

State of the County Overview

Progress Report for 2006

Economic Progress

Since the Reality Tour last year, the county negotiated a contract with its largest union that saves some \$250,000 per month in health care costs. The county also moved to self-insured plan saving \$18.7 million over next 5 years.

The County Executive isolated the largest pension problem by capping the lump sum backdrop for all new employees. The county also filled a lawsuit against actuarial firm that gave incorrect advise about pensions. Now, the Governor's budget includes the help the county needs for Pension Obligation Bonds that will save \$6.25 million annually for the next 30 years (using the plan proposed in the County Executive's budget).

Finally, the County Executive introduced his 5th budget with no tax levy increase. Even with the additional tax levy added by the board, the increases are held to 2% per year over past 5 budgets (previous 5 years were twice as much).

Social Progress

Last year, the Mayor and the County Executive initiated an effort to find more housing for those with mental illness. Last month, 48 new housing units were approved.

The FamilyCare program served more than 7,000 and yet created a surplus. Also, the EMS system was funded in 2006 and a two-year contract was signed with all of the municipalities in the county.

The health care task force is working on a redesign of the successful GAMP program to provide health care to those in need. Last year, the county also took over all child support calls for Racine County.

Economic Progress

Mitchell International Airport broke another record with 7.3 million passengers. Improvements continue with remodeled concourses and mall area - as well as security and parking editions. Midwest Airlines continues to thrive because of assistance given by the county in 2004 and improvements to airport in 2006.

Milwaukee County Research Park is growing with new headquarters and new hotel.

In the parks, the county expanded the Oak Leaf Trail, saw nearly 400,000 rounds of golf, and the number of friends groups grew to 42. The zoo saw the opening of the Big Cat Country and Giraffe Experience.

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Progress Goals for 2007

Improving our Fiscal Status

- Approve Pension Obligation Bond (POB) plan
- Work with leaders in Milwaukee 7 to form regional approach to health care costs
- Introduce 6th straight budget with no increase in property tax levy
- Oppose any increase in the sales tax

Improving Care for People with Disabilities

- New housing plan at various county sites to cover seniors, people with disabilities - including those suffering from mental illness
- Proposal to move mental health complex to former St. Michael's Hospital site
- Proposal to sell land where complex currently sits on county grounds to finance move and create fund for care of patients with mental illness
- Pursue expansion of FamilyCare-style system for long-term care

Improving Protection of Children

- Expand child support enforcement calls to other counties
- Name child support offices after former director John P. Hayes
- Nominate Lisa Jo Marks as Director of Child Support Enforcement

Improving Development of Workforce

- Push for a regional workforce development strategy
- Work with the Milwaukee 7 leadership to review workforce strategy

Improving Transportation Infrastructure

- Pursue long-term plan to add runway and extend others at airport
- Push state to approve plan to use current sales tax on auto sales for transit

Improving Economic Assets

- Find home for UWM near the regional medical complex
- Kick off celebration of 100th anniversary of parks system
- Move forward with Lincoln Park aquatic center, pool pass promotion and Adopt-A-Beach program in the parks system.
- Start construction on US Bank Gathering Place and flamingo house at zoo
- Take bids on a waterpark and hotel on the zoo property
- Push action on the Park East corridor with the City of Milwaukee