



Lake County Illinois

Master

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File Name: 2009 State Legislative Program

Final Action:

Title: Resolution presenting and requesting approval of the 2009 Lake County State Legislative Program.

Notes:

Sponsors:

Agenda Date:

Attachments: 2009 State Program -- RRL Recommendation

Enactment Number:

Authorizer:

Hearing Date:

Entered by:

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

| Ver- sion: | Acting Body: | Date: | Action: | Sent To: | Due Date: | Return Date: | Result: |
|---------------|--|------------|--|----------|-----------|-----------------|---------|
| 1 | Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee | 11/12/2008 | Recommended for adoption to the Regular Agenda | | | | Pass |
| | <p>Action Text: A motion was made by Member Paxton, seconded by Member Bassi, that this Resolution be Recommended for adoption to the Regular Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:</p> <p>Notes: <i>Plat Act Clarification</i></p> <p><i>CS :Clarify the recommendation . Gibson will work with Eric Waggoner to clarify.</i></p> <p><i>EREic Waggoner eplxinaed that in 200 the dept. instituted new process to start combining non-conforming lots. One of the purposed of the UDO, is to gradually eliminate non-conformitieds. identified process where person came into to develop on multiple lots, we could combine those lots together, using a plat of vacation. It becaame clear that the applicants were gtting snowed by the lengh of time it took to get the plat process completed. very lengthly review process, dept., wanted to work to fix that. Able to identify internal insturment, partial vacation of plat, that could slubstitute for, and able to shave off a couple of months of time for applicant. simplified process and fees for processing vacations.</i></p> <p><i>within last year, getting some feedback from surveyors and applicnats. one of the concerns expfress by surveyors, is that altho we have ben shortcutting past any review on the part of hightay authoriwty and formal committees, surveys are concerned that the statue may not allow you to shortcut past these agencies.</i></p> <p><i>This only affects</i></p> | | | | | | |
| 1 | Lake County Board | 11/18/2008 | | | | | |

Text of Legislative File 08-0961

Title

Resolution presenting and requesting approval of the 2009 Lake County State Legislative Program.

Body

WHEREAS, your Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee has solicited legislative proposals from elected officials and department heads and prepared a Lake County Legislative Program for the 2009 session of the Illinois General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Lake County 2009 Legislative Program encompasses a variety of recommendations designed to upgrade the efficiency and effectiveness of county government in Lake County and throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee seeks your approval of the 2009 Lake County State Legislative Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by this County Board of Lake County, Illinois, that the 2009 Lake County State Legislative Program is hereby approved, a copy of which program is attached hereto and made part hereof; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this County Board does hereby approve and support those efforts necessary to draft, introduce, and support legislation designed to implement the objectives of this program, with those efforts to be executed by the County Administrator in coordination with the Chair of the County Board and the Chair of the Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that because of the unique and often unpredictable timing by which actions occur in the General Assembly, the County Administrator, in coordination with the Chair of the County Board and the Chair of the Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee, is hereby authorized and directed to take all appropriate actions regarding other legislative proposals that may impact upon Lake County government.

DATED at WAUKEGAN, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS this 18th day of November, A.D.,
2008.

Staff Summary

- Resolution presenting and requesting approval of the 2009 State Legislative Program.



LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS State Legislative Program for FY2009

It is often mentioned that local governments across the country are the first, and most important, provider of public services to residents. As the current economic situation continues to unfold, local governments will be endeavoring to meet resident demands for needed services, while at the same time looking to balance expenditures against static or decreasing revenues.

In 2009, as in previous years, the Lake County Board will rely upon our State Legislators to address issues of concern to the county government. Constitutional restrictions on the powers and functions of county government slow or constrain the County Board and our departments in providing for the safety and needs of over 700,000 residents, as well as for commerce and industry.

We are well aware of the state's on-going political and financial situation and have tried to be responsive and responsible as we prepared the County's 2009 legislative program. As in previous legislative programs, you will note there is an emphasis on seeking Authority, to enable more effective governance and sound financing.

As in the past, the County's general legislative policy is to:

1. Support legislation granting additional permissive authorities for counties.
2. Support legislation allowing counties to expand non-property tax revenue sources.
3. Oppose unfunded mandates imposed by the state or federal government.
4. Oppose legislation that would reduce the existing authority of county government.
5. Oppose proposals that erode the existing County revenue base.

