

## **2015 BUDGET STRATEGY**

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The budget strategy uses proven methodologies of dealing with past budgets and looking at future strategic approaches. The budget is based upon the following assumptions and approaches:

- No local property tax initiative will be approved by the voters and the 16.804 mill levy cannot be raised without political fallout in these economic times.
- **In the 2015 budget request, any net county cost increase in a budget unit must be offset with a corresponding decrease in a department's total budget.**
- Unless a change is legally mandated, the county's share of partnership programs will not increase, it will decrease wherever possible. **Local dollars will not displace federal or state reductions.**
- Program managers and the public will be made aware of the proposed service reductions as soon as possible.
- Early warning sessions will be held in September addressing budget issues identified early in the process.
- All county departments and offices will receive a set target amount for 2015 before budget preparations begin.
- **A target of ten percent off the 2014 budget base will be uniformly applied to all budget units.**
- Fringe benefits will be left at the current level of benefit.
- No salary adjustments will be included in the requested budget. The Board will determine any salary adjustments above the 2014 level in the Final Budget process. Any Department Head or Elected Official justifying to the Board a higher salary for a class unique to that department or office should include the additional salary within the assigned target budget amount.
- Any 2015 classification upgrades will be treated like new position requests in the budget process, with the department funding any requests within the target amount.
- There will not be any recommended increases in staff in the recommended budget to the Board. Increased workload will be absorbed by existing personnel wherever possible through increased productivity.
- Outside agencies will be treated like county departments, since most provide contractual services.

- New or expanded mandates will be absorbed within the 2015 target amount by all budget units.
- Additional program options outside the overall budget plan will be proposed for Board consideration. Staff will explore the options as directed by the Board, and these options will be topics of discussion at the public work sessions and hearings.
- Self supporting budgets will float at the 2014 funding levels.
- A review of all discretionary programs will be done by the Department Head or Elected Official and the Board.
- All vacant positions in 2015 will follow the “sunset review” process to determine if the position needs to be filled.
- Resources for new activities will come from increased productivity and termination of existing activities wherever possible. No new non-mandated programs will be proposed without proportionate cutbacks in other programs.
- All user and service fees will be examined and recommendations made for increases or other adjustments to match the cost of providing such services.
- As 2015 budget requests accommodate or are integrated with long term program strategies, they will be highlighted.

The budget strategy will permit Weld County to cope with the new fiscal and program challenges faced in 2015, while accomplishing a balanced budget. The 2015 budget must be structured to attempt, within available funds, to ensure that:

- Basic services are funded at adequate levels.
- Revenue has been estimated at realistic levels.
- Reserves that afford protection for the future are funded.
- Productivity improvement programs are continued.
- Employee compensation levels are based upon realistic employment market considerations and within the county's ability to pay.
- TABOR Amendment limits will be adhered to in the budget.
- Legislative and regulatory changes are accommodated.
- GIS, e-government, web based applications and other technologies are employed in cost effective manners in the county.
- Population growth and development is planned for and accommodated.

- New initiatives associated with the human capital management strategies are accommodated.
  
- Weld County must continue the initiatives required to foster area economic development and to improve the quality of life.
  
- The WCR 47/49 Corridor South from SH 34 to I-76 and North from WCR 60.5 (SH263) to SH 392 will be funded over 2015-2019 at the level of \$25 million.