

## **2011 Legislative Session – St. Louis County Priorities**

### **St. Louis County Specific Items:**

#### **1. Protect Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)**

- \$5 million projected increase in formula funding, not likely to be funded unless we make the case.
- Base funding could also be in jeopardy
- Important to get full PILT funding into Gov's Budget Proposal

#### **2. Pursue ARMER Sales Tax Exemption on equipment**

- All other regions in the state (that have implemented this mandate) have thus far received this exemption, so this is a simple question of fairness.
- We need to form a coalition with the remaining regions in the state who have not yet built their systems.

#### **3. Protect Disparity Reduction Aid and Taconite Tax**

- With a target of over \$1 Billion in savings from State Aids & Credits, everything will be on the table...
- The property tax increases that would accompany the elimination of these two programs would be absolutely devastating to our citizens.

#### **4. Pass Special Sales of Tax Forfeited Lands (Riparian) Bill**

- This bill was vetoed last year and as a result, we lost out on approximately \$500K in estimated revenue to our county.
- May have an opportunity to repeal or amend this long-standing riparian land sales provision.

#### **5. Lead on GAMC Collaboration as a possible state model (If early M.A. opt-in fails/January 15)**

- Funding for state share of M.A. in place through June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Federal Funding of \$1.4 Billion till 2014, then 100% Fed funding.

#### **6. Require District Courts to pay their prorated share of operating costs in county facilities**

- \$1.3 million impact on St. Louis County
- Overlooked item during state takeover of courts.

#### **7. Provide Planning Department oversight in splitting of parcels to help ensure zoning requirements are met.**

- Preventive effort to avoid later problems with undersized lots and septic issues, etc.
- Action would occur before the transfer or conveyance of a property.

8. Amend state statute to include the Tax Forfeited Trust in the distribution of any surplus funding in the Minerals Management Account.

- Currently if this account exceeds \$3 million, any excess is distributed only to the Permanent School Fund and the Permanent University Fund.
- Many of the impacted properties involve tax forfeited lands, therefore, the Tax Forfeited Trust should also be equally included in any distribution of any excess dollars.

**Regional or Statewide Issues:**

- Protect County Program Aid (CPA) and all categorical funding
- Oppose Cost Shifts to Counties
- Remove all remaining Maintenance of Effort (MOE's)
- Explore Revenue Enhancements- County half-cent sales tax to help offset CPA cuts, etc. Sales Tax increase on liquor to offset county costs of detox and other county CD related costs.
- Pursue Reform, Redesign, Collaborative and Cooperation efforts
- Pursue Bonding Bill items (if there is one) that would benefit counties: Local Bridge Repair & Replacement Program; Local Road Improvement Program; Local Road Wetland Replacement Program.
- Protect gas tax revenue dedicated to unorganized township roads.
- Prevent Invasive Species from entering our lakes by placing a moratorium on the state requirement that all lakes over 100 acres in size must have a public access.
- Amending (Outdoor Heritage Fund Citizen's Council) to require geographic representation on the Council. Nobody north of Hinckley currently sits on this 9 member Council.
- Pursue legislation that would exempt county fair associations from property tax liability.
- Amend cartway statute to allow alternatives to the current system which requires the entire county board to serve as both judge and jury. Move responsibility to the District Court or a sub-committee of the county board.
- Pursue (possibly w/the other 13 forested counties) similar statutory authority that the state currently has pertaining to intermediate auction sales of timber.
- Revisit the 1905 Mine Inspection Statute strategy to protect funding to Iron Range Resources from mining industry.
- Explore electronic notifications/reporting on Board meetings.