

Benton County
Summary of Major Factors in the Final 2016 Budget and Levy

- ❑ The proposed 2016 property tax levy totals \$18,987,493 a decrease of 0.9% or \$181,984 from 2015
- ❑ This reduction, combined with expected tax capacity growth of 5% should bring the County tax rate down 4 percentage points in 2016
- ❑ With this proposed reduction, Benton County will have reduced or held its levy to no increase in six out of the past seven years
- ❑ The proposed 2016 County budget totals \$45,102,328, an increase of 3.1% or \$1,375,843 from 2015
- ❑ The proposed budget includes an additional \$50,000 to help fund a new countywide economic development organization currently in the planning stages (economic development is one of seven “county priorities” identified during the County’s 2015 strategic planning)
- ❑ Also included is \$152,870 (net levy cost of \$51,976) to allow the Human Services Department to expand its eDocs document management system into the Child Support Enforcement unit (technology is another “county priority”)
- ❑ The proposed budget invests an additional \$40,000 in a new employee wellness program that may include physical workplace enhancements and incentives to reward the attainment of measurable health outcomes (employee wellness is another “county priority”)
- ❑ The proposed budget adds two new positions: a Social Worker in the Adult Services Unit to address increased caseload and a 0.625 FTE Detention Officer position in the Sheriff’s Office (no increase in budget/offset by reduced overtime)
- ❑ The proposed budget funds a general wage increase contained in 2016 labor agreements, as well as step and longevity adjustments (\$315,000 estimated cost)
- ❑ The County will have no 2016 health insurance premium increase because of the two-year rate guarantee from Health Partners
- ❑ Increased costs and other policy choices funded by the County Board are offset by additional revenue to produce this net levy reduction
- ❑ Additional revenue comes from two main sources: the County Program Aid formula provides an additional \$146,000, and Human Services revenue is expected grow just over a \$1 million (higher caseload, adding positions that generate revenue)
- ❑ Fund balance levels remain acceptable (General Revenue Fund at 6.4 months coverage vs. 5 month policy); fund balance continues to support the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan