



# Hello, Hamilton County

E-News for Hamilton County Residents and Staff

January 2, 2004

“We will serve the residents of Hamilton County by providing the best and most responsive county government in America.”  
 – Hamilton County Vision

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## 2004 Hamilton County Budget

The total general fund budget for 2004 is \$258.3 million. This represents a \$0.4 million decrease from the 2003 general fund approved appropriation of \$258.7 million. Ongoing general fund revenues exceed ongoing expenditures by \$42,216. The 2004 budget includes \$16.5 million of one-time expenditures.

County Commissioners, John Dowlin, Phil Heimlich, and Todd Portune adopted a

budget goal for 2004 to increase the undedicated general fund reserves to 20% by 2006. The budget includes significant progress on this goal. The combination of projected general fund reserves (\$25.0 million) and the unreserved component of the Budget Stabilization Fund (\$7.5 million) equals \$32.5 million or 13.4% of the ongoing general fund expenditure level of \$242 million.



The total 2004 budget is \$2.29 billion, an increase over the \$2.19 billion budget adopted for 2003. The majority of the increase is occurring in the Department of Jobs and Family Services (JFS) program area. For the fourth consecutive year, JFS is continuing to experience significant entitle-

ment payment increases in the Medicaid area. These increases do not require the county to raise additional local funds as the programs are funded through state and federal payments.

Other areas of increase equal to or greater than \$5 million include:

- ♦ JFS — The increase is due to an accounting change (\$30 million) and one time expenditures primarily related to closing out the Magellan managed care contract (\$10 million).
- ♦ Mental Retardation-Development Disabilities (MRDD) — The 2004 MRDD budget is in line with the 2004 levy plan. Since the beginning of the current levy period in 2000, MRDD has consistently been under the annual levy plan amounts in order to not end the levy period with a negative balance. The increase in 2004 from 2003 brings the MRDD budget back in line with that plan while still projecting a positive fund balance at the end of 2004. Additional funds in 2004 are provided to cover increased staffing,

building repair and maintenance, bus rental costs and increased support for state waiver services.

- ♦ Sheriff — The Sheriff Department's budget increases approximately \$5 million due to increased personnel expenses related to union contract negotiations, increased medical costs, and increased expenses for overtime. There are also increases in medical services for inmates and the inmate food service contract.
- ♦ Debt — The 1993 courthouse debt will be called at a one-time cost of \$5.7 million. This early redemption will result in reduced debt payments through 2011 and a total net interest savings of \$1.1 million. The debt retirement will eliminate \$1.0 million from the 2004 ongoing debt service budget. This call will eliminate future interest costs and free up additional debt capacity.



*Our wish for you . . .*

*A year that's your best by far;*

*With blue skies above and things that you love,*

*And laughter wherever you are!*

*Happy New Year!*

*From the staff of Hello, Hamilton County*

### Ralph Linne Elected

Ralph Linne, Director of County Facilities, was elected Trustee of the Ohio Public Facilities Maintenance Association (OPFMA) at the November annual conference. Ralph has been an active member of the organization for seven years.

OPFMA is a tax exempt, non-profit organization created in 1987. For over 15 years, OPFMA has been devoted to the educational, informational, and professional development of facilities' employees at all levels. OPFMA not only supports employees of public facilities, it strives to improve operations of the facilities.

Congratulations, Ralph.

### Volunteer Holiday Breakfast

The Hamilton County Volunteers rang in the holiday season this year at a Holiday Breakfast held in their honor on December 17th. The event has become an annual celebration and was catered by Busken Bakery. Each volunteer received a \$25 Kroger gift certificate as a token of appreciation for their hard work.

In attendance were Commissioner John Dowlin; County Administrator, Dave Krings; and Senior Executive Assistant County Administrator, Peter Hames, as well as representatives from the County Personnel Department and the Recorder's Office. The following volunteers were recognized at this year's event: Patricia Collins, Dorothy Gaiter, Tracey Heath, Claudia Jackson, Margaret Phelps, and Inell Pinkston-Nash. Volunteers Mattie Armstrong, Calvin McGivens, Sharon Morris and Earlee Walker were unable to attend.

