



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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District One
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District Three

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2012 Preliminary Budget Message
October 18, 2011

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present the 2012 Preliminary Thurston County Budget. The Board of County Commissioners is interested in your comments as they deliberate on the budget proposals.

As in the rest of our state and our nation, the Thurston County economy continues to be stagnant. Although we expect to be financially stable in 2012, the growth in costs is anticipated to outpace the growth in revenue. Our greatest challenge is to balance the needs of county citizens with our current revenue sources.

County leadership is committed to building on the good management and fiscal practices that were enacted in the past few years. As a result of actions taken since 2009 to reduce staff and spending and predicted modest revenue growth, the general fund is expected to be sufficient to maintain county services and programs at their current level. Public health and social services, permitting and road funds continue to experience declining revenue. All county elected officials and department directors have implemented cost saving measures that create financially responsible fund balances in 2012. This preliminary budget reflects the amounts necessary to maintain the current level of county services.

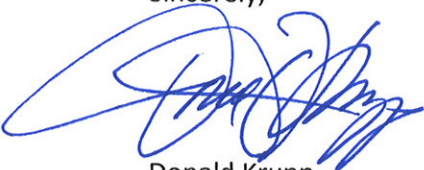
In addition to the costs and revenues reflected in this document, policy level proposals address unmet needs, increasing demands and declining revenues. The Commissioners will consider each proposal to determine what must be addressed in the 2012 fiscal year. Important issues to be considered include:

- exploring options for the Accountability and Restitution Center (ARC)
- reduced financial support from state and federal government for public health, social services, law and justice, and transportation
- maintaining county infrastructure that supports clean water, safe roads and environmental stewardship

A list of all policy proposals can be found on the county website: www.co.thurston.wa.us/budget. Over the course of the next few weeks, Commissioners will hold work sessions to review and deliberate on these proposals. You are invited to comment at a public hearing on date, or send written comments to the board.

The county budget is complex. It contains 78 funds and thousands of line items, managed by 21 offices and departments. These funds support the county's services to the public for law and justice, public health and social services, emergency services, roads, parks, open space and trails, land use planning, development services, environmental protection and utilities operations. The budget also provides for general government services that enable the county to conduct its business, such as elections, property assessment, financial management, human resources and capital facility management. The budget is organized to reflect the services provided by each office and their value to the citizens we serve.

Sincerely,



Donald Krupp
County Manager