Sponsorship of specific initiatives and support of other proposals listed in the 2009 Lake County Legislative Program will be greatly appreciated.

Direct Sponsorship Initiatives

Topic: **Brownfield Property Late Penalty Write-off**

Issue: Existing regulations require that the County assess a late payment fee on properties when property taxes are not paid by the due date. Late fees accumulate and must be paid in full upon transfer of property to another owner. Upon receipt of payment, all local taxing bodies are allocated their payment due, with all late fees retained by the County as general fund revenue.

In the case of brownfield properties, back taxes and late payment fees can accumulate rapidly. The Illinois Statutes currently require that the County Treasurer collect the full amount due, including the late payments. The inability of the County to waive late payments has been viewed as a deterrent to redeveloping brownfields.

Recommendation: Renew support for legislation that would provide permissive authority to counties to waive or write-off late fees to encourage redevelopment of brownfields. The brownfield property would have to be incorporated in a redevelopment plan of a local government and have that local government support the application to waive or write-off the late fees.

Topic: **Filing of Mechanic’s Lien – Notification to Property Owner**

Issue: Currently, Mechanics Liens can be filed against a property without any notice being provided to the property owner. If no legal action has been instituted within two (2) years, then the lien is closed. A property owner may be unaware of a recorded lien and as a result may not be able to complete a property transaction, refinancing, etc.

Recommendation: Renew support for a requirement that the party filing and recording a Mechanic’s Lien on a residential property provide documentation that the property owner has been notified, either through the submission of a return receipt or similar documentation that would be recorded along with the Mechanic’s Lien.

Topic: **Local Recapture of Locally Generated Funds for Affordable Housing Programs**

Issue: The State of Illinois passed Title 47, Chapter II, Part 380 for the “Illinois Housing Development Authority’s Rental Housing Support Program” to help 4,000 to 5,000 rent-burdened families find safe, dependable, and affordable housing. Although state funding would be awarded to applying “Local Administering Agencies (LAAs)” -- which can be local housing authorities, municipalities, or community groups that manage the program locally in their own area – that would provide rent subsidies to contracted landlords for households who earn less than 30% of the area median income for a family of

four, it is unclear if funds collected for this program would be directly available back to the same County from which the funds were originally generated.

Recommendation: Distribution of RHSP appropriation funds places Suburban Areas (including Lake County) last. If no LAAs submit an application from a particular Suburban Area, Small Metropolitan Area, or Rural Area, provisions should be made to reserve previously collected fees from the local \$10 Recorder of Deed surcharges on real estate document recordings. Such reservations should be allowed back to the County from which these funds were originally generated.

Topic: **Authority for County Boards to Provide Supportive Human Services through Imposition of Taxpayer Authorized Levy**

Issue: The continued use of federal Community Development Block Grant funds for the provision of social services has been under increasing pressure due to reduced level of federal funding. As a result, there is an increasing need to seek out alternative funding options for these needed programs. Townships have been empowered under Illinois statute to provide social services. In many cases however, townships do not have the financial ability to provide the needed programs, either through their own services or by contract with a not-for-profit organization.

County boards are authorized under existing statutes to place a referendum question before the voters in a county regarding the imposition of a property tax for the provision of supportive services for elderly residents. The maximum amount permitted to be levied is .025 percent on all taxable property.

Under its current authority, county boards have the limited authority to appropriate funds “to provide supportive social services designed to prevent the unnecessary institutionalization of elderly residents, or, for operation of, and equipment for, senior citizen centers providing social services to elderly residents.” The statutes go on further to provide county boards with the authority to provide transportation vehicles or services for senior citizens.

Recommendation: Renew support to modify the existing statutes to expand the current authority of county boards to: (1) enable county boards to place a referendum question on the ballot regarding the imposition of a property tax to be used for senior services and/or human services, (2) establish a new fund dedicated exclusively to receive proceeds gathered from passage of a referendum question, with said proceeds to be used exclusively for said services, and (3) provide said services, either through county programs, intergovernmental agreements with other local governments or through contractual arrangements with not-for-profit organizations.