Thanks to everyone who was able to attend, and thanks to the volunteers for their work throughout the county.



From left to right: County Administrator, Dave Krings; County Commissioner John Dowlin; Volunteer, Patricia Collins; Volunteer, Dorothy Gaiter; Volunteer, Margaret Phelps; Volunteer Coordinator, Jessica Hayes; Volunteer, Tracey Heath; Volunteer, Inell Pinkston-Nash; Volunteer, Claudia Jackson.



From left to right, back row: Jessica Hayes, Volunteer Program Coordinator; Peter Hames, Senior Executive Assistant County Administrator. Front row: Volunteers, Tracey Heath and Inell Pinkston-Nash.



### Thursday's Child For Information Call 513.632.6366

birth dates:  
April 1991



Katrina

Kimberly

Katrina and Kimberly are an energetic, eager and sweet set of twins. They enjoy each other's company and share a lot of the same interests.

On rainy days, Katrina and Kimberly enjoy reading a good adventure book or drawing, painting and coloring. They enjoy playing cards, and board or video games, too. Usually you can find the two girls outside swimming, swinging on the swing set or riding their bikes. They also like to climb trees and go camping.

When it comes to their favorite foods, they will agree it has to be pizza and hot fries for them. They like to watch various Disney movies and videos. Their favorite music is Christian or gospel songs.

Both girls are developmentally on target but will require ongoing therapy and medications.

These charming twins are looking for a loving and supportive family to call their own.

## Budget

The Metropolitan Sewer District's (MSD) budget increases approximately \$15 million. \$9 million of the increase is due to implementation of the Global Consent Decree. The balance of the increase is for ongoing operational increases. The MSD budget submitted through the City of Cincinnati requires a 5% rate increase. The department had originally anticipated a need for a 7% rate increase for 2004. The smaller increase is the result of the department holding the line on operating expenses and a favorable interest rate environment for the 2003 debt issuance. The budget includes expenses and an additional 9% rate increase in anticipation of a potential Consent Decree settlement.



The budget funds 6,339 total positions. There was a net reduction

of approximately 18 positions during 2003 and 12.50 positions are added for 2004. This results in an overall reduction of approximately six positions from 2003. There are no new positions recommended for the general fund.

This budget includes funding for salary increases averaging 3.0% of the 2003 salary amounts for nonrepresented staff and represented staff with contracts linked to the county allocation for nonrepresented staff. The 3% adjustment is consistent with a review of market conditions and information, such as the Chamber of Commerce and other salary studies. The 2004 budget includes funding for union contracts, as negotiated.

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Also included in this budget, consistent with the Board's pay-for-performance compensation system, are two 1% supplemental salary adjustments for participating departments. Supplemental salary adjustments do not increase the annual salary base, as they considered "one time" adjustments.



The budget includes a 3.5% turnover rate that was applied to all general fund departments with the exception of those departments with fewer than 20 positions. No turnover rate was applied to those departments. This is an increase from the 3% turnover rate that has been used in recent years. Actual turnover for the past four years has been approximately 5%.



*"To preserve the faith of the nation by an exact discharge of its debts and contracts, expend the public money with the same care and economy we would practice with our own, and impose on our citizens no unnecessary burden ... are the landmarks by which we are to guide ourselves in all our proceedings."*

— Thomas Jefferson, 1802

## 2004 Budget Goals

1. The 2004 budget will be submitted to the Commissioners in November to allow sufficient review time for adoption by January 1, 2004.
2. The 2004 budget will be based on current tax revenue adjusted to reflect growth and/or reductions anticipated in 2004.
3. All special funds shall, to the extent possible, reimburse the general fund for both direct and indirect costs.
4. The 2004 budget will be utilized to coordinate special levies to ensure there is no duplication of services and that the respective levies take responsibility for all obligations.
5. The level of ongoing general fund revenue shall meet or exceed the level of ongoing expenditures. New or expanded services will be separated from existing ones.
6. The 2004 budget will maximize federal and state revenues through a detailed analysis to ensure that all general fund expenditures are being appropriately identified and charged to the correct federal/state program.
7. The 2004 budget process will be utilized to develop a legislative agenda to address items impacting our ability to administer effectively and fund required and/or necessary programs.

