

Non-Department Specific Cost Savings Ideas

(as updated through February 18, 2009; more ideas continue to arrive)

1. Concentrate on "core functions" and discontinue environmental strategic plan items and any other unfunded mandates (such as Sustainability, Citizen's Energy Initiative, Climate Change, Renewable Energy Projects, Development of ISO9000 and ISO 14000 standards, etc) which should be put on hold during economic crisis.
2. Include solar/geothermal energy efficiency upgrades to public buildings. The federal government has been providing special tax incentive programs such as the Clean Renewable Energy Bond program so private financing can pay for the upgrades and the local agencies can repay the financing out of energy savings.
3. Other energy savings efforts: check for most efficient use of lightbulbs, removing where unnecessary, re-evaluating where motion sensor switches should be used (perhaps add some hard switches to eliminate unneeded on-time for some rooms, review day and night light usage patterns, turn off computers and copiers at night, and computers when away from desk for some period of time (1.5-3 hours), use individual workstation lighting.
4. Stop departmental subscriptions to newspapers, and other periodicals -- access on-line.
5. Surplus equipment: require depts. to use instead of buying new, sell remainder rather than storing.
6. Extend useful life of computers and vehicles rather than current replacement schedules.
7. Reduce janitorial services to 2 days per week as opposed to 3.
8. Expand use of telecommuting.
9. "Green" suggestions from California Academy of Sciences (reuse/recycle packing supplies; purchase commodities only in bulk, eliminate anti-bacterial soap, replace restroom paper towels with electric hand dryers)
10. Charge employees for parking permits.
11. Artwork: stop purchasing artwork for offices, donate sculpture in front of Admin bldg (get a write off) and replace with simple plaque thanking public servants and/or veterans for service and dedication.
12. Use empty county offices for meetings instead of renting space
13. Stop food and beverage catering for management meetings.
14. Stop paying moving expenses for management recruits.
15. Evaluate cost effectiveness of using "head hunters" as opposed to less costly ways of recruiting.
16. Set appropriate ratio of management to staff
17. Management Academy: stop hiring outside consultants for training in performance improvement and leadership evaluation or do away with Management Academy, evaluate effectiveness of this academy, stop allowing Management Academy to hold seminars at wineries.
18. Evaluate cost effectiveness of providing other training classes like: Fraud & Identity Theft; Nutrition, and Smart Car Buying.
19. Fill public records requests, electronically and change request forms to promote electronic transmission of requested records.
20. Change to electronic paid leave requests and approvals as opposed to paper versions currently required.
21. Mandate that the majority of county printing should be done at the county printshop (i.e. Use Reprographics as opposed to outside vendors or

- distributed printing via the many small printers and copiers in departments.) Suggested variations: Establish Printer/person ratios that make sense per division function; Install multi-function printer/fac/copier/scanners with color and larger page size (i.e. 11 x 17) and Confidential settings (log in to print these documents); Eliminate old printers and accessories (continue donating old stock to local non-profits); Target fewer, more efficient, faster devices in common areas.
22. County should stop providing bottled water, variations: drink tap, tap with faucet filter (cost split with employees)
 23. Look at levels of approval for routine items that currently need to go to the Board of Supervisors for approval; increase departmental approval authority.
 24. Streamline and simplify approval processes to reduce staff time on administrative processes.
 25. Enhance space standards by following steps: Design and identify space typical (6x6; 6x8, 8x8...); Design floor layouts that optimize cube flexibility; Eliminate most walled offices; Include multiple storage options that are ergonomically safe; Transfer ownership of all furniture product to General Services (to minimize attachment to assets and manage more effectively); Work towards adjustable worksurface components; Add in more multi-purpose conference room areas that can be scheduled or drop-in Invest in inviting, optimized multi-function break areas and eliminate individual department areas; Create 'public' lobby areas for all contact (where possible); and Develop Space Management system to support locating space, areas, people, departments and other key space components.
 26. Implement Web Conferencing and Collaboration solutions (i.e. WebEx; Sametime...) to manage meetings or bring together groups from multiple areas or departments easily when a face-2-face is not required (most of the time); quickly resolve problems/issues by sharing data to ensure thorough communication; for training and other educational purposes; and to benefit from recording option.
 27. Expand sabbatical policy to allow employees to take up to a year off, or another specified time frame and county continue to pay health benefits. Don't back fill behind staff out. Rotate # of sabbaticals allowed to keep more positions vacant to get through next two to three years budget crunch.
 28. Work with purchasing to negotiate better rates with consultants who have multiple contracts with the County.
 29. Eliminate MBA accounts until financial situation improves.
 30. Limit PDA purchases per manager per year.
 31. Reduce or eliminate Tuition and Textbook (one variation suggested effective 7/1/09 these funds available only as needed to a maximum negotiated amount with no balance rollover from FY 09-10 forward and renegotiating the maximum rollover available from FY 08-09. Also suggested budgeting for 5 year average use vs budgeting total potential benefit; another variation suggested limiting amount and use to mandatory trainings).
 32. Redirect Department Employee Recognition Program funds to the General Fund for the next 2 years and then revisit
 33. Suspend implementation of the new Human Resources Management System
 34. Reduce or eliminate travel
 35. Reduce or eliminate cell phones

36. Reduce or eliminate home internet service
37. Determine if voice over internet service would be less expensive than phone service
38. Distribute paychecks electronically, variation added: heavily promote direct deposit.
39. Mandate standardization for all county web pages
40. Review county offered training and provide as much as possible in automated, on-demand, web-based formats as opposed to classroom style with internal or external trainers
41. Freeze or reduce salaries -- Variations included: Eliminate salary COLA for Board of Supervisors, Dept Heads, Managers and Confidentials for up-coming year; Cut pay for managers and attorneys, cut Dept Head pay 5%, Let each manager take a very small voluntary reduction in salary, roll-back most recent COLA for all groups.
42. Eliminate bi-lingual premium
43. Eliminate or reduce the \$600 cash allowance
44. Postpone the implementation of the \$600/mo cash allowance for employees and the \$500 flat monthly health insurance contributions for both employees and retirees.
45. Offer cash allowance as a lump sum now, plus 2 years longevity service credit, to induce long-term employees to retire before they had originally planned.
46. Voluntary time off. (One variation specified allowing unrepresented employees to work a 32 hour work week without a change to benefits including retirement and without effect on losing position, another variation provides for increasing flexibility on sabbaticals to allow for some sort of rotation; e.g. 3 months each, rotated so that 21 people fill 20 FTE on an on-going basis)
47. Mandatory Time Off - most commonly, week off between Christmas and New Years with impact of pay cut spread out over a number of months (variations suggested included a second week in mid-summer and begin reducing paychecks now, 11 days or 2 weeks over Christmas/New Years, or alternate Fridays)
48. Close business one, two or more days per month – (more specific variation: All Sonoma County Employees, whose job does not require 40 hours coverage per week, take a 10% time cut by creating a work week from Monday through Thursday at 9 hours per day. All County offices to be closed on Fridays. For those whose jobs require 40 hours of coverage per week and/or 24 hour facility operation, a 2.5 to 5% cut in salary. Salary cuts to be implemented such that no impact on current employee or future retirement benefits (they continue as though the employee is working at 100% time/pay). Retirement to be based on an employee's highest month's wages X 12 in career.)
49. Create hot-line to confidentially report administrative waste, fraud, and abuse, to be monitored by Board of Supervisors or their staff.