salary Study to February 1, 2008 for a cost savings of \$600,000.
- d. Eliminate the general revenue subsidy for FY08 to the Mosquito Control Program in the amount of \$597,580, and for FY07 immediately implement a fee based pilot program (at a rate of \$40) for mosquito spraying to determine if the program could be self-supporting through user fees (Attachment # 2).
- e. Reduce the County Attorney's outside litigation funding in the amount of \$300,000.
- f. Reduce the Sheriff's Office operating and capital budget request by \$466,056.
- g. Reduce the funding to the Supervisor of Elections Office budget in the amount of \$212,940.
- h. Reduce the funding to the Property Appraiser's Office in the amount of \$181,158.
- i. Reduce the amount of line item funding by \$152,910.
- j. Reduce the funding allocation for lake chemistry sampling by \$150,000, and reduce the sampling schedule from monthly to quarterly.
- k. Eliminate the Public Service Director position for a cost savings of \$109,000.
- l. Reduce funding to the Clerk of Courts in the amount of \$90,000.
- m. Reduce Management Information System technical support by eliminating one position for a cost savings of \$53,933.
- n. Eliminate \$50,000 in funding to the Leon County School Board for their Late Night Media Program.
- o. Reduce administrative support at the Agricultural Extension Office by eliminating an Administrative position saving \$36,727.
- p. Reduce Geographical Information Systems development by eliminating one GIS Specialist position for a net savings of \$22,554 since the position is split funded by the City of Tallahassee.
- q. Eliminate the Office of Management and Budget Internship Program for a savings of \$19,774.

For detailed information on the budget workshop, please visit www.leoncountyfl.gov or call the Leon County Public Information Office at 606-5300.

Mosquito Control Now Fee-for-Service



The Board made required reductions to the budget – one of which included making Mosquito Control hand- and truck-spraying fee-for-service. During their consideration of this issue, the Board was advised that Leon County's Mosquito Control program is not a disease prevention program; rather it is a nuisance control program.

Instead of eliminating the program and shifting employees to other County divisions, the Board chose to conduct a 90-day trial period in which residents would pay \$40 for spraying services. After the trial period, the Board will decide whether Mosquito Control can function as a fee-supported service. For more information, please contact Jenn Meale, Leon County Public Information Officer, at 606-5300.

Leon County is a "Heart Ready Community"

For the second consecutive year, the American Heart Association recognizes Leon County as a "Heart Ready Community" for the placement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public locations, along with public CPR and AED training. Leon County is a leader in ongoing efforts to save lives from sudden cardiac arrest through public safety education programs and its progressive, countywide AED program.



The American Heart Association estimates that each day, more than 95 percent of Americans who suffer cardiac arrest die before reaching the hospital. Over the past year, Leon County Emergency Medical Services (LCEMS) has improved their resuscitation rate from 21.21 to 22.75 percent. These resuscitation rates are well above the national resuscitation rate of five to seven percent. In an effort to expand AED coverage throughout the County, LCEMS has added 116 AEDs to the Leon County Sheriff's Office fleet.

Two new factors contributing to these successful resuscitation rates are improved airway training for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) and Paramedics and the addition of new bone drills in the ambulances to use on patients who are not able to have intravenous lines administered. For more information, please contact Leon County Emergency Medical Services Deputy Chief of Operations, Mac Kemp, at 606-2100 or visit www.leoncountyfl.gov.

Purchase County Surplus Items Online

Buying Leon County surplus items is now possible from the comfort of your home. The Leon County Purchasing Division recently joined www.publicsurplus.com to make bidding and purchasing items more convenient. Vehicles, heavy equipment, electronics and more are available, and there is no registration fee. In addition to the online bidding process, live auctions will still be offered and dates for these auctions will be posted on the County Web site.

For more information, please contact Leon County Board of County Commissioners Purchasing Division/Property Control at 606-1600.

July 2007

Board of County Commissioners Schedule

4 County Offices Closed in Honor of Independence Day Holiday

10 Commission Meeting, 3 p.m., **Public Hearings**, 6 p.m.
Leon County Courthouse, Commission Chambers

24 No Meeting; Board Recess

The Link is produced by Leon County Public Information, 606-5300.