

Bryan's Brief March 2009

Spring has arrived - the time of year we all love so well here in Leon County! We've set the clocks forward and still trying to adjust to that lost hour. The dogwoods and azaleas are blooming and hay fever season is in high gear. It's also our least favorite time of year - income tax preparation and the County budget review.

The FY 09/10 Budget Process

In FY 07/08, we cut service levels, operations and staffing to address the \$11 million decrease in revenue and the increased operating costs of more than \$4 million for that fiscal year. Last year we implemented additional service level, operations and staffing reductions to address the additional \$17 million in reduced revenues and increased operating costs.

The Leon County Property Appraiser has now advised us of an unprecedented decrease from \$15.7 billion to \$14.7 billion in taxable property values which translates into another projected decrease in revenue of almost \$12 million for next year's budget. We've identified a gap of approximately \$19 million that we're either going to have to make up in service level reductions, an increase in the millage rate, increased taxes, other funding opportunities, etc. At our budget workshop in March, the Board directed staff to proceed with:

- Building a budget with a 7% across-the-board reduction.
- No changes in the countywide millage rate, which results in a direct estimated tax savings of \$8.1 million to Leon County taxpayers.
- Pursuing (in cooperation with surrounding local governments) approximately 25 different funding opportunities through the Federal Economic Stimulus Package.
- Excluding any employee pay increases.
- Using unreserved fund balances as an offset against possible budget reductions and for one-time capital projects.
- The Fire and Emergency Services functional consolidation (in cooperation with the City) which is moving forward timely.
- Developing the FY 09/10 budget for a gradual increase in the solid waste and stormwater fees to eliminate the general revenue subsidy.
- Eliminating the general revenue subsidy to transportation and explore whether it can be replaced with a gas tax. This would insure everyone in the county who purchases gas is paying toward transportation improvements instead of just property owners.

Leon County continues to have the lowest net budget per capita among comparable counties in the nation as well as the lowest number of staff positions per capita. We'll continue to seek out operational reductions that will have the least impact on our quality of life and welcome any suggestions you may have for us during this process. Public Hearings on the budget will be held in June and September and I'll insure you're provided with the dates in upcoming newsletters.

Air Service Improvements - Delta Air Lines will reinstate non-stop intra-Florida service between Tallahassee Regional Airport and Fort Lauderdale, Tampa and Orlando beginning on April 1, 2009. This joint initiative on behalf of the City of Tallahassee, Governor's Office and Leon County reinstates Delta service that was lost back in October 2008. This was done to address the needs of the business community and legislators.

Signage Ordinance (Billboards) - After confirmation with, and the approval of, some neighborhood leaders, action was delayed on this item until April 28th and a public hearing will be held April 9 to also extend the moratorium on the installation of new signage.

District IV Updates

Kerry Forest Parkway Extension - completed and in operation - a welcome, highly efficient and beautiful, transportation amenity!

Bradfordville/Velda Dairy and Bradfordville/Centerville Rd Intersection Improvements - completed, in operation and thanks to those of you who continue to provide feedback

Meridian/Oxbottom and Meridian/Bannerman Intersection Improvement - the design and permitting is complete on both and we're pursuing funding for these through the Federal Economic Stimulus Process through FDOT which will allow County funds to be used on other projects. We still anticipate getting these two projects done during the summer.

Oxbottom and Thomasville Rd Development - This is a City project and Wayne Tedder, the Director of the Tallahassee Leon County Planning Department has the lead, has been monitoring the project, and is soliciting input from residents in the area. Contact him at Wayne.Tedder@talgov.com

Pimlico Sidewalk - completed

Target Entrance Improvements - Target, Regents Bank and another private developer are looking at relocation of the Target entrance due to safety concerns. They have all the County permits and they're currently in the review process FDOT.

Bannerman Road - the Board has authorized the corridor study for Bannerman Rd. to determine ways to better plan for improvements.

Bannerman-Bull Headley in the process of design of intersection improvements with construction completion the first of next year. The improvements include enhanced signal system, left hand turn on to Bull Headley and treatment facility for roadway stormwater.

Commission Meeting Issues - On April 28th, our commission meetings will move back to Tuesdays from Thursday.

As always, thank you for your continuing support. I'm honored to serve as your District IV Commissioner. I welcome your suggestions on where we can improve and encourage you to use *LeonListens* at www.leoncountyfl.com to provide your recommendations to the Board and me. I hope you'll call on me if you have further questions or concerns – deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov or 606-5364.

Respectfully,

Bryan Desloge

Chair

Leon County Commissioner, District IV