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Stanislaus County Releases 2010-2011 Recommended Proposed Budget

More downsizing and cuts will have public impacts

Stanislaus County, CA – The Stanislaus County Chief Executive Office has released the County's Recommended Proposed Budget for the 2010-2011 Budget Year. The Recommended Proposed Budget will serve as an interim spending plan for Stanislaus County operations until a Final Budget for 2010-2011 is adopted in September.

A Public Hearing on the 2010-2011 Recommended Proposed Budget has been scheduled for 9:05 a.m. on June 8, 2010 to be continued if necessary on June 9 and 10, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. for the Board of Supervisors to adopt a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The meeting will take place at 1010 Tenth Street in Modesto in the basement Board Chambers.

“This will be another painful year for Stanislaus County,” stated Rick Robinson, Chief Executive Officer. “We are continuing to reduce local government spending through multiple strategies. The end result will be a smaller County government with fewer employees and reduced levels of service to the Community.”

Stanislaus County has reduced the number of employee positions from 4,603 down to 3,955 since 2008 as part of a strategy to lower its cost structure. Total positions would drop down to 3,785 with passage of the proposed budget. The County has also used wage reductions, furlough days, a hiring freeze and benefits changes to lower costs as well.

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The downturn in the economy, high unemployment and the large number of foreclosures in our region has resulted in a significant loss in local discretionary revenue that funds critical County programs. Discretionary revenue is largely driven by things like sales taxes and property tax. Discretionary revenue has fallen from \$181,578,293 in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 to a projected \$146,408,000 in Budget Year 2010-2011.

As an example, Stanislaus County's local property tax assessment roll, once a stable and growing funding source, is anticipated to drop for the third straight year. For the first time since the passage of Proposition 13, there will be no Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment. Property tax related discretionary revenue alone is projected to be down an estimated \$20 million from its high in the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year. To give the number some perspective, that amount is more than the entire General Fund contribution for the Agricultural Commissioner, Assessor, Auditor-Controller, Board of Supervisors, Clerk of the Board, Clerk-Recorder, Elections, Cooperative Extension, County Counsel, General Services Agency, Grand Jury, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Community Development and the Treasurer-Tax Collector combined.

The Recommended Proposed Budget totals \$912,390,959. This is an overall decrease of \$45,655,566 from the Adopted Final Budget for 2009-2010 representing a 4.8 percent decrease compared to last fiscal year. This significant reduction in available resources requires the County to deliver services more cost-effectively.

The risks and costs to a program of action have been highlighted in the Board room during many recent reduction-in-force discussions. Almost without exception, one could argue why cuts in each County department makes absolutely no sense. For one department it may mean the threat of further decreased revenue, for another increased public safety risks, and for yet another, the threat of increased cost and liability exposures. In each department, this represents decreased service levels to the public and noticeable program impacts.

Program impacts include reduced office hours for the Assessor's Office, the Library and the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office, the closure of 270 beds at the Honor Farm, reductions in the number of prosecutors available to staff courtrooms, a reduction in services at the Assessor's Office, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS)-Alcohol and Drug Programs and Public Guardian services, In-Home Supportive Services case management and Child Welfare supportive services along with reduced maintenance service levels at parks and County facilities.

The Stanislaus County 2010-2011 Recommended Proposed Budget is available for public review Friday, May 28 at 3 p.m. It can be viewed at the Board of Supervisors Office of the County of Stanislaus at 1010 10th Street, Suite 6500 in Modesto. It is also available on the County's web site, www.stancounty.com/budget or at any of the thirteen libraries located throughout Stanislaus County.

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