



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 A.M.
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007**

For more information
call Laurence Msall, 312-201-9044

**CIVIC FEDERATION SUPPORTS FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE
DUPAGE COUNTY BUDGET CUTS**

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DuPage County faces serious fiscal challenges that have left it with no responsible choice but to make deep spending cuts next year, the Civic Federation found in its analysis of the \$480.5 million recommended county budget. The full report, including complete findings and recommendations, will be released today on the Federation's website, www.civicfed.org.

The proposed FY2008 budget includes a 12.1%, \$60.1 million decrease in spending. It also calls for the elimination of 10% of the workforce or 241 full-time positions, including 168 positions in public safety. Unfortunately, in times of severe financial stress, the pain of workforce cuts must be spread across all areas and departments. "The Civic Federation recognizes that this has been a painful process for all parties and particularly commends Chairman Schillerstrom for his leadership in making the necessary choices to balance this budget," said Federation President Laurence Msall. So long as every effort is made to protect priority services and first responders, the Civic Federation strongly believes there is opportunity for greater efficiency in every government's public safety spending.

The primary reason the Civic Federation supports this budget is because DuPage County has an established record of managing its existing resources and responsibly living within the means its citizens provide. Nevertheless, the county's fiscal problems are likely to continue, with a narrow revenue base and increasing spending pressures that mature and urban counties experience. The recommended budget includes an increase in property taxes of \$4.9 million, the maximum level allowable under state law. County officials have also attempted to enhance revenues via an increase in the cigarette sales tax, which has so far failed to get state legislative approval. The Civic Federation supports the cigarette tax increase because it would help diversify county revenues.

However, the Civic Federation believes the time has come for DuPage County to review, re-think, and reform its revenue base and modernize its structure. The Federation offered several recommendations that would help eliminate costly duplication and streamline service delivery. They include:

- Consolidation of County Government and the DuPage County Health Department;
- Elimination and/or Consolidation of Certain Elected Offices; and
- Privatization of the Convalescent Center.

The Federation also recommended DuPage use a performance measurement system and develop a long-term financial plan to chart how the county will cope with its fiscal challenges. In its analysis, the Federation also registered its disappointment that the County Board failed to use the county's multi-year strategic planning process to establish consensus regarding prioritization of county programs. "A strategic planning process is only useful if it is used to establish baseline priorities for spending," Msall said. "It is more difficult to make necessary spending cuts if there is no agreement among stakeholders as to which county functions are most important."

The Civic Federation is an independent, non-partisan government research organization founded in 1894. The Federation's membership includes business and professional leaders from a wide range of Chicago area corporations, professional service firms and institutions.