



2012 FALL ISSUE



The Board of Chosen Freeholders has developed this newsletter with the taxpayers in mind. We want to inform you of what's going on and get the word out that WE ARE "Open to the Public". There's been an overall change in thinking as we examine our core values and services. The Freeholders are placing the internal controls necessary to do more with less. We want you to know and understand about Salem County Government so you can get involved.

## Balancing the County's Checkbook: Answers to Budget Questions



As with your home checkbook the county's checkbook needs to be balanced. This year it was NOT an easy task! The Freeholders work diligently on what needs to be done all year long and balancing the budget was a top priority. Using the County's Guiding Principles we

made some tough decisions. This issue of "Open to the Public" explains details on the county's budget and how these tough decisions were made.

## Taking a Look at the County's Finances

We started out the new year with a challenge...the county checkbook did not balance! We had to deal with a \$13 million deficit. The county checkbook needed to be reconciled in order to submit it to the state. We didn't want to keep pretending it was not a problem by spending, borrowing and hoping things would get better. Our vision is to do the right thing: be responsible, reduce spending, stop borrowing and work on solving the problems. First we examined why our checkbook didn't balance.

## GOOD NEWS

### Veterans' Discounts

The Salem County Clerk's Office has begun issuing Veterans' Identification Cards at no charge to the veteran.

These Cards can be used as identification for Veterans' Discounts at local businesses.

You can obtain a list of vendors that offer discounts from our office when you stop by for your ID Card.

Any veteran wishing to apply for a card may apply in person at the County Clerk's Office between 9:00 am - 3:00 pm Monday thru Friday (excluding holidays).

Please bring your original or certified copy of the veteran's discharge papers. If you do not have the original you will be able to file to get one through our office.

Please see our website for more details  
[www.SalemCountyClerk.org](http://www.SalemCountyClerk.org)

# How We Got Here

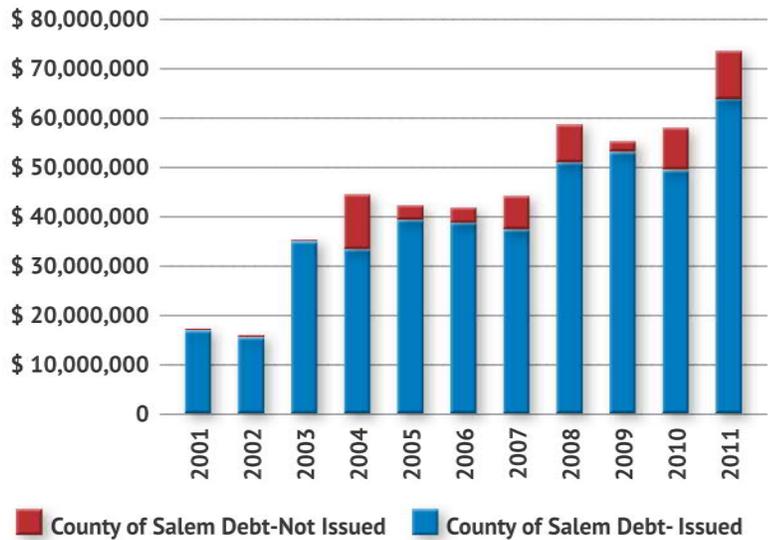
It didn't just happen over night ... it was years in the making. Over the past 10 years the county budget grew from \$56 million to \$77 million. In addition, borrowing increased from \$17 million to \$70 million. *Just like your credit card, the county debt has to be paid back with interest.* The chart below shows the debt figures over the past 10 years.

## Other factors contributing to the \$13 million deficit were:

- 12% Increase in the number of county staff employees in the past 5 years
- 3.4% Average increase per year on county employee contracts
- 12% Increase this year in healthcare and insurance costs
- \$17 Million county reserve fund decreased to \$7 million over the last 6 years

In addition, an overall declining economy lowers property values and interest rates on investments leading to less income and revenues.