See **Budget Goals**, Page 4

## fyi

### Hamilton County Facts at a Glance

- ◆ Date of Incorporation — 1790
- ◆ Form of Government — 3-member Board of Commissioners
- ◆ County Seat — Cincinnati, Ohio
- ◆ Area — 414 square miles
- ◆ Population (2000 Census) — 845,303

### Hamilton County Firsts

- ◆ First area in the United States to publish greeting cards — Gibson Greeting Card Co., 1850
- ◆ Invention of the first practical steam engine, 1853.
- ◆ First professional baseball team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, known today as the Cincinnati Reds, 1869.
- ◆ First metro area to establish a weather bureau, 1869.
- ◆ The first professional night baseball game played under lights, 1935.

### Comparisons to Other Metro Regions

- ◆ The Greater Cincinnati region was ranked in *Fortune* magazine's 1996 top 10 great places to live and work.
- ◆ *Places Rated Almanac* crowned the Queen City the Best Place to Live in North America in 1993.
- ◆ Hamilton County's average buying power in 1999 was the eighth best in the U.S.
- ◆ Hamilton County is home to the second oldest opera company in the nation, the Cincinnati Opera.

## Budget Goals

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8. The 2004 budget process will include a review of funding opportunities to allow the county to continue being a leader in providing necessary support services to individuals transitioning from welfare to work.
9. The 2004 budget process will carry out federal and state-mandated county responsibilities in the most effective way. The county will continue to aggressively pursue alternative funding sources for these mandates.
10. The 2004 budget process will reserve dollars for employee pay adjustments, if any, according to the county's normal procedure.
11. The 2004 budget will hold the growth of general fund expenditures supported by locally generated funds, expenditures supported by county controlled taxes, and locally set fees under the rate of inflation.
12. Through the 2004 budget the county will continue to increase the undedicated general fund reserves with a goal of reaching a reserve amount of 20% of the general fund by 2006.
13. Beginning in 2004, the county will develop an annual Commissioners' Report Card to citizens.
14. During 2004, the budget will provide for the development of a "gain sharing" program modeled after successful programs in other organizations.
15. The 2004 budget will reserve \$2 million for targeted economic development investments that provide for acceptable rates of return on investment for the county.
16. Through Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) funds, the 2004 budget will support a county representative for one year with the responsibility of reforming operations and improving customer service provided by MSD.
17. The 2004 budget will support the implementation of recommendations of the Homeland Security Commission as agreed to by the Board of Commissioners.
18. The 2004 budget should continue the county's leadership in serving seniors by continuing the elimination of waiting lists for services provided by the Senior Services levy.
19. The 2004 budget will provide for efforts to complete the collection of Paul Brown Stadium overrun costs from responsible parties.
20. The county will work to meet with Cincinnati, as needed, at no more than four times during 2004 to explore opportunities to keep costs down and minimize overlap in services provided to citizens.
21. Increase county revenue by pursuing changes in state law that provide counties with a voice in the approval of tax increment financing districts.

For more information about the county's 2004 budget and budget goals, send an e-mail to [lois.reynolds@hamilton-co.org](mailto:lois.reynolds@hamilton-co.org).

**"Got News?"**  
 If you have county news for Hello, Hamilton County, send an email to Sharon Booker at [sharon.booker@hamilton-co.org](mailto:sharon.booker@hamilton-co.org).  
 Next deadline: **January 12.**

*Have  
 a  
 productive  
 and  
 prosperous  
 year  
 in  
 2004!*



Please remember to print and post *Hello, Hamilton County* in your areas so that everyone can see what's going on!

**Thank you** to everyone who contributed to this issue.

**Hello, Hamilton County** is published twice monthly on the County's web page. It is intended to inform both Hamilton County residents and staff. If you have questions or suggestions for future editions, please contact Sharon Booker (946.4428), Peter Hames (946.4432), or Cheryl Willis (946.4324). To subscribe or unsubscribe visit [www.hamilton-co.org](http://www.hamilton-co.org) and click on the green "Newsletter" button.