



# ADA COUNTY

Public Information  
Department  
Rich Wright – Director  
200 W. Front Street  
Boise, ID 83702  
Fax: 287-7019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 25, 2009

Contact: **Laura Wylde, Specialist**  
208-287-7017  
[lwylde@adaweb.net](mailto:lwylde@adaweb.net)

## Ada County Commissioners Kick-Off FY2010 Budgeting Process

*Elected officials and department heads told to cut budgets;  
come to the table with additional budget savings*

(Boise, Idaho) -- Today, the Board of Ada County Commissioners began the long process of developing Ada County's FY2010 budget. Showing great concern for Ada County taxpayers hit hard by the current economic downturn, Commissioners said they intend to cut Ada County's overall budget (\$193 million in FY2009) and instructed department heads and fellow county elected officials to develop strategic budget plans that result in budget savings instead of increased expenditures.

"This is certainly not the time to increase county spending," said Ada County Commissioner Fred Tilman. "People are hurting financially and we are committed to doing everything within our power to develop a county budget that doesn't place any additional pressure on property owners who are already struggling to make ends meet."

Current revenue projections indicate Ada County faces at least \$2 million budget shortfall in FY2010. The Board of Commissioners told their fellow elected officials and department heads that increasing property taxes to fill the revenue gap is not an option. In fact, the Board will require their management teams to cut their budgets as compared to last year to provide as much property tax relief as possible.

"We are in a time that requires us to reinvent the way we do business. I expect each office and department to eliminate all non-mission-critical expenditures. If they don't, we will do it for them. These are dire times we are in, and right now, our primary goal is to deliver necessary county services at the lowest possible cost," said Ada County Commissioner Sharon Ullman.

To date, extremely conservative revenue projections built into the current FY2009 budget have helped Ada County escape the dramatic budget shortfalls now impacting other Idaho governments. Ada County Commissioner Rick Yzaguirre said, "We saw the writing on the wall early last year, which is why we cut the County's FY09 budget by \$2 million. Additionally, we left \$2.3 million in property taxes uncollected and in the pockets of taxpayers. Obviously, our work isn't done yet – but I believe our extremely conservative approach to budgeting will once again help Ada County weather the tough economic storm sweeping the nation."

County department heads and elected officials will spend the next several months building their budgets for presentation to the public in a series of meetings and hearings starting in June and ending when the Commission approves the final budget in August. During today's budget kick-off, the Board of Commissioners revealed a list of budget policies intended to help county departments and elected officials produce significant budget savings.

These guidelines include:

- No new full-time or part-time positions to be added in FY2010
- No merit pay increases for employees
- Possible holdbacks in current budget
- No new major capital building projects in FY2010
- Restricted travel and training (Exception: situations where an employee needs to maintain a professional certification to meet statutory requirements.)

In an effort to help off-set the elimination of employee merit increases, the Board of Commissioners has agreed to cover the cost of employee health insurance premium increases, which in previous years, might have been passed on to employees. Additionally, the county will give employees a “health insurance premium holiday” resulting in no payroll deduction for health insurance premiums during the month of December – a time when most employees could use a little extra cash in their paychecks.

“Our employees are very important to us. They’re our most important asset in terms of delivering the services the state requires us to provide. And while financially we’re not in a position to be able to budget for merit increases this year, our goal is to keep our employees gainfully employed and contributing to the local economy,” said Chairman Tilman.

This is the second year Ada County will use the Budgeting For Outcomes model to develop the County’s budget. Budgeting For Outcomes is a process used by many government agencies during times of tight budgets and growing revenue shortfalls. Public participation and involvement is a cornerstone of the Budgeting For Outcomes model. Last year the Board of Commissioners used an online public survey to help gain valuable input from citizens about their service priorities and spending preferences. Next month, the Board will once again launch a similar online survey to engage Ada County residents in the budgeting process. The County will release additional details about the survey in the coming weeks.

Even though Ada County’s budgeting process won’t officially wrap up until late summer/early fall, the Board of Commissioners strongly encourages the public to take an active role in the process now -- during these early stages of budget development. County residents are always encouraged to attend budget meetings and hearings to learn more about proposed expenditures. In addition to providing testimony during public hearings, the public may also submit written feedback and testimony through emails and letters sent directly to the Board of County Commissioners. Ada County residents should submit written testimony via email to: [bocc1@adaweb.net](mailto:bocc1@adaweb.net). Letters should be sent to: Ada County Board of Commissioners, 200 W. Front Street, Boise, Idaho 83702. Constituents may also contact Commissioners by telephone at: 208-287-7000.

## **Ada County FY2010 Budget Timeline**

<b>Online Public Survey Launched</b>	<b>March 16, 2009</b>
<b>Online Public Survey Ends</b>	<b>April 2, 1009</b>
<b>Budget Workshops</b>	<b>June 5 &amp; 12, 2009</b>
<b>Budget Presentation to the Public</b>	<b>July 21, 2009</b>
<b>Tentative Budget Set</b>	<b>July 23, 2009</b>
<b>Tentative Budget Published in Idaho Statesman</b>	<b>August 3, 2009</b>
<b>Budget Finalized</b>	<b>August 11, 2009</b>
<b>Approval of Tax Levies</b>	<b>September 14, 2009</b>

**\*Note: meeting agendas for the Board of Commissioners may be found online at: [www.adaweb.net/commissioners.aspx](http://www.adaweb.net/commissioners.aspx)**