Another conservative budget for 2009

Let’s put the bottom line at the top:
For 2009 – and many prior years – the City of Loveland will have a balanced budget. The City will not spend more money than it receives.

And like many prior years, the City’s 2009 budget continues to be conservative. The quantity and quality of current services will be maintained and some new projects that have been anticipated and planned for some time will begin. There are no “eye openers” in the 2009 budget.

Comparing apples to apples – the 2009 adopted budget to the 2008 adopted budget – for our growing city, the 2009 budget is 3.8 percent higher. However, compared to the 2008 revised budget that includes unspent rollover money from the previous year – apples to oranges – the $175.6 million 2009 adopted budget is 11 percent lower than the 2008 revised budget of $196.7 million.

The 2009 budget with its maintenance approach will continue to support the Loveland City Council’s objectives: focusing on economic development, transportation, open and accessible government, and effective, efficient government. Loveland’s “hold the line” budget philosophy has been quite successful during the past few years.

“Loveland’s economy continues to perform better than other municipalities both nationwide and in our region,” said Loveland City

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What to do when the leaves fall

Autumn is here and that means those beautiful red and gold leaves on the trees will soon be on lawns and sidewalks. The Solid Waste Division recommends that residents bag their leaves and take them to the City’s Recycling Center at 400 N. Wilson Ave. for recycling.

“It clogs stormwater collection systems and also negatively affects stormwater quality.”

Another option is to sign up for the City’s weekly curbside yard waste collection service that runs through the end of November.

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Make Christmas tree ‘greener’

Many Loveland residents have already made the switch and replaced their standard incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) to reap the terrific energy and cost-savings CFLs provide.

Another lighting technology also making inroads in the energy and cost-savings domain is light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

LEDs are commonly used to light watches, clocks and calculators, and in the last several years, have emerged as a new option for holiday lighting.

In contrast to incandescent bulbs that produce light through a heated filament that glows, light from LEDs results from energy produced by

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Manager Don Williams. “While we have not escaped the impacts of downturns in the building industry, our financial outlook remains stable. Our conservative philosophy has enabled us to weather this storm without the service reductions we’ve read about elsewhere.”

Williams emphasized that the budget is a plan, not an unchangeable directive. The 2009 budget has been under development for a year – long before the emergence of national economic woes in recent weeks. Adjustments to actual spending could occur during the year if revenues decrease.

Economic considerations

In preparing the budget, the City has taken into consideration various economic facts and assumptions.

Although the inflation rate in the Loveland area has been and is forecasted to continue to be less than the national rate, a 3.2 percent Consumer Price Index increase is anticipated for 2009. Thus, a 3.8 percent increase in Loveland’s 2009 budget barely offsets the likely inflation rate.

Regarding unemployment, the Loveland/Fort Collins region continues to enjoy low unemployment rates. However, underemployment continues to be a concern for the region with its highly skilled workforce. The availability of this workforce is promoted by Loveland in seeking to attract firms offering higher paying jobs with strong benefit packages.

The 3 percent sales tax the City receives on retail purchases continues to be the primary revenue source for the General Fund budget that supports police, fire, parks, recreation, culture, the library and more. The 3 percent rate has remained unchanged for more than 20 years.

Sales tax revenues have grown substantially during the past several years thanks to a strong economy and all the new stores that now enable local residents to shop here in Loveland.

In preparing the 2009 budget, a conservative perspective was used in acknowledging that the sales tax growth rate may not be as strong as in previous years. The dramatic increase in new Loveland stores has subsided while new large shopping venues are opening in Fort Collins and Timnath.

Total sales tax revenues for 2008 are projected to be 7.2 percent higher than in 2007. The new budget uses a conservative 4.0 percent rate increase for 2009.

Don’t let FOG blur vision or pipes

All of us have inadvertently poured a little cooking oil down the drain. But out of sight should not be out of mind. Fats, oil and grease (FOG) can cause big problems for homeowners, especially around the holidays when large meals, often including roasted or fried meats, are prepared.

