

June 2009

Budget:

The Board of Commissioners reached a consensus on the proposed FY 2010 budget. A public hearing will be held on June 16 at 6pm. The Board will vote on the budget following the public hearing. The proposed budget assumes that the millage will remain at 9.73. In addition, there will be a restructuring and consolidation of departments that will require a reduction in workforce of up to 16 employees. Balancing this budget also includes 15 unpaid holidays for all employees and funds the Sheriff's department at the FY 2009 appropriation.

Tax Bills:

The tax bills will be mailed in July. Although the Board of Commissioners was able to balance the budget at the 9.73 millage rate, many residents will see a \$200-300 increase on their tax bill from 2008. This increase is a result of decisions made in the Georgia General Assembly. Historically, the state has funded a Homestead Tax Relief Grant that lowered the tax bills. However, due to the shortfall at the State, this grant will not be funded and thus the tax bills will be increased.

Tax Digest:

Newton County's tax digest is considered inverted. Ideally, a county should derive the majority of its taxes from the commercial/industrial sector. Currently, Newton County derives 80% of its tax digest from individual homeowners. Therefore the homeowner is bearing the burden of taxes for operating our county. As housing outpaced commercial development, our tax digest became inverted. To reverse this trend, we must focus on strategies and initiatives that will foster Economic Development and relieve the individual homeowner.

The next two Fireside Chats will address the interdependence of the Tax Digest and Economic Development. Please plan to attend the Fireside Chat in August (EXPLANATION OF THE TAX DIGEST and your TAX BILL) and the Fireside Chat in October (Economic Development).