

NEWS RELEASE: Jan. 25, 2011

County Commission approves 2011 Budget

The Greene County Commission approved a balanced 2011 Budget in a public meeting this morning, marking an end to three months of budget hearings.

The \$121.3 million budget includes \$33.9 million in General Revenue, \$24.3 million in Road and Bridge funds and \$19.7 for construction of the Public Safety Center. The remaining balance is comprised of funds the county collects then distributes to other jurisdictions, including the 911 Sales Tax, the Springfield-Greene County Parks Sales Tax and the Law Enforcement Sales Tax.

The county's operating budget is based on zero-percent sales tax growth over 2010 receipts, and includes a \$200,000 reduction in non-capital spending, made possible largely by holding vacant positions open. The budget also includes a \$94,000 General Revenue fund surplus, which will be held in place until the State of Missouri's budget is finalized at midyear. Many of the county's expenses and revenues are directly related to the state budget.

"Now that the Governor outlined his plans for the state budget, we must wait for the Legislature to work out the final result," said Roseann Bentley, Associate Commissioner, District 2.

The budget includes five new positions: three sheriff's deputies, a Juvenile Probation Supervisor and a security officer for the Juvenile Office. The budget also eliminates 24 vacant positions, which had been held open due to the county's hiring freeze.

"We have a lot to be proud of in this budget," said Jim Viebrock, Presiding Commissioner. "We managed to reinforce our commitment to public safety and our support for juvenile services. We held our General Revenue spending flat. And we ended up with a net reduction of 24 full-time positions."

Greene County Road and Bridge funds will cover several major transportation projects, including:

- \$3.8 million for Weaver Road improvements
- \$2.73 million in bridge construction/replacement
- \$753,000 for West Republic Road design and right-of-way acquisition
- \$435,000 for the Farm Road 190/East-West arterial design and right-of-way acquisition

Due to construction of the Public Safety Center, the 2011 Budget shows a 23-percent increase over 2010. However, Public Safety Center construction is covered by bond funding, grants and other external revenue sources — not General Revenue.

Despite the one-time construction funds, the current budget is 7 percent smaller than the 2008 Budget, the last year with robust projected revenues. Greene County has maintained a balanced budget throughout the economic downturn because the county cut spending at the first sign of declining revenue, in April 2008. Since then, the county has observed a hiring freeze for non-essential positions. Travel and training budgets have also been eliminated, building maintenance has been deferred, and county computers are not scheduled for upgrades. County employees have gone without cost-of-living or merit pay increases for three years.

“My hat is off to the department heads and officeholders,” said Harold Bengsch, Associate Commissioner, District 1. “This is the third year in a row that they have scraped the bottom of the barrel.”

Bensch added that he is concerned about the long-term effects of budget constraints.

“This scraping sound is beginning to show signs of wear and tear on both county services and employees.”

The 2011 Budget is at www.greenecountymo.org/budget. For more information, call Jeff Reinold, Greene County Budget Officer, at 417-868-4112, or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.

###