

Benton County
2011 Budget and Levy

Summary of Major Factors in the Final 2011 Budget and Levy:

- The final 2011 property tax levy totals \$19,950,506, a reduction of \$23,259 or 0.1% from the 2010 levy
- The final 2011 budget totals \$34,240,188, a reduction of \$3.7 million from the 2010 budget
- A levy increase of \$701,080, or 3.5% was needed to fund the base budget (level of funding needed to maintain County functions at a status-quo level)
- Approximately 70% of the projected increase was related to compensation and benefits (step/longevity increases and health insurance, primarily)
- How much County Program Aid to budget for in 2011 was a significant dilemma, considering the State's expected deficit in the next biennium
- The proposed budget and levy conservatively reflects an estimated \$1.1 million in County Program Aid, even though certified 2011 aid totals \$2.0 million
- The proposed budget continues a modest level of reserve usage, gradually drawing down on reserves as the County brings expenditures in line with available revenues
- After reviewing the base budget estimates, the County Board considered various options for bringing the base budget levy increase down, settling on the following policy choices:
 - Contracting out for custodial services, saving \$141,996
 - Eliminating three vacant positions, saving \$117,880
 - Accepting budget reduction options proposed by Departments, saving \$229,887
 - Reducing funding for local road capital projects by \$100,000 (but keeping \$542,000 annually in the base budget for local roads)
 - Reducing the County's contingency account by \$75,000
- The proposed budget adds funding to retain a full-time Sentence to Serve crew leader and a shared position with Sherburne County working on water quality projects in the Elk River watershed and Little Rock Lake
- Anticipating cuts in state funding in 2011, the County continues a hiring freeze started in December 2008; since then, the County has eliminated 16 positions, representing 6% of the County workforce.