Topic: **Clarification of Requirements for Plan Review and Inspection Services for Public School Buildings**

Issue: The duties and responsibilities of the Regional Superintendent of Schools include the duty to ensure that construction and occupation of new school facilities or renovated existing facilities is permitted following plan reviews and inspections

by qualified individuals. The State's Administrative Rules outline the certification process whereby individuals seeking approval to serve as a qualified school building code plan reviewer or qualified school inspector need to submit evidence of passage of the relevant examinations and hours of experience to the State Superintendent of Education. The Administrative Rules do not (1) preclude an architect or engineer, once certified by the State Superintendent of Education, from certifying that plans that he/she created comply with all relevant codes; and (2) define the formal relationship between the School District, the Regional Superintendent and the professionals hired to conduct plan reviews and inspections.

Recommendation: Support legislation that requires that an independent third party conduct plan reviews and inspections, and that they be retained by the School District undertaking the construction project. Mandate that all reports and documentation from the independent third parties be provided to the Regional Superintendent of Schools as part of that Office's permitting and occupancy procedures.

Topic: **Lake County Transportation Summit
Priority Projects for IDOT SFY2009 Funding**

Issue: The Illinois General Assembly did not resolve competing proposals to address any statewide infrastructure funding, including capital funding for state highways, local highways and transit in the 2008 session as of October 2008. The General Assembly did meet the operational crisis of the RTA in HB 656, although the revenue and expenditure assumptions underlying the solution are in some cases falling short. The Lake County Board did receive a source of additional local funding for county highways in HB 656. Thus, some of the County's FY2009 Transportation Supported Initiatives are recommended to be carried over, abet slightly revised due to the political climate they are now being discussed in. Lake County still feels that a comprehensive transportation funding bill will advance in the 2009 Session of the General Assembly Session: including capital funding for RTA- transit, state highways and local highways.

Recommendation: Lake County needs a fair return out of the funding package on three (3) items:

- Transit projects in Lake County.
 - Use the Lake County submittals contained in the RTA regional strategic planning effort known as "Moving Beyond Congestion" for Capital funding.
- State highway projects in Lake County.
 - Use results of 2006 Lake County Transportation Summit: Priority Projects for IDOT SFY2008-9 Funding. See [Exhibit A](#)
- If IDOT receives increased revenue then the County needs to get the same % growth:
 - Increase thru the County share of the MFT formula distribution
 - Increase in the High Growth Counties allocation

Exhibit A

**Lake County Transportation Summit
Priority Projects for IDOT SFY2008-9 Funding**

Lake County has not received its fair share of state road investments in the past, despite a growing need for road infrastructure improvements. Therefore the second countywide Transportation Summit was held on 9/20/06 sponsored by Lake County Partners, College of Lake County, Lake County and the TMA of Lake Cook. More than 62 of the eligible 105 local Lake County elected officials attended the Summit, which was convened around the theme: "One Voice...One Transportation Future."

Since there are many competing priorities for limited state highway dollars, the consensus developed at the Transportation Summit provides clear guidance so Lake County's governmental, business, academic and civic leaders can support our legislative delegation in its aggressive pursuit of the County's fair share of transportation funding. The top three (3) highest priority projects in three (3) readiness categories are as follows:

| Category | Top Priority Projects |
|--|--|
| Add lanes projects ready for Planning Funding | 1 IL-176 (IL Rte 21 to IL Rte 131) 2 US 45 (Millburn Rd to IL Rte 132) 3 IL 83 (IL Rte 120 to IL Rte 176) 4 IL 176 (US Rte 12 to Fairfield Rd) 5 IL 21 (Lake-Cook Rd to US 45) 6 IL 60 (Fairfield Rd to IL Rte 176) |
| Add lanes projects ready for Engineering Funding | 1 US 45 (IL Rte 60 to IL Rte 21) 2 IL 60/83 (South of IL Rte 176 to EJ&E Railroad) 3 IL 131 (Wisconsin state line to Sunset Ave) 4 US 45 (Millburn Bypass) |
| Add lanes projects ready for Construction Funding | 1 IL 21 (South of IL Rte 120 to IL Rte 137) 2 US 45 (Washington St to IL Rte 120) 3 IL 83 (Wisconsin state line to Petite Lake Rd) 4 US 45 (IL Rte 132 to Rollins Rd) 5 US 45 (Rollins Rd to Washington St) |

Topic: Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption

Issue: Current State regulations require that senior citizens file an annual application with the County for the Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption. The annual filing requirement is viewed as duplicative and requires that senior property owners travel to the County Building in order to file for the exemption. With a permanent exemption status, should a senior property owner sell and move to another property within Lake County, it is recommended that the exemption be portable; when a senior sells their home, transfer the exemption to a new home.

