

On July 8, 2008, this Board unanimously voted to amend the County's policy related to take-home vehicles. Copies of your newly adopted policy were forwarded to all operating departments and agencies in possession of county-owned vehicles. I personally sent a memo to the sheriff on Wednesday July 9 outlining the implications of your policy on his department.

Your decision was followed by extensive work on the part of your senior staff, and the input of the various department heads.

The recommendation of the committee along with your formal action was neither arbitrary or capricious. Your actions were precipitated not only by the rising cost of fuel, but the long term implication of owning a fleet of motor vehicles. Your actions were timely in the face of major reductions of revenue from state and local sources. In recent years the County has experienced major reductions in highway user funds, Program Open Space funding, and due to a slowing national economy, sluggish income tax revenue.

During tough economic times, local government, like private businesses and families, are forced to make difficult decisions, and live with those decisions that they make.

As such, you are currently evaluating the option of lowering the County's Homestead Tax Credit from a 10% cap to a lower amount. The direct consequence of this action will mean a lower rate of tax assessment increases to our citizens. This action conversely will reduce the amount of tax revenue to the County each and every year impacting the County's budget process.

While we take steps to reduce the tax burden, we must immediately explore ways to save money while providing existing services. This is a difficult challenge for all of us. Doing this requires the cooperation and assistance of all our partners, both public and private. The commissioners and Jerry Frantz cannot do this alone. We must achieve the cooperation of the Board

of Education, our public works department, our general services staff, and every single outside agency including the sheriff's office.

The comment was recently made that the Commissioners were not elected to run the sheriff's office their job is to fund it. For the record this Board of Commissioners took formal public action to make the sheriff's job easier in managing his budget. This Board of Commissioners increased the sheriff road patrol budget by 5.3 % for FY 09. It was the County Commissioners who chose to increase the sheriff's over-time budget by an additional \$50,000 to assist with the sheriff and his department with repeated overtime challenges.

Adhering to the County's newly adopted vehicle take-home policy would effectively save the Sheriffs Road Patrol Division and the taxpayers an estimated \$18,000 per year. The thanks you get, is a public response from the sheriff via the *Cumberland Times-News* indicating that he has chosen not to abide by the County's recently adopted policy. The July 21st article references a letter to the Commissioners that the paper received, which to date the County has not received.

Commissioners in order that you effectively govern during difficult times we must have cooperation and an amicable line of communication from every public and private partner here in Allegany County, not their arrogance.

Commissioners, the Sheriff is not going to manage his department and budget the way your policy expects the director of public works, or the boards of education's director of finance to manage theirs. History tells us that he is not going to do it.

In light of the sheriff's decision not to follow the County's policy, your legal staff is considering a host of options. One option we are considering includes deactivating fuel credit cards. We will also be evaluating the disposition of various vehicle leases. We also have the right to file a replevin action to seize vehicles located outside of the county. Regardless of what steps we do eventually take, I think we need to be prepared for a huge investment of staff time, potential court cost, employee grievances, and a host of other issues which will require time and resources that would be more productively spent on matters of greater importance.

At this time I would like to recommend that you authorize my office to instruct the Director of Homeland Security, and the County Attorney's Office, to evaluate the expansion of the County's Bureau of Police to assume an expanded law enforcement role here in Allegany County. It is important to note any new role or expanded force of the existing department would be organized under the civilian control of the Board of County Commissioners, and not under the control of Allegany County Sheriff David A. Goad.

If the Commissioners authorize this administrative step, it would be the objective of this exercise to explore ways to develop an organization that performs the following:

- 1) an organization that leverages all resources at the Federal and State level to implement and enhance effective and professional service delivery
- 2) an organization that establishes lasting partnerships that seek to share resources
- 3) an organization that establishes a administrative culture that recognizes the importance of adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
- 4) an organization that will espouse a work culture of high professionalism and cooperation, thus eliminating the persistent strain associated with lengthy outside investigations focusing on matters of mismanagement and malfeasance
- 5) an organization that will ultimately reduce the cost of providing public safety to the citizens of Allegany County