

Executive Update



Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's Weekly Newsletter

December 4, 2009

Message from County Executive Walker

On Wednesday, I issued an Executive Order ending the final furlough day of 2009 (scheduled for December 24th). I did this after my weekly meeting with the County Board Chair and the County Board Finance and Audit Committee Chair.

Last Friday, we cancelled the furlough planned for December 4th because of numbers that were just reviewed for actual health care claims paid through our new plan with United Healthcare. Up until then, our data was based on projections from our previous provider. This new information showed that our health care cost savings were greater than we had originally planned for 2009. This is good news.

Still, with the loss of significant state aid and very volatile sales tax collections, we did not want to take additional action until we could verify the health care numbers with an external source. We did that during the past week and – on Wednesday – we came to the conclusion that we could eliminate the final furlough day.

Thanks to Chairman Holloway and Supervisor Coggs for working with me on the very serious business of reaching a balanced budget. We will continue to meet to insure that other factors do not change by the end of the year. Right now, we have a surplus of just over \$700,000. That is a razor thin margin.

Thanks, too, should go to the various department and division heads who put together aggressive plans to balance the budget. State aid cuts and a slumping economy led to a \$14 million shortfall earlier this year. Changes made by me and my cabinet and then by the County Board helped us to reach a surplus by the final month of 2009. This was a team effort. We will need to work hard to continue this in 2010.

Scott

WCA covers Park award



County Executive Walker and Parks Director Sue Black were interviewed by Michelle Thompson (at left in photo above) and Jennifer Bock – editor of Wisconsin Counties Association magazine (at right in photo) for an article about the National Gold Medal Award won by the Milwaukee County Park system. The article is scheduled to appear in the WCA magazine's January edition.

German Consul General



County Executive Walker welcomed German Consul General Onno Hückmann (above right) and his host, Dr. John Gatto – President and CEO of NRW Invest, during their Milwaukee visit. Hückmann serves in the Chicago consulate.

Free Days at Zoo



County Executive Walker will promote several zoo activities on WISN Channel 12 with Kidd O'Shea this weekend. The zoo is open every day of the year with Saturday, December 5 and January 2 the upcoming **Family Free Days** at the zoo, sponsored by North Shore Bank and Fox 6.

New this year, a **Giving Tree** for anyone interested in purchasing enrichment "toys" for the animals is displayed in the US Bank Gathering Place. The Zoological Society purchased the tree, which is adorned with hand made ornaments courtesy of Zoo Pride volunteers and labeled with requested items. Zookeepers created a list of enrichment items to be given to the animals to allow them to experience some of the natural behaviors they would in the wild.

To view a complete list, click on the link below:

<http://tinyurl.com/yfbmeap>

During your zoo visit, stop and visit Tula and Nuri, the new tiger cubs. They are growing quickly and out in their enclosure more frequently.



Blue Angels flyover



Cloudy conditions over Bradford Beach didn't prevent a flyover by one of the jets from the Blue Angels. The pilots attended an event hosted by Paul Rogers of Milwaukee Air Shows to announce Milwaukee as one of the finalists for an air show by the Blue Angels in July 2010. The Blue Angels are expected to announce the city they have selected this month. The 2009 Milwaukee Air & Water Show drew thousands to Bradford Beach to see the free performances by the Thunderbirds and stunt plane groups.

Community Events

County Executive Walker will host the annual lighting of the county Christmas tree in the Courthouse Rotunda on Monday, December 7. Employees and their families are welcome to attend, make ornaments for the tree, and enjoy some holiday refreshments. He will also participate in the 21st Annual Christmas in the Ward tree lighting ceremony tonight that features the Bel Canto Chorus, the Milwaukee Police Band, Trinity Irish Dancers, horse-drawn carriage rides, an appearance by Santa, and Bartolotta fireworks. For other Third Ward holiday events, visit: www.historicthirdward.org.

Walker met with editors at the Business Journal this week to provide an update on county issues. Weekly fiscal analysis meetings with the County Executive, County Board and their staffs continue to monitor the status of the budget at year-end.