

Pinal County Press Release

For Immediate Release
May 27, 2010

Contact: Heather Murphy (520) 866-6057

Supervisors Adopt Balanced, Tentative Budget for FY 2010-11 Document Highlights the Effects of State Cost Shifts to Pinal County

FLORENCE – The Pinal County Board of Supervisors yesterday adopted a tentative budget in the amount of \$437,176,551 for the upcoming fiscal year of 2010-11.

The document presented to the board by County Manager Terry Doolittle, reflected budget numbers based on the assumption that Proposition 100 (temporary one cent sales tax) would not pass. On May 18, voters approved the measure that enacts a temporary sales tax to help the state deal with the current economic crisis.

“If (Proposition) 100 hadn’t passed it would have forced numerous additional cost shifts from the state to the counties,” County Manager Doolittle said in his presentation before the supervisors. “One of those consequences would have been transferring state prisoners who are in the last year of their sentence to the county to finish out the remainder of their time and release in county systems.”

But Doolittle did warn that even though Proposition 100 passed, “it is not the end all, be all of our budget solutions. There are other initiatives to be decided by voters in the upcoming general election that could affect county coffers.” If they are defeated, Doolittle said it could force legislators into a special session to again contemplate shifting state responsibilities onto counties in the form of even more cost shifts.

The budget presentation gave County Manager Doolittle an opportunity to review his accomplishments of the past year in alignment with the county’s strategic priorities. He praised the work of the supervisors in adopting the Comprehensive Plan that will guide land use and sustainability efforts throughout the county for the next decade.

Doolittle also discussed the Sheriff’s progress in driving down response times to priority one calls to the Sheriff’s office. In 2009, response times varied between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on the region. By 2011, the Sheriff’s Office expects to respond to priority one calls in 10 minutes or less.

Pinal County has also driven the childhood vaccination rate up from a low of 43 percent just a few years ago to a vaccination rate of 75 percent. In some parts of the county, the rate is at or near the national average of 80 percent.

The tentative budget is \$36.9 million above last year’s budget due to cost shifts from the state to the county in the areas of health care or increased financial obligations for long term care clients. Cost shifts from the state require county taxpayers to shoulder an added burden of \$0.27 per

\$100 of assessed value. The Supervisors approved lowering the county operational levy by five cents (\$0.05).

To offset some of the impacts of the increased cost shifts from the state, the Supervisors approved nearly a half-million dollars in cuts from non-mandated programs.

When examining the entire budget, Pinal County receives over 31 percent of its revenues from intergovernmental funds, such as state shared revenues. Twenty-four percent of revenues are generated through property taxes. The majority of expenditures with the upcoming budget are in the public safety sector at 28 percent. Health and Human Services and general government operations are tied at 22 percent each.

The final budget, which will be adopted in June, can be the same as what was presented today or the Supervisors could vote on a lower budget. By law, the adopted budget cannot be higher than the tentative budget presented today.

###

Quotes by the Supervisors regarding the tentative budget:

Chairman Pete Rios: “This isn’t the first time we have seen these numbers. This has actually been an ongoing process throughout the year to make sure our budget is balanced and that we keep providing folks the same level of programs and services. I am pleased with the work of our County Manager, elected officials and staff to make this a balanced budget for the people of Pinal County.”

Vice Chairman Bryan Martyn: “I encourage people to look at the budget, examine it line by line. We are in this together. I am very pleased to see our levy drop as we continue to reduce the size of government at every opportunity. We have great challenges ahead of us as we deal with cost shifts and reduced revenues. Overall, I am pleased with the direction Pinal County is taking with this budget.”

Supervisor David Snider: “As has been pointed out in this meeting, the tentative budget is a budget ceiling – we cannot go up from these numbers. This year’s process was the most intense and involved I have seen as a supervisor. The issue that confronts us as a board is, more than ever – what are the consequences to our constituents? I do not like seeing the county tax rate rise, but because of the cost shifts forced upon us by the state, we have to absorb the pain they are sending our way while providing all of the services that we are mandated to provide.”

For more information on the Pinal County budget:*

Presentation by County Manager Doolittle to Board members: <http://is.gd/crHBz>

Tentative Budget Schedules for FY 2010-11: <http://is.gd/crHzd>

*These are valid web addresses shortened using the www.is.gd URL shortener.