

Executive Update

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's Weekly Newsletter

October 31, 2008

Message from County Executive Walker

There is good news and bad news about the budget.

*First, the good news. Last week, it sounded like several Supervisors were talking about taxing the maximum allowed under state law. I was incorrect. The County Board Chairman contacted me this week and made it clear that the County Board will **not** raise the levy to the maximum. That is good news. Considering the 14.6% increase passed by the MPS Board, it is good to know that the County Board will not tax to the max.*

*Now, the bad news. Through this week, the actions taken by the members of the County Board Finance and Audit Committee result in a **net property tax levy increase of \$7.9 million.***

*My budget proposal provided **no** increase to the current property tax levy and we maintained core county services. While the committee members voted to add millions of dollars to the tax levy, they did not restore core services - just more government jobs. In contrast, our budget proposal held the line on taxes while seeking to partner with others in the community to provide many of these key services at a more affordable price. In some cases, we actually provided greater services.*

Milwaukee County policy makers have a real choice to make. Will the county just be an employment service or will the county seek to provide core services? I choose the latter. Without the type of changes we proposed, however, this county will not be able to provide core services on a long-term basis. The county's structural challenges are too great to just rely on continuous property tax levy increases (not to mention the harm it does to working families, seniors and small business owners).

We can do better, but we have to get past the status quo argument that all county services must be provided by public sector employees.

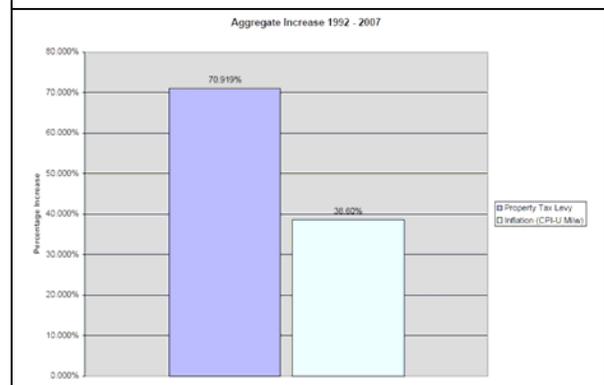
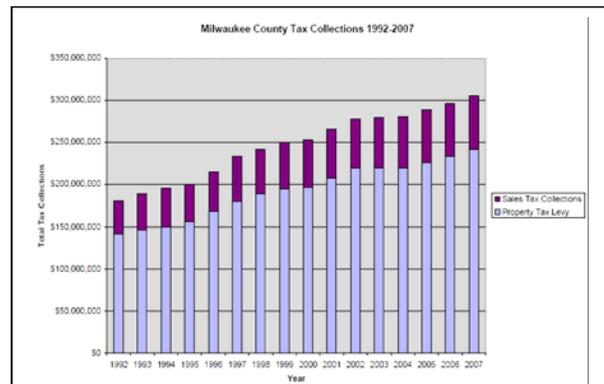
Scott (link below to my column in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/33539459.html>



County Executive Walker spoke with reporters to explain how the property tax levy went up since the sales tax was last raised by the County Board. Originally, the ordinance that created the sales tax said that it “shall be used only for the purpose of directly reducing the property tax levy.” It was later amended.

The charts below show how overall tax collections (sales and property) went up from 1992 to 2007. The bottom chart shows how the property tax went up 70.9% while our ability to pay (as measured by the consumer price index or CPI) only went up 38.6%. Even with a sales tax, the property tax levy went up during that time period.



Grand Reopening

NOV. 5TH – 5-9 p.m.



Be sure to explore the Show Dome for an "Enchanted Autumn"

Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory

The Domes

524 S. Layton Blvd. • 414.257.PARK

5 p.m. Doors Open; FREE admission
5-6 p.m. Reception
6 p.m. Reopening Ceremony
6:25 p.m. Lighting of The Domes
6:30-9 p.m. Live Jazz



Domes Grand Reopening

County Executive Walker is pleased to invite the public to celebrate the grand reopening of the Domes on Wednesday, November 5. The event will highlight the accent lighting that has been installed thanks to a generous donation of over \$550,000 from Chris Abele, Michael Cudahy and an anonymous donor.

Ship to port at Veterans Park for commissioning



The LCS 1 Freedom will arrive at Milwaukee County Veterans Park on Sunday, November 2 at 11am.

The public is invited to gather along shore to welcome the ship. A Milwaukee Fire Department fireboat will spray red, white and blue water as the ship docks.

The commissioning of the USS FREEDOM will take place on Saturday, November 8 at 10am. Tickets were distributed by the Navy to attend the commissioning, but spectators can view the ship from outside the security perimeter. The ship will depart for San Diego after her weeklong stay at Veterans Park.

Free Day at the Zoo

It's a great weather weekend for a day at the zoo!

Saturday, November 1 is Free Day for visitors and is sponsored by North Shore Bank. (Parking fee is still in effect). There will be one more Free Day in 2008 –on December 6. The zoo is open 365 days a year, but hours vary by season. Visit www.milwaukeezoo.org for more information.

Community Events

County Executive Walker testified before the County Board Economic and Community Development committee to allow UW-Milwaukee to purchase land on county grounds at the Research Park for an engineering school, attended the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation 9th Annual Research Luncheon and Awards Ceremony, addressed the participants at the annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner for the Milwaukee County Senior Meal Program, and attended the Heart and Soul event for Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Joseph Foundation.