## SALEM COUNTY DECADE OF DEBT

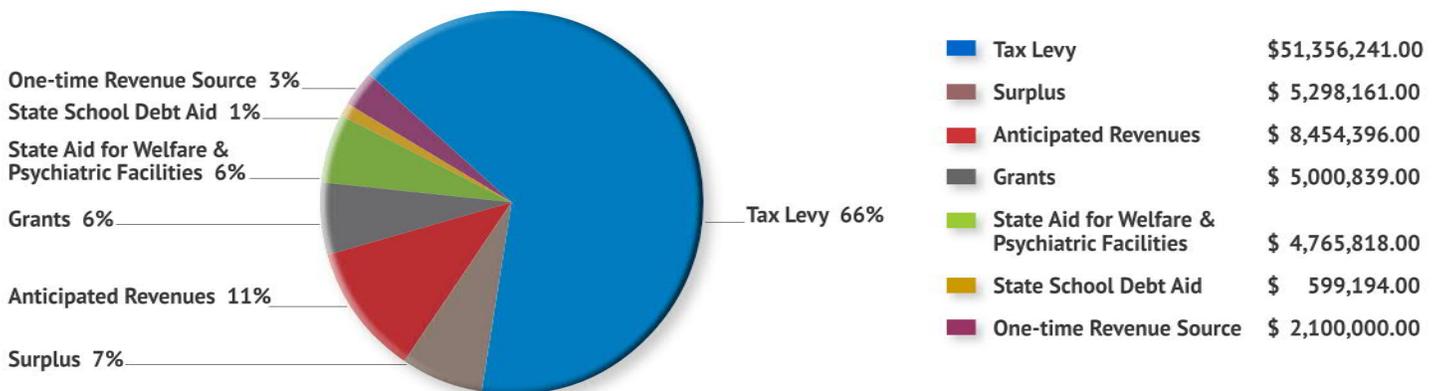


# Tightening the Budget Belt to Balance the County Checkbook

When it's time to tighten the budget belt in your household, you look at needs versus wants. Everyone needs food, shelter, clothing and transportation. We reviewed our Guiding Principles and wanted to protect our Core Mission of providing essential services to our county's citizens: public safety, health and human services, and investing in our future. The Board of Chosen Freeholders agreed that we will not spend money we don't have and will not borrow to pay operating expenses. We made decisions based on a long-term vision for Salem County.

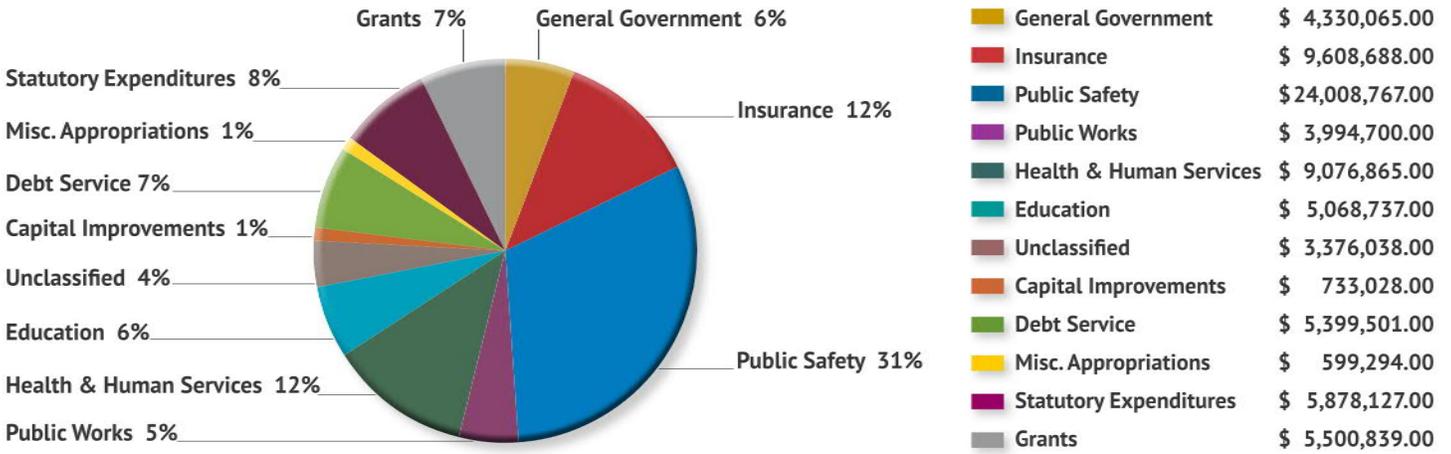
## Here's how the County generates revenues...

