



**A Message From
Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5**

Earlier this year the State Legislature required counties and municipalities throughout Florida to keep their tax supported budgets the same as in 2007 and reduce that amount by a percentage that was determined by past property tax increases. In Broward County, where property tax rates have actually been reduced annually for the past decade, we were required to make a 5% reduction.

The state mandate meant that we had to eliminate about \$90 million from the \$1 billion that is annually collected in property taxes. We have tried to preserve services to residents and as a result it has become necessary to increase the fees we charge for some services. In total, the fee increases will raise about \$9 million in revenue.

Next month, there will be increases in some classes of bus fares. This is the first time that Broward County Transit has increased fares since 1995, and these adjusted fares bring Broward County in line with neighboring counties. These fare increases are anticipated to raise \$3.6 million this year. A regular one-way fare will increase in price to \$1.25, while reduced price fares for special groups of students, seniors, the disabled or those on Medicare will increase to \$.60. A 10-Ride Bus Pass will now cost \$10.00. An All Day pass will increase in price to \$3.00 (reduced price passes for youth, seniors, the disabled or those on Medicare will now cost \$2.00), a 7-Day Pass will now cost \$11.00, and a 31-Day Pass has gone up in price to \$40.00 (\$20.00 for special reduced price groups, as well as for college students). Please remember that 123,000 people ride BCT's 41 routes daily. Fares only pay a quarter of the \$131 million a year it takes to operate this service.

Broward County Libraries will be increasing the fines charged on overdue print materials from \$.15 per item per day to \$.25 per item per day. This slight increase will result in approximately \$500,000 in revenue being returned to the general fund. Advanced computer classes that are offered at the libraries will cost \$10. Broward County Libraries offer computer classes in a number of subjects, from Basic Computer Literacy to more advanced classes, including training on essential business software such as Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint. To learn more about Broward County Libraries, including information on computer classes offered, please visit www.broward.org/library or call (954) 357-7444.

Broward County residents who own pets will be paying a slight increase in licensing fees this year. (Note that the majority of veterinarians and the Animal Care Division charge the

following fees for pet license tags. Some veterinarians charge an additional handling fee to cover administrative costs.) Replacement tags will now be \$4.00. One-year licenses for animals that are spayed or neutered will increase in price by \$1.00 to \$15.00. The County Commission also approved a three-year pet license that will cost \$35.00.

The fees are higher for owners whose pets are not spayed or neutered; a one-year license will cost \$31.00 and a three-year license will cost \$75.00. Spaying or neutering your pet reduces the number of unwanted cats and dogs born and reduces the number of unwanted animals that are euthanized. In addition, a spayed or neutered pet is usually healthier than one who is not. Broward County residents who own dogs classified as "dangerous" will pay \$100.00 to license their dogs annually.

There are also new registration fees for dangerous dogs. Dangerous dog owners will pay a \$200 initial registration fee and a \$100 annual licensing fee. These increased licensing fees will raise approximately \$275,000 in revenue next year. For more information on the Animal Care and Regulation Division, please visit their website at <http://www.broward.org/animal/welcome.htm> or call (954) 359-1313.

At the time of writing, the increased fees for the Parks and Recreation Division have not yet been approved by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners. The following are the proposed rate increases. To find out what the finalized rate increases are, or to find out more specific information on fees, please visit www.broward.org/parks/ or call (954) 357-8100. The proposed fee to enter a park (note that entrance fees are only charged on weekends and holidays) will increase to \$1.50 a person, with the maximum per non-commercial vehicle rising to \$8.00. An individual annual pass will rise to \$25.00 a year, while a family annual pass (up to six people) will now be \$60.00. Athletic passes to regional parks for athletic programs will now cost \$2.50. Camping fees in Broward County Parks with the appropriate facilities will now be \$25.00 per site, per night for Tri-County residents. Please note that a number of fees associated with holding large events or renting facilities in Broward County Parks have also increased; more information is available by contacting the Parks and Recreation Division.

The Broward County Board of County Commissioners is proud of the services that it provides to its residents. Should you have any questions about services or fees, please call my office at (954) 357-7005.

Best Regards,

Lois Wexler
Commissioner, District 5
Broward County