



## Office of the County Executive

Bob Ziegelbauer, County Executive

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### *Accountability • Respect • Customer Service*

November 2, 2011

Hi this is Bob Ziegelbauer.

This is budget season, a busy time for local government. For the next few weeks you'll hear a lot about City and County budgets as we work on spending plans for next year and the taxes necessary to support them.

My proposal for Manitowoc County went to the Board two weeks ago. (The complete document is available from the County Clerk and posted on our website.) They'll take action on it by November 15<sup>th</sup>, but in the meantime they have set aside time to hear your comments privately, or directly, at a public hearing next Monday night November 7<sup>th</sup>.

Our budget process doesn't occur in a vacuum. We know what's happened in our community and we're keenly aware of our responsibility. The last few years have been very difficult. Low economic growth and high unemployment put continuing pressure on everyone.

My 2012 budget proposal is built on two principal themes; to hold the line on property taxes for the sixth year in a row while providing high quality essential services to Manitowoc County and provide employment stability to County employees in a time of economic uncertainty.

Sometimes that's easier said than done. Holding down taxes and saving jobs can seem to be in conflict, but to do it we stretch every tax dollar as far as possible. Fortunately the tools enacted by the Legislature help by allowing modest compensation adjustments necessary to bring it back in sync with the rest of our economy.

At the County we're under less pressure now than many around us because we've made tough decisions when necessary, quickly when it became obvious they were needed without shrinking from them, and embraced our responsibility to restructure County government while making vital investments for the future. As a result, County government is more prepared to move forward today than ever before.

I'm also happy to report that while holding the line on tax increases my budget also protects County employees from the threat of layoff. We value our employees and the work they do; and pay them fairly. They are a vital ingredient in our success.

We understand our responsibility to the taxpayers of our community. Unfortunately, the economic downturn that began over three years ago is not over. There are many tough choices ahead. These decisions can be difficult, but now more than ever we need to make the right choices to help move our community forward.

The budget now awaits action by the County Board. I'd appreciate your support very much.

This is an important time to be interested because this government belongs to all of us. Let your elected representatives know what you think. Check my website [www.bobziegelbauer.com](http://www.bobziegelbauer.com) for updates, and as always, call on me anytime I can be of assistance to you.

This is Bob Ziegelbauer. Thanks for listening.