



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jim Kreuser, County Executive

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News Release:

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County Executive Kreuser proposes second lowest tax levy in 25 years

Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser on Tuesday presented to the County Board of Supervisors a 2014 budget proposal that features the second lowest tax levy in 25 years.

“Our commitment to the citizens of this great county is to provide efficient services in the most cost effective manner while we continue to work toward our collective vision to create a stronger, sustainable Kenosha County,” Kreuser said Tuesday night.

“This budget continues our excellent services – many mandated – with some increases based on fixed costs, things like asphalt and gasoline, and we continue to aggressively reduce fraud, waste and abuse,” Kreuser said.

The proposed budget includes \$500,000 to replenish the high impact economic development fund administered by the Kenosha Area Business Alliance for the county. Over the past several years, the fund has been used to grow local businesses, like Bradshaw Medical Inc., and to attract new businesses to Kenosha County, including Kenall Manufacturing.

“Economic development remains a high priority in this budget and in this administration, Kreuser said, noting that more than 1,500 new jobs have been announced as the result of economic development gains since the start of the year in Kenosha County.

An important element to economic development is infrastructure, Kreuser said. The proposed 2014 budget continues with the county’s annual paving program of about 13 miles of county trunk highways, with about half of those projects slated to include expanded shoulders for bicycle paths, he said. Kenosha County will also be preparing to expand County Highway S and County Highway H in coming years, he said.

Another important infrastructure investment has been the broadband network for public safety, which has been built upon for commercial and residential users, Kreuser said. Now, 30% of the county that did not have access to high speed internet can have that option.

“Building on that success, I am proposing we make an additional investment in Downtown Kenosha beyond our annual ongoing support of KABA, which helps to fund the Downtown Kenosha Main Street Project,” Kreuser said. “I am proposing tonight that Kenosha County provide the infrastructure for an outdoor WiFi network, from 35th Street to the north, and Anderson Arts Center on the south,” Kreuser said. “It will encompass downtown business, parks and harbor areas.”

Kreuser said, “I look to our partners, KABA, Downtown Kenosha Inc., and the City of Kenosha, to fund the modest, ongoing expense for annual operation of the outdoor WiFi network.”

The county will also be establishing various WiFi hotspots in Kenosha County parks, Kreuser said.

Other impacts on the 2014 budget:

- Increase in Mental Health funding
- Decrease in federal inmate holds at the Kenosha County Corrections Center
- Tuck pointing and waterproofing of the Kenosha County Administration Building

The proposed budget goes to the County Board standing committees for review and will be discussed by the County Finance and Administration Committee on Oct. 22, 23 and 24. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 5, with budget adoption slated for Wednesday, Nov. 6.

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