Looking Back on 2009

The last 12 months went by fast as the Board of County Commissioners prepared for 2010. Here’s a look back at the tough decisions and major accomplishments.

2009 was dominated by the budget as the County cut $7 million from its General Fund and more than 12% of its workforce.

A department reorganization improved efficiency and streamlined departments. In 2009, we went from 16 departments down to 8.

This reorganization fostered communication among departments, which has allowed for better public services.

Because of the reorganization, our county parks were able to remain open, and our trail system improved.

We worked with medical service providers to develop and execute the response plan to H1N1.

Public Health and Social Service funding was partly restored for the Human Services Review Council (HSRC) and Special Recreation programs were saved.

We established a building maintenance reserve fund to deal with the challenges of operating a 31-year-old courthouse.

Combating climate change was taken very seriously as the County received a federal “Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant” – part of the federal stimulus act in the amount of $617,000. Part of the money will be used to identify and fix energy inefficiencies.

Looking Forward for 2010 and Beyond

Because decisions made today will impact our tomorrow, the Board of County Commissioners is constantly looking forward to the future.

Many budget items will be coming to a head in the next couple years, including: removing the Detention Sales Tax subsidy for operations from the Corrections Department, removing Road Fund Diversion money from the General Fund, covering the cost of building and staffing our new jail, replacing vehicles in the Sheriff’s office, and making sure our County Fair is on sound financial footing.

The longer you put off these decisions, the tougher they get. You can move things around for awhile, but sooner or later time runs out.

Our goal is to end 2010 with a 25% increase in the ending fund balance.

The public will be excited to know we are almost finished revamping the County’s website. We asked a group of community members to participate in the process, and have had numerous meetings for input and feedback. The new site will be streamlined, visually updated and easier for the public to use.

These goals, which include developing a 2010 strategic goals and priorities, can be found online at: www.co.thurston.wa.us/bocc/documents/boardgoals.pdf

These goals, which include prioritizing the financial health of the county, supporting a quality environment, and investing in strategies known to enhance public safety, will guide us through the coming months and beyond.

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