



The Civic Federation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MORE TRANSPARENT DUPAGE BUDGET REDUCES PROPERTY TAXES, EARNS CIVIC FEDERATION SUPPORT

(CHICAGO) The Civic Federation will announce its **support** for DuPage County's \$521.2 million proposed FY2010 budget at a public hearing on Tuesday, October 27, 2009 at 8:00 am. In contrast to many other local governments in northeastern Illinois, DuPage will maintain funding for its core programs despite falling revenues and increasing expenses, while simultaneously reducing its property tax levy by 0.2%. The full 38-page budget review is available at www.civiced.org.

The County is able to provide relief to property taxpayers during a difficult recession that has decimated many Illinois governments' budgets by reducing funding for capital expenditures, forgoing some new strategic initiatives, and relying on \$19.0 million in federal stimulus funding. DuPage was also able to hold the line on personnel expenses—without reducing employee headcount—by canceling raises for the non-union employees who make up the majority of the County's workforce.

“A severe recession is no time for a government to be working without a financial safety net,” said Laurence Msall, president of the Civic Federation. “That is why the Civic Federation commends DuPage County for maintaining a more than adequate budget reserve of 32.3%.” Too many of our governments spend nearly every dime they take in revenue, leaving them no contingency funds within their budgets to compensate for the unprecedented revenue shortfalls that have hit governments across the country. “Thanks in part to DuPage County's budgetary reserves, the government has very high debt ratings that lower its cost of borrowing.”

The Civic Federation is pleased that DuPage County has heeded our calls to improve the transparency of its budget process. This year the County held its first formal public hearings on the budget to solicit citizens' input and reactions. They have also developed an online budget calendar so citizens can see when key budget decisions will be made and make plans to participate in the process. “Providing opportunities for County stakeholders to offer commentary on the 2010 spending plan not only benefits residents, but also gives DuPage the opportunity to promote its work and hear how it can further improve its services,” said Msall.

The analysis does, however, discuss a number of concerns the Federation retains about the proposed budget and the County's future fiscal stability. In comparison to other local governments, which have predicted declines or nearly flat sales tax revenues for 2010, the County is projecting a 4.1% increase over projected actual sales tax collections. The Civic Federation urges DuPage County leaders to closely examine these revenue projections and consider whether the government would be better served by forecasting more conservative sales tax projections and balancing the budget through other means.

The Federation recommends that the County continue to improve financial transparency in its operations by implementing a formal capital improvement plan, a complete performance measurement system, and a formal long-term financial plan. Making the effort to plan for the future will help the County address the problems it faces as a large, professional, and modern government.

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. For more information, please visit the Federation's website at www.civiced.org.

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