



September • 2009

BROWARD'S BUDGET OUTLOOK:

As I am sure you have read in the newspapers, Broward County is in the middle of our budget process for the 2009/2010 budget. To say the least, this is the most difficult budget that our Commission has ever had to resolve. In 2008, the State told us Amendment 1 would cause our taxes to “drop like a rock,” and further we would see no decline in services. Instead, what we now know is that Amendment 1 has created greater property tax inequality. Combine this with the economic recession, a depressed housing market and a decline in economic activity and the result is a huge gap in the County’s General Fund of \$110 million. General funds pay for services and programs such as parks, libraries and transit, in addition to the Sheriff, Property Appraiser and the Supervisor of Elections.

To address the gap, significant reductions in the budget have to be made. This includes

closing libraries on Sundays, closing parks a second day per week, eliminating some funding to Tri-Rail and reducing funding for not for profit services to children, the elderly, primary care and cultural grants. The County is also poised to eliminate 523 positions, half of which are filled. County employees have also agreed to work five days without pay. More tough decisions remain ahead. Even with all these efforts, we are faced with more challenges. The budget requires us to find an additional \$25 million in savings. With most efficiencies already attained and staffing reductions already made, there are few options left to cut costs.

There are two public hearings scheduled for September 10 and 22 at 5:01p.m. at the Broward County Governmental Center, located at 115 S. Andrews Avenue, 4th Floor in Ft. Lauderdale. Citizen input is invaluable to me as we move towards a final budget. Please feel free to attend the budget hearing and share your opinion, or catch us live on Comcast Cable channel 12 or on the web at: www.Broward.org/video.

Are you ready for a hurricane

Following Hurricane Wilma’s arrival in Broward County on October 24, 2005, emergency management personnel were dealing with frantic callers attempting to determine if a family member was well or in need of assistance. It is a great help to our first responders if you make sure your family and friends know where you are. If you decide to stay in a shelter, let your family or neighbors know how to reach you. Consider providing a family member or friend, living in another area, a phone list of people who need to know you are safe. You can then call one or two people, who can in turn let the others on your list know you are safe, and how to reach you.

Database of vulnerable residents

Broward County, in cooperation with our cities has launched a Vulnerable Population Registry. The new Registry is for residents who do not qualify for a Special Needs Shelter, or choose not to evacuate to a shelter, but consider themselves vulnerable. During previous hurricanes, first responders reacted to calls for help from residents who found coping with an emergency difficult. Some residents were unable to find supplies and were in need of groceries or medications. Others were trapped in multi-story buildings with no working elevators and unable to travel up and down stairs to secure essential provisions. Residents may register online at: <http://www.broward.org/atrisk/> or call 954-831-4000. All your information will be held in strict confidence, as required by federal law. If this service is important to you, register now not when a storm threatens.

Series of Upcoming Town Hall Meetings

Hosting meeting in each city I represent makes it easy and convenient for those of you who may not want to travel downtown or to my district office to meet with me. These meetings are also an opportunity to bring you up to date on County issues that impact all of us and I want to discuss your concerns and listen to your ideas.

Deerfield Beach

Thursday, October 15, 2009 6:30 p.m.
The School House at the City of Deerfield Beach
150 N.E. 2 Avenue

Margate

Tuesday, November 17, 2009
N.W. Focal Point Center
6009 N.W. 10 Street

Power of One

If every newspaper reader in the United States recycled just one typical Sunday paper, he or she could help create 212 million pounds of cellulose insulation— enough to insulate 118,767 Habitat for Humanity houses. That’s nearly twice as many houses as all Habitat homes built in America so far.

