

Press Release

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COUNTY EMPLOYEES FIND WAYS TO SAVE

ACCOMAC, JANUARY 14, 2009: The Accomack County government is asking its employees for ways to save during the economic downturn. According to Steve Miner, County Administrator, an initiative is well under way to further cut costs and prepare the County's operations to rebalance this year's budget, which remains in precarious condition due to the economic downturn. "The Board cut hard at budget time, and again in late fall, using capital funds to balance operations; however, it isn't enough. In response, the employees have been asked to provide ideas on further cost-savings - in order to help rebalance the current year's budget and for consideration for upcoming budgets", according to Miner.

To date, 9 of 18 departments, numbering 97 employees have participated in the process, which consists of brainstorming sessions held by department, coordinated by Dan Hillman, part-time consultant to the County. These meetings, which have

focused on cost effective and revenue enhancement opportunities, produced over 425 suggestions in twelve categories including energy, supplies, organizational issues, insurance, operational issues, revenues, operational cost savings, management issues, policy issues, Board of Supervisors issues and others. Of these, according to Hillman, 163 are considered to be "high impact" suggestions, meaning that they could save greater than \$20,000 when fully implemented.

Immediately, Miner is looking for savings that can be counted and folded into the current budget, making sure that all cost savings which can be found, including the employees' suggestions, are counted prior to anything affecting personnel. "Our staff has already produced an excellent set of suggestions, many of which are sure to save tax dollars". Miner stated, "Some of these could actually take income from the persons making the suggestions", adding, "I was extremely heartened by the response and by the employees' willingness to step up to the plate and contribute. It shows that they realize the seriousness of the situation and are conscientious about their work as well being aware of their special position as public servants".

The high impact suggestions have been narrowed to 25 suggestions by Hillman, working with County staff to extract those items that can be measured and credited to the existing budget. Of these, one affects the Board of Supervisors, two

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insurance costs, 13 affect operations, 1 is organizational, and 8 are revenue enhancements of various sorts, including enhanced enforcements of delinquent tax collection from citizens and County employees. Hillman states that, "I have worked with local government for many years looking for efficiencies in operations, and this set of ideas is one of the most comprehensive sets of cost-savings ideas I have ever seen." The shortened list will next go to the board as suggested cost reductions after cost savings can be assigned to them.

Remaining ideas will be pursued for next year's budget and will be shared with the Budget Redevelopment Committee appointed recently by the Board.

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