

County spending cutback approved

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Washoe County commissioners Tuesday approved a \$10 million cutback in general fund spending over the next six months to get expenses in line with a drop in sale tax revenues and property tax losses in Incline Village.

The county is preparing to refund \$4.6 million to residents of Incline Village as a result of the Nevada Supreme Court ruling in their favor in December about past appraisal methods, such as valuing Lake Tahoe views. Last year, the county board of equalization agreed to roll back 9,000 parcels for the current tax year, pending the Supreme Court ruling. Assessor Josh Wilson on Thursday will appeal the county equalization board's decision to the state board of equalization.

The county equalization board will vote in late February whether to roll back property values for Incline Village for the next tax year starting in July.

Washoe County sales tax totals are down by less than 1 percent for July though November, compared with the same five months from 2005.

Finance Director John Sherman had predicted a 7 percent increase in sales taxes for the year and said the year will end in June with a 2 to 3 percent increase. Auto sales and building material sales have led the decline.

Sherman said he doesn't expect the public to notice any reduction in county services and that reserve and rainy day funds should remain intact.

The reductions include:

About \$2.7 million in capital projects, largely involving upgrades to the county administrative building and commission chambers.

Other services, supplies and goods would be cut by \$6.4 million.

Except for public safety positions, all new hiring will be delayed 30 days. That would be added to the average of 45 days to fill a vacant position and save \$1 million.

Departments are not supposed to use overtime, contract services or temporary positions to get around the hiring delay.

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