



C. BRIAN HADDIX
Chief Administrative Officer

BUTTE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

25 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE
OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95965-3380
Telephone: (530) 538-7631 Fax: (530) 538-7120

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

BILL CONNELLY
JANE DOLAN
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CURT JOSIASSEN
KIM K. YAMAGUCHI

Butte County Budget in Solid Shape

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 23, 2008 – 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Brian Haddix, Chief Administrative Officer (530) 538-7224

Oroville, CA – Despite the economic slowdown affecting California, and recognizing that there will be deep budget cuts from the state, Chief Administrative Officer, Brian Haddix, will present to the Butte County Board of Supervisors a solidly balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

“Overall,” according to Haddix, “Butte County is in a better position to endure this challenging budget year than many other counties in California because of the sound fiscal restraint demonstrated over the years by the Board of Supervisors.”

In essence, the Recommended Budget proposes \$418.7 million in appropriations, which is 1.56% lower than last year’s budget. Although there is a reduction in spending when compared to last year’s budget, the Recommended Budget provides for an increase in replacement vehicles for law enforcement and fire protection; maintains the extended hours for public access in every branch of Butte County’s library system; and continues to support the Butte County General Plan 2030 process.

Nonetheless, there are two major challenges facing Butte County. First, resulting from substantial reductions expected in state funding for mental health services, the County’s Department of Behavioral Health is forced to propose difficult cuts to insure a “structurally balanced” budget (department revenues must equal expenses).

In particular, the department, after due consideration of all alternatives, is recommending that 19 vacancies be eliminated and 26 filled positions be cut in the Mental Health Division. In doing so, no mental health clinics will close in Butte County -- although some inevitable service declines are expected countywide. To try to avoid further structural budget challenges caused by state funding reductions, the budget recommends that the department conduct a thorough study of its operations and look to building a reserve for the future.

Second, as a direct result of the housing slump and credit crisis facing California, the County’s Department of Development Services is expected to suffer a notable decline in revenues, thereby forcing the department to eliminate six vacant positions and cut nine filled positions.

Despite these fiscal challenges largely caused by a sluggish economy and massive state budget cuts, Haddix assures that “all departments are committed to continue to provide high quality services to the residents of Butte County.”

The Board of Supervisors will consider the Recommended Budget at a public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, June 24, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Chambers at 25 County Center Drive, Oroville, California.

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