News from
SALEM COUNTY
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COUNTY TAX RATE DROPS

2006 Preliminary Budget will provide property tax relief by decreasing tax rate and saving approximately $880,000

(SALEM, NJ) – At the regular meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders on Wednesday evening, Freeholder Director Lee Ware announced on behalf of the County Administration & Finance Committee that the preliminary 2006 Budget will give much needed tax relief for county residents. The preliminary 2006 Budget will decrease the county tax rate, saving approximately $880,000, or two cents on every $100 dollars of assessed property value (.9686). The introduction of the budget was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

"We are committed to a government of social responsibility and fiscal restraint," said Director Ware. "As the State government struggles to find an equitable solution to the property tax problem, this board has maintained a commitment to assist our citizens by reducing the county tax rate."

Since 2003, this administration of the Board of Chosen Freeholders has not increased the county tax rate. In 2005 and now in 2006, the county tax rate has dropped by a total of 2.39 cents. Through innovative measures and streamlining techniques, the Board of Chosen Freeholders has been able to increase the effectiveness of County government, while decreasing taxes.

"To put it simply: we are getting more bang for your buck. Given the steady rise in wages and benefits, along with increased utility costs this has been a challenge," said Director Ware. "The Freeholders have been working with every department to eliminate waste, increase productivity, and streamline functions. We have been able to increase county services, while not increasing the cost for the tax payer."

While the county tax rate has dropped, County Treasurer Joanne Bell says that property taxes may go up in individual municipalities. "The county has done its part in providing tax relief," said Bell. "It is now up to individual municipalities to determine the tax rate in their jurisdiction."

Director Ware is optimistic for the future of Salem County. "The Salem County team is committed to increasing services, without increasing the costs. As we work together, we will continue to do great things as we combine ingenuity with perseverance and integrity."

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