



NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE COONS ANNOUNCES NEXT ROUND OF BUDGET AND SERVICE REDUCTIONS

NEW CASTLE, Del. – County Executive Chris Coons has announced further cuts to the current FY2009 budget as the county’s financial outlook continues to worsen. The new spending cuts announced today include salary reductions for top managers in the government, including the County Executive, as well as layoffs for some of the county’s casual and seasonal workforce.

Since the County Executive’s previous announcement on November 13, the county’s projected revenue for the year has fallen by another \$2 million, increasing the deficit for the current fiscal year to \$32 million. The size of the county’s deficit in relation to its budget is now nearly 19%, almost identical to the State of Delaware’s deficit in relation to its budget.

Actions today include the reduction of library and adult activity center hours, mandatory unpaid furlough time for the County Executive, Department General Managers, Chief Administrative Officer, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief of Staff, cost-cutting in the police Mounted Patrol Unit, elimination of more take home cars, as well as reductions in park and athletic field maintenance.

County libraries will be closed all day Sunday and Thursday evenings beginning in January. In addition, beginning January 2, the Activity Centers at Garfield Park and Hockessin will close on Fridays and overall hours will decrease. Some county parks will see the elimination of grass cutting in meadow areas and the county will institute a carry-in carry-out policy for trash similar to that in state parks.

Other services such as sewer connections provided to residents at significantly discounted rates will also end, and county employees will be asked to pay a larger share of their health care costs.

The cuts across all areas of government will help the county save \$2.5 million over the final six months of the FY2009 budget and \$5 million in future budget years.

County Council is also taking steps to reduce spending. Earlier this month, County Council voted to reduce their budget for next fiscal year by \$192,716. Many of those reductions will start in January.

“Our financial situation requires hard choices, including layoffs for some of our part-time workforce, and I regret that. But we cannot continue business as usual in light of our growing budget deficit,” said County Executive Chris Coons. This continued loss of revenue has increased the urgency with which we must take steps to cut spending, as our FY2010 budget will require even more serious cuts and reductions,” he added.

County Executive Coons also met with Governor-Elect Jack Markell on Tuesday to discuss the county’s budget issues and ways to improve cooperation in new job growth and government efficiency with the state.

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