FOG can build up in a home’s pipes, clogging interior sewer lines and resulting in big messes and even bigger repair bills (clogged pipes in residences are homeowner’s responsibility). Garbage disposals do not effectively process or remove grease that’s gone down the drain.

FOG can do even more damage if it spreads to the sewer lines in the streets. The result can be a serious overflow or backup of sewage which can pose a health hazard as well as potentially increasing costs for sewer service due to increased cost to the utility for maintenance and repairs.

To safely dispose of FOG during the holidays and year-round, pour oil from greasy skillets, broiler pans and roasters into an old soup can or other closable container. Allow it to cool and harden, then throw it in the trash. Also, wipe off greasy dishes and utensils with paper towels before loading them into the dishwasher.

It is a misconception to assume that a good dose of hot water will break down the grease if some does manage to get down the drain. Grease and oil are hydrophobic. No matter how much hot water follows, they will stick to pipe’s interiors and continue to build up until a blockage occurs. The best and safest bet is just keeping fat, oil

Signed up yet?

LARIMER EMERGENCY TELEPHONE AUTHORITY

Emergency notifications By cell phone, e-mail

Larimer County residents can now sign up to receive free emergency notifications on their cell phones, work phones, via text messages and e-mails in addition to receiving phone calls on their traditional home phones. This free, expanded service requires signing up at the Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority (LETA) website, www.leta911.org. Residents who don’t sign up will still receive notifications on their traditional home phones but nowhere else.

Since the program was announced in late September, more than 8,000 signups have been received.
Revenue growth
City sales tax revenue has shown modest but significant growth over the past several years. A 4 percent increase is projected in the 2009 budget. City sales tax is the primary revenue source for the General Fund that pays for police, fire, library, parks, recreation and more. The sales tax rate paid on purchases has not increased for more than 20 years.

Your property tax
Owners of homes and other real estate pay property taxes every year. The City of Loveland receives about 12 percent of the taxes paid, with greater portions going to the local school district and the county.

Business expo draws hundreds
More than 400 Loveland business owners and managers attended the 6th Annual City of Loveland’s Resource Expo and Business Appreciation Event last month at the Ranch. This year’s event featured a motivational presentation by keynote speaker, former CSU Football Coach Sonny Lubick.

The Resource Expo included 25 vendor booths, which ran the gamut from non-profit organizations offering low-interest loans and free data mining services to free business plan consulting and no-cost employee training and recruiting services. Loveland’s Economic Gardening Program and the Loveland Center for Business Development also had booths there.

In addition to numerous business tips, employees from the City’s Water and Power Department made suggestions on how businesses could lower their utility bills and conserve energy, and City code enforcement staff advised local business owners on sign and zoning codes.

Joining the City as event hosts this year were Home State Bank, Embassy Suites Loveland, McKee Medical Center, LBN Insurance, and Comcast.

Notable Projects, Programs for 2009
Mobile computers for fire vehicles; providing building plans, maps, communication tools.............................................. $186,000
Fire truck replacement .......................................................... $475,000
Library expansion design .......................................................$1.4 million
Design of 40-60 acre Mehaffey Park in NW Loveland ...............$600,000
Expansion of Chilson Recreation Center .................................$7 million

Recreation Trail expansion near Boyd Lake .................. $1.1 million
Open Lands acquisition ...........................................................$1.7 million
(Funded primarily from Loveland’s portion of the Larimer County Open Space sales tax, plus development fees.)

Downtown improvements ..................................................$740,000
City buildings maintenance projects ......................................$500,000
Service Center expansion .....................................................$1.7 million

Annual street maintenance program ..................................$3.4 million
Transportation program ...........................................................$4.6 million; primarily for new roads, including widening Taft Ave.
(An additional $12 million will be spent for major improvements to the interchange at I-25/Hwy. 34. These improvements are funded by fees from purchases within the Centerra Metro District and therefore not included in the City budget.)

Wheeled recycling carts for single-stream pickup ..................$146,000
Storm Water engineering, construction, oversizing programs; equipment .........................................................$1.5 million

Water Utility projects ...........................................................$7.5 million
Wastewater Utility projects ..................................................$1.8 million
Electric Power Utility projects ...............................................$7 million

Airport improvement projects ..............................................$1.6 million

Overall City personnel net increase .................................. .74 Full time equivalent staffer

NOTE: The City of Loveland maintains a balanced budget. Therefore, the funding for all these projects and programs either already exists or will be received through normal sources as these projects occur.

