

Bryan's Brief
July, 2010

With all the heat and rain we're having, I'm looking forward to the cooler days of autumn, even if it does mean raking leaves. We're now on our summer break, but there's a lot going on right now with the elections coming up, the budget reconciliation, infrastructure improvements, etc. Here's some updates.

We began work in June on the FY2011 budget, facing an almost \$10 million shortfall, which included increases in operating costs and a \$1.9 million decline in ad valorem collections associated with a reduction in property values. Just as you have had to do, we whittled away at the budget and I'm proud to say we've been able to keep the millage rate at 8.35 and reduced property taxes by \$1.9 million. We've tentatively approved a budget of approximately \$244 million for the FY2011 fiscal year, bringing the total reduction of the County's budget to more than \$40 million, or roughly 14 percent, since 2008. For the second year in a row, the County has reduced citizens' property taxes, resulting in a cumulative savings of \$11 million over the past two budget cycles.

Nine positions within Growth and Environmental Management were eliminated and staff was directed to bring back a plan detailing a project-manager approach to assisting citizens with the permitting process. After comparisons with like county's budgets and discussions with the Supervisor of Elections and his staff, he was able to cut his budget by \$250,000 and I commend him for his efforts. Furthermore, the Board determined its overall levels of reserves were sufficient and that it was an appropriate time to utilize a portion of its rainy-day fund, drawing \$4 million from the general fund balance. During the "boom" years, the County was diligent in not adding excessive costs to the operating budget and instead prudently established adequate reserves. In spite of continued revenue reductions, increased costs, unfunded mandates from the State, financial constraints born out of Amendment 1 tax-reform legislation, and last year's unprecedented \$1 billion estimated decline in taxable value, the Board has made a concerted effort over the past three years to minimize the impact of service delivery to the citizens of Leon County, implementing expenditure reductions and reducing and restructuring services.

I'm proud to say that when compared to Florida's other 66 counties:

- Leon County has the fourth lowest net budget per capita, after Gadsden, Santa Rosa and Baker counties.
- Leon County has the fifth lowest number of employees per capita with only Pinellas, Seminole, Santa Rosa and Sumter employing fewer.

DISTRICT IV UPDATE

- **Stormwater Projects**
 - Barfield and Edinfield stormwater project completion
 - Killlearn Lakes Stormwater Project - The Neighborhood Association has information on this project. We will be holding a public meeting with the residents to discuss the Killlearn Lakes Stormwater Maintenance Program for Units 1, 2, & 3 when we've completed our negotiations with the State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection on the environmental permitting impact.
- **Northeast Library** - construction is underway for the addition of 5000 sq ft, with refurbished areas, engineering and design work, permitting and the addition of a sprinkler system, at a cost of \$1.4 million. The ribbon cutting should be scheduled sometime in late January or February.
- **Roadway improvements-**
 - Bannerman Rd. repaving has been completed and engineering and design work continues on the Bannerman Rd/Bull Headley intersection improvements adding turn lanes and stormwater improvements. With permitting and construction, the project should be complete in 3 to 4 months..

- The engineering and design work is underway for a proposed Bannerman Rd. road-widening project. Completion of the engineering and design work on this project will position us for possible stimulus or other funding sources that may become available. Please understand there are no funds available for this project at this time. I'm just trying to get us strategically placed such that if some come available, this project will be ready to go! A Citizens Advisory Committee has been established to participate with the County in the development of the design. Their kickoff meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, July 21st.
- Resurfacing of Miles Johnson Rd. near Crump Rd. has been completed.
- Resurfacing of Bradfordville Rd. from Centerville to Thomasville Rd with intersection improvements at Centerville and Bradfordville and Velda Dairy and Bradfordville completed.
- Lee Reeves Rd. is being stabilized and paved with scheduled work completion in 4 to 6 mths.
- The FDOT/County Mahan Dr Expansion continues and with it being a gateway to the community, the landscaping enhancements are now being installed.
- **Intersection Improvements** - Work has been completed on the Meridian Rd/Oxbottom Rds.; Meridian Rd/Bannerman Rds; Timberlane/Timberlane School Rds - let me know if you are experiencing any problems
- **Sidewalk Extensions**
 - Work has been completed on the sidewalk installation on Timberlane from Timberlane School Rd to Woodley Dr;
 - Dempsey Mayo Rd. sidewalk from from Mahan to Miccosukee Rd;
 - The sidewalk is about 60% complete on Velda Dairy Rd. from Kerry Forest to Bradfordville Rd.
 - Work is underway on the sidewalk and safety improvement project for Deer Lake and Kinhega Drives. We have had requests for the sidewalk to be extended to the end of Deerlake North. Regretfully funding is only available for the addition of sidewalks and safety improvements to the school. Since we are working within the existing roadway, costs are not as drastic as they would be if we included the extension which would require the removal of trees, understory, and the permitting and installation of stormwater conveyances. Regretfully, funding was just not available for this type of expansion. We had to work within our limited budget and I'm grateful we were able to provide this limited improvement.
- **Miccosukee Park** - we have completed the installation of a scoreboard and scoring booth and are in the process of engineering and designing the expansion of the sports complex adding much needed football and soccer fields. We're working on the design and engineering now and with the permitting process should have the project ready to start construction by the end of the year, but we'll need to coordinate construction with scheduled field activities.

I'm pleased to provide you with this overview of the work done this year. As always, thank you for your continuing support. I'm honored to serve as your District IV Commissioner. I welcome your suggestions on how we can further improve our operations and services and hope you'll call me if you have any questions or concerns – deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov or 606-5364.

Respectfully,



Bryan Desloge

Chairman

Leon County Commissioner, District IV