



Jim Kreuser, County Executive

1010 – 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Third Floor  
Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140  
(262) 653-2600  
Fax: (262) 653-2817

October 2, 2018

News release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Jennie Tunkieicz  
(262) 653-2831

## **Proposed 2019 Kenosha County budget lowers taxes, increases services and commitment to infrastructure**

Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser's 2019 budget proposal reduces property taxes while growing the county's commitment to improving its infrastructure.

"This budget meets the needs of our community – at a cost savings to taxpayers," said Kreuser, who presented the budget to the County Board on Tuesday night.

For a home valued at \$200,000, county taxes will decrease by \$8.26 in 2019, under the proposed budget. This puts taxes in line with where they were in 2015.

The tax decrease comes as equalized values are increasing above projections, due in large part to the work the county has done to grow economic development possibilities, Kreuser said. That work must continue, Kreuser added.

"Significant, quality development is knocking at our door, and we don't want it to drive past us," Kreuser said.

Infrastructure improvements included in Kreuser's budget proposal include:

- The fulfillment of a \$3.3 million commitment to the state of Wisconsin to supplement the \$30 million to \$40 million that the state is investing in an expansion of Highway KR (First Street) to support the Foxconn development.
- Provisions to expand Highway K (60<sup>th</sup> Street) to four lanes westward to Highway H (88<sup>th</sup> Avenue). Under an agreement with Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian, the city will expand the road between the Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific railroad tracks, while the county will handle the widening between the Canadian Pacific tracks and Highway H. Upon completion, the entire stretch of roadway east of Highway H will be jurisdictionally transferred to the city.
- Acquisition for right-of-way and design work will continue on Highway S (38<sup>th</sup> Street/Burlington Road). Beginning in 2020, this road is slated to be turned into a four-lane, divided highway from Highway 31 (Green Bay Road) to Interstate 94.

- Annual paving projects on other county highways will continue as usual, with 18 miles of such work having occurred in 2018.

Other budget highlights include:

- Funding for the county's portion of replacing the 911 radio console system that is now at the end of its life, as well as the development of a simulcast system that addresses communications gaps for law enforcement, fire and rescue services. Two communication towers and new radio equipment will be added to provide a level of public safety coverage consistent with federal targets.
- A change in the prescription drug formulary for county employees, expected to result in a \$300,000 to \$500,000 savings while still providing needed medications and services.
- Upgrades to testing equipment in the Division of Health laboratory to allow for faster and better drug and alcohol analysis to assist law enforcement, the courts and the public.
- Programming changes to upgrade and transition the Kenosha County Job Center to provide enhanced training in the Gig Economy.
- Increased depth to behavioral health services, including additional funding for the Bridges Community Center, a peer-run center that assists people with behavioral and mental health issues. The budget also increases beds at the KARE Center, from 11 to 16, to provide more opportunities for stabilization for people in behavioral health crisis situations.
- Additional help to the Division of Veterans Services to improve services for military veterans and their families.

The County Board and its committees will review the budget in detail over the coming weeks. A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 7, with the board expected to vote on adoption on Thursday, Nov. 8.

“This budget addresses our urgent infrastructure and economic development needs, while taking care of our most vulnerable citizens – and taxpayers will see a savings,” Kreuser said. “I look forward to working with the County Board to continue moving Kenosha County forward.”

###