

Tips for Tough Times - Media Scan

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Prepared by NACo's Research Division

Lawrence County, Pa.

The Lawrence County commissioners will shut down the courthouse during Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks to save the western Pennsylvania county some money. The commissioners want workers unaffected by those closures to agree to a 3 percent wage rollback instead of taking the holiday furloughs. The commissioners say the county northwest of Pittsburgh must use \$900,000 from its general fund for employees who would normally be paid using state funds tied up as the General Assembly fights to pass a budget. The courthouse will close from Nov. 23-27 and Dec. 21 to 28, and workers won't be paid for those holidays to save money. Workers at the county's jail, 911 center and coroner's office are asked to take a 3 percent pay cut instead of the furloughs.

http://www.philly.com/philly/wires/ap/news/state/pennsylvania/20090929_ap_westerncountycitesbudgetforpayrollcuts.html

Miami-Dade County, Fla.

Miami commissioners finally balanced the city's 2010 budget shortly before midnight Tuesday, after unanimously accepting hard-fought agreements with the city's police, fire and general service unions. All told, the agreements -- two of which were voted on by union members Monday, the other only a few hours before the city's third budget hearing got under way Tuesday -- will save Miami more than \$27 million. Just as importantly, the pacts will save the jobs of more than 400 employees. Beyond the union agreements, commissioners debated saving community programs -- and how deep to dip into savings to do so. They identified and voted to use \$1.75 million to consolidate some of the city's dozen NET offices, which serve as mini City Halls throughout the city -- and which would save an unknown number of union workers in those offices.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/southflorida/story/1258671-p2.html>

Fairfax County, Va.

Cash-strapped Fairfax County is looking at whether selling the naming rights of its 24,000 acres of public parks and facilities could pull in enough revenue to offset some of the millions of dollars in budget shortfalls that have hamstrung many county programs and operations. For the next fiscal year, Fairfax is projecting a \$315 million gap. The county is looking at whether it can finagle a few dollars for its parks,

pointing to deals struck in California, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington state. In Cranberry, Pa., a sports park was named after Dick's Sporting Goods. Kiosks at a county-owned trail in King County, Wash., now bear the Starbucks name. One of the most talked-about deals was negotiated between the city of Medford, Ore., and U.S. Cellular for a new sports park. The price tag: \$650,000 for six years.

Among the facilities listed on the Fairfax County Park Authority's request for proposals, which has a mid-October deadline: county-owned lakes, nature and recreation centers, golf courses, reservable picnic sites, the summer entertainment series and the future Laurel Hill SportsPlex near Occoquan.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/29/AR2009092903646.html>