

Executive Update

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's Weekly Newsletter

October 3, 2008

We change the way we do economic development in this budget. First, the specific role of the county in this area is through our assets, so we move real estate sales in with the management of our facilities. In the past, we used our assets to bring GE Healthcare to the county research park and to keep Midwest Airlines in business.

Looking ahead, we hope to build a new School of Engineering on the county grounds, expand the role of the institutions at the Regional Medical Center and revitalize the former St. Michael Hospital site with a new mental health complex. We also have projects pending at 6th and State, in the Park East Corridor and in other parts of the county.

Second, we recognize that the best way to push true economic growth is by making it a priority throughout the government and not just in one division.

A safe working environment and community is vital for a successful business. We included funds for the Targeted Enforcement Units in the Sheriff's budget which help make our lakefront, beaches and parks more open to the public.

Transportation is important too. Our airport just had the 17th consecutive month of record growth. Since the airport is our front door to business travelers, it is good to see that they like Milwaukee County. All of the bus routes stay in place so people can get to work. Transit options expand for people with disabilities. We push for a new form of Bus Rapid Transit to improve and upgrade the system.

Per the need for quality of life, we add 26,000 hours of labor in the parks, invest in a new aquatic center, bathrooms and playground equipment. Our zoo gets high marks on the national accreditation and we invest more there too. A UWM report shows that our economic output from the zoo is about ten fold our investment.

And for the 7th budget in a row, we do not raise the property tax levy from the previous year. Each of these items is part of our strategy to improve our county for our residents and our employers. Scott

Walker Announces New Senior Meal Site



County Executive Walker announced the opening of a new site for the Senior Meal Program. The programs at Granville Senior Center will move to the Milwaukee Elk's Lodge #46 effective January 5, 2009. Bruce Somers, Exalted Ruler of the Elk's Lodge, signed an agreement with Walker (photo above) to provide use of their facility. The lease was up on the former site which is owned by the city of Milwaukee and needs more than \$1 million in structural repairs. The county will no longer pay annual operating costs of \$114,000 and will avoid maintenance charges at the new site.

The amenities at the Elk's Lodge far exceed those at Granville and feature a swimming pool, bowling alley, card room, bar, and meals cooked on-site by James Wildt of Lodge Catering. Other features include a large parking lot that can accommodate 300 cars, easy drop-off entryways for specialized transportation services, and convenient access to a bus line.

The Department on Aging is convening a work group to include the programming desired in the transition.

Airport lease plan bolstered by Chicago Midway deal



County Executive Walker's proposal to prepare for a bid to lease the operations of General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA) was bolstered by Chicago Midway International's receipt of a winning bid of \$2.521 billion for a long-term lease of Midway Airport. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley announced this week that the historic, 99-year lease would generate approximately \$1 billion for their city.

"The Midway deal shows the merits of leasing airport operations," said Walker. "Milwaukee can benefit from their example and generate necessary revenue on a smaller scale."

Leasing would secure more efficient operations while making government more fiscally sound. Bids for a lease of Milwaukee's smaller airport operations would be less than those received by Midway, but contracting out operations would provide a steady long-term revenue stream to the county. **These funds could be designated to support and improve transit as an alternative to increasing either property or sales taxes.**

The \$500,000 proposal to study and plan for the lease-option is derived from airport revenues and not from the county tax levy. These funds can only be used for airport-related matters and can not be allocated to other areas of the county budget.

Enjoy fun fall events!

The **Milwaukee County Zoo** will host a new "**Polar Bear Awareness Day**" event on **Saturday, October 4**. It will feature activities, displays and a photo exhibit by National Geographic photographer David J. Cox.

Cider Sunday will take place at the **Wehr Nature Center** on **October 5** from 11am – 5pm. Activities include cider press demonstrations, fresh cider, live music, nature hikes, and the process to make apple butter and apple wine. Admission to Cider Sunday is \$1 per person, children 2 and under are free. Parking is \$3. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Wehr to assist the needs of the nature center. For more information, visit www.friendsofwehr.org or call the Wehr Nature Center at (414) 425-8550.

Fall Golf Specials are going full swing at Milwaukee County golf courses. Visit www.countyparks.com for information on special promotions, events, lessons, tips from the pros and the popular golf gift card.

Community Events

County Executive Walker gave the welcoming address at the 36th National Association of Pretrial Service Agencies (NAPSA) Annual Conference and Training Institute at the Hyatt Regency, issued a proclamation honoring the 150th Anniversary of the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee, attended the United Way Leadership Breakfast, was interviewed on WMCS-AM1290 by Joel McNally and Cassandra Cassandra regarding his proposed 2009 budget, met with representatives of 27th Street area businesses to discuss reconstruction of the Mitchell interchange, presented a proclamation to Western Building Products in Wauwatosa for their 25th Anniversary celebration of employee ownership, and was the featured guest at the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) meeting for a dialogue with members on the prospective budget and county issues.