



## Office of the County Executive

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November 19, 2010

### Statement on Manitowoc County Budget Signing

I congratulate the County Board members for passing a budget very close to what I proposed, and appreciate their support of my efforts to hold the line on taxes while preserving county jobs.

This budget represents a major step in the right direction for the taxpayers of Manitowoc County. The tax levy increase (0.85%) is less than the value increase of new construction (0.88%) from last year to this. As a result the typical taxpayer in Manitowoc County will see a slight decrease in the property taxes attributable to the county.

While we have succeeded in achieving my top priority of holding the line on property taxes, we still have important work to do to save county jobs from further layoffs. By year end we need to make more progress on our proposals to make very modest reductions in the costs of wages and fringe benefits for county employees.

Non bargaining county employees have had modest changes (no general wage increase for 2011 and taking responsibility for their own Healthy Savings Account) imposed on them in this budget, and this week the Health Department Union to their credit voluntarily agreed to make the same change. I sincerely applaud them for this. Now we need our other union employees agree to this same small reduction in benefits the others have already accepted, so that we can save more than 20 jobs of their fellow union members they have resting in their hands. Unfortunately I don't have a vote in that.

Now is the time to come together to do this. For more than 20 people to lose their jobs because the overall membership won't agree to a very modest reduction in benefits would be extremely unnecessary, cruelly self interested, and so easily avoidable. Let's hope the holiday season brings out the best in all of us, and the union members can come together for the greater good of their team. The sacrifice we're asking of them is very small, but the accomplishment of saving their fellow members jobs would be great.

Time is of the essence.