

PRESS RELEASE



County Council

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Cooper Proposes Reducing Car Allowance for Elected Officials

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Declaring he had to stay true to the commitment he made during the recent budget deliberations, County Councilmember Mike Cooper has announced he will introduce an ordinance next week designed to save the county general fund nearly \$40,000 by reducing the car allowance granted to some county elected officials by 55 percent -- half of the savings alone will come from the council members.

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Cooper noted that elected officials can not legally turn down pay raises or take unpaid leave, including the ten-day furloughs being asked of regular county employees in the 2009 budget. "This is a way for us to do our part," he said.

"This proposal continues to demonstrate the council's proactive leadership in solving the county's budget challenges while at the same time attempting to save the jobs of the hard working women and men who serve you each day," said Cooper.

"It not only makes sense, it is the right thing to do," he said. "I look forward to the executive and other elected officials joining me in public support of this measure."

The car allowance for county elected officials is adopted by the council annually and is based on a 99% of value of using county-owned vehicles. The amount for 2009 would be \$586.40 a month for each elected official, except the sheriff and judges, who are excluded. The proposed reimbursed rate totals \$70,368 for the county executive, the five council members, the assessor, auditor, clerk and treasurer – \$35,184 just for council members.

"My proposal," said Cooper, "will save the general fund almost \$40,000 – nearly \$20,000 in savings from the county council.

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