### 2012 SALEM COUNTY INCOME\*



Going through the budget balancing process we checked every line item on the expense sheet.  
*Here's where the tax money goes...*

**2012 SALEM COUNTY EXPENSES\***



**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

- Adjutor's Office
- Administrative & Executive
- Agricultural Board
- Auditor
- Board of Elections
- Board of Taxation
- Bond Costs
- Clerk of the Board
- County Clerk
- County Counsel
- Cultural & Heritage
- Economic Development
- Engineering
- Grant Management
- HR/Payroll
- IT
- Labor Counsel
- Public Information Office
- Purchasing
- Special Counsel/Consulting
- Surrogate's Office
- Treasurer's Office

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

- 911 Center
- Alternative Youth Shelter
- Correctional Facility
- Emergency Services
- Fire Marshall
- Fire School
- Juvenile Detention
- Medical Examiner
- Prosecutor's Office
- Sheriff's Office

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

- Alcohol Treatment
- Commission on Women
- Health Department
- Maintenance of Patients in State Institutions
- Office on Aging
- Office on the Disabled
- War Vets Burial
- Welfare Board

**EDUCATION**

- Bookmobile
- County Superintendent of Schools
- Reimb. For Residents Attending Out of County 2 yr. College
- Salem Community College
- Salem County Vo-Tech
- Special Services School District

**MISC. APPROPRIATIONS**

- Code Enforcement
- Contingent
- Deferred Charges
- Judgments
- Land Use Administration
- Parks & Recreation

**UNCLASSIFIED**

- Bus Service
- In Lieu of Taxes Pilot Prog.
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Veteran's Services

**STATUTORY**

- Police & Fireman's Retirement System
- Public Employee's Retirement System
- Social Security

*We wanted to protect our Core Mission of providing essential services to our county's citizens: public safety, health and human services, and investing in our future.*

\*Information supplied by the Salem County Treasure's Office.

Once we scrutinized the expenses then we determined the county's core needs. At that point we made tough decisions to trim the budget. Here are the budget cuts we made:



- Reduced Freeholder salaries.
- Cut \$40,000 from the administration budget.
- Reduced the workforce approximately 10% to 2009 level.
- Cut operating expenses for 18 departments.
- Consolidated and restructured departments, using shared services.
- Restructured non-union employee health benefits – employees will pay more toward their own healthcare benefits.

## Our Plan Going Forward...

Our plan is to continue making decisions based on a long term vision for the County. We will protect our Core Mission of providing essential services to county residents. Other items we will do:

- Negotiate realistic contracts that reflect the current economic realities.
- Realize a full-year savings in the Salary and Wage line.
- Spend within our means.
- Cover operating costs without borrowing funds.
- Protect taxpayers.
- Eliminate wasteful spending.

## How You Can Contact Us

As we have named our newsletter...we are "Open to the Public" and we want your input. Here's how you can contact us:

- **Attend Workshops & Regular Meetings:** 1st & 3rd Wednesday of every month, see website for the schedule & location.
- **Contact Us – We want to hear from you!**  
*E-mail:* [freeholders@salemcountynj.gov](mailto:freeholders@salemcountynj.gov)  
*Phone:* 1-856-935-7510, x8483  
*Fax:* 1-856-935-9102  
*Address:* 94 Market Street, Salem, NJ 08079
- **Stay Informed:** We will keep you informed as we do business differently in Salem County. Please fill in your e-mail address so we can notify you of upcoming issues of *Open to the Public*.

If you would like to download the complete **Salem County 2012 Budget Presentation** PowerPoint file click here.



**First Row:** Beth Timberman, Julie Acton, Director, Ben Laury, Deputy Director. **Second Row:** Bruce Bobbitt, Lee Ware, Dale Cross, Bob Vanderslice