Among the best
The Loveland Reporter-Herald newspaper recently published its annual Reader’s Choice Awards for Loveland’s “best of” and “favorite” in numerous categories. More than 40 Reporter-Herald readers sent in ballots listing their favorites in Loveland. The following are City facilities that made this year’s list:

Best of/Favorite:
• Place to skateboard – Loveland Sports Park
• Fitness center – Chilson Recreation Center
• Fun event for children – Fishing Derby
• Art gallery – Loveland Museum/Gallery
• Place to take out-of-towners – Benson Sculpture Park
• Place for entertainment – Foote Lagoon concerts & Library Park
• Fitness instructors – Chilson Recreation Center
• Employer – City of Loveland
• Place to walk your dog – Recreation Trail system
• Local events – The Old-Fashioned Corn Roast Festival
• Golf course – Marianna Butte Golf Course
• Fitness classes – Chilson Recreation Center

Quality leadership recognized
Loveland business owners and officials attended the 6th Annual City of Loveland Business Appreciation Breakfast and Business Resource Expo. Many smiles and nods of agreement were evident as keynote speaker, Sonny Lubick, addressed the crowd. Lubick spoke of the similar qualities of behavior and character needed in leading a successful business and successful sports team.
To request a yard waste cart call 962-2111. For more information call 962-2529.

Residents may dispose of leaves at no charge. Leaf collection is offered April through November.

Cart customers who plan to use the carts again next spring are asked to call 962-2529. If you have a yard waste collection cart, please call 962-2529 to ensure your cart is emptied on your trash collection day.

The carts are emptied on residents' trash collection day. Cost for curbside yard waste collection is $7.50 per month. The service is available April through November.

What to do when the leaves fall

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These 96-gallon carts, delivered to residents' homes, can be filled with leaves and other clean (no dog droppings, rock, soil, sod, or other litter) yard wastes.

The carts are emptied on residents' trash collection day. Cost for curbside yard waste collection is $7.50 per month. The service is offered April through November.

Cart customers who plan to use the carts again next spring are asked to keep the carts during the winter months.

The City's Recycling Center is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon. – Fri., and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the weekends. Residents may dispose of leaves at no charge.

For more information call 962-2529. To request a yard waste cart call 962-2111.

Make Christmas tree 'greener'

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Have you signed up yet?

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Choose how, where

The enhanced system provides residents with choices of how to be notified and the locations to be contacted about. That means notifications can be sent to your home phone, cell phone, work phone and e-mail about situations near your home, work or child's school.

To receive notifications about more than one location, additional signups are required. For example, to receive alerts about home and child's school, two registrations are needed; one using the home address and another signup using the school address.

LETA is a partnership of 23 government and public safety agencies of Larimer County. LETA supports 9-1-1 emergency communications to make emergency notification throughout Larimer County consistent and effective.

Sign up today at www.leta911.org.

Be Informed

Some or all of these sources may be utilized during an emergency or special situation. The nature of the situation will dictate what sources will be utilized. Setup and staffing for some resources will not occur immediately.

City of Loveland Info Sources:

Official City website
1610 AM radio
Channel 16 cable TV
Phone 911
www.cityofloveland.org
City’s AM radio station
City cable TV channel
Info line/call center
Emergency police/fire

Emergency Notification
Phone calls/e-mails: signup www.LETA911.org
Emergency Alert System (EAS)
Emergency messages on TV & radio

Other sources:

www.larimer.org
Phone 211
Area assistance phone info line
www.firstcall211.org

City Update is a monthly publication of the City of Loveland. Residents receive City Update on various dates throughout the month depending on their utility billing cycle. Timeliness of the information may be affected by recipients' bill distribution schedule. Your comments are encouraged and welcomed at 962-2302, hillea@ci.loveland.co.us. Visit the City's website at www.cityofloveland.org.