Recommendation: Renew support for legislation that would (1) provide counties with permissive authority to adopt policies that would enable seniors to be permanently entered in the freeze program after two (2) consecutive successful applications, and (2) should a senior citizen who has an assessment freeze sell their home and move to a new home in the same County, calculate percentage benefit from freeze on property sold, and have it transferred to the purchased property.

Topic: **Unsewered Communities Grant Program**

Issue: The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency administers the Unsewered Communities Grant Program, which helps provide financing opportunities to provide wastewater collection and treatment to existing unsewered communities which are primarily residential and have a history of public health or water pollution issues resulting from inadequate wastewater disposal systems.

To be eligible for the program, an area must be within the incorporated limits of a municipality. Lake County has several unincorporated areas that continue to be served as individual septic systems. These areas are not eligible to participate in the state funding program due to the terms of the grant program.

Recommendation: Renew support of legislation that would modify the requirement that mandates that eligibility is limited to incorporated communities.

Topic: **Plat Act Clarifications**

Issue: Currently, the Plat Act, 765 ILCS 205/6 and 205/7 contains a number of ambiguities that need to be clarified in order to provide the Planning, Building and Development Department clearer authority to vacate and combine nonconforming subdivision parcels through a “partial vacation of plat” document. The Department has used this document for several years to provide property owners a convenient, efficient alternative to vacating their parcels through the more complex plat vacation process. These ambiguities are as follows:

a.) Section 6 provides that, in using the document, the County Board must approve it “in the same manner as plats of subdivision”. While Section 205/2 of the Plat Act provides that plats may be approved by the County Board or delegated to the “officer or officers designated by them” this delegation language is absent from Section 6 (thereby jeopardizing process efficiency).

b.) Section 6 provides that, in the case of the vacation of an entire plat, the document shall be approved by the Highway Commissioner and the County Engineer (to ensure that the document does not affect public rights in such streets or alleys under their jurisdiction). This language will not impact the more typical case seen by the Department when individual lots are vacated and no streets are involved. This waiver language is critical to ensuring that the process remains efficient.

c.) Section 7 provides that the vacation of a part of a plat “shall not abridge or destroy any of the rights or privileges of other proprietors in such plat” but does not clearly indicate that the vacated lot owner’s rights (example: lake rights, easements, etc.) are similarly preserved.

d.) Section 6 provides that the vacation of an entire plat shall be submitted for approval of “the public utility or utilities involves”, as such vacation will “destroy the effect of ... all dedications laid out or described in the plat.” Although such utility easements remain in effect and are not vacated in the case of partial vacations, Section 7 does not clearly waive the requirement for utility company approvals in such cases. Such language, again, is crucial for maintaining an efficient process.

Recommendation: Amend Sections 6 and 7 as follows: (added text in underline format; deleted text in ~~strikeout format~~)

Section 6 Modifications: “The instrument shall be approved by the city council or village or county board or their designated officer or officers in the same manner as plats of subdivisions.”

Section 7 Modifications: “Any part of a plat may be vacated in the manner provided in the preceding section, and subject to the conditions therein prescribed: Provided, such vacation shall require only the approval of the city council or village or county board or their designated officer or officers: And ~~Provided~~, such vacation shall not abridge or destroy any of the rights or privileges of other proprietors in such plat nor the owner of such part of plat to be vacated: And provided, further, that nothing contained in this section shall authorize the closing or obstructing of any public highway laid out according to law.”

Topic: **Establishment of Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

Issue: In Lake County, the free market is unable to meet the demand for affordable housing without intervention due to land and property costs. Statistics demonstrate that housing costs exceed the reach of many residents, from young people starting out to seniors to those who have struggled with medical crisis or job layoff. Additionally, a lack of housing options – especially near job centers – translates into increased traffic congestion and environmental degradation, lower quality of life for commuters and residents, and a disincentive to employers seeking to move into or stay in Lake County. The lack of affordable housing undermines individuals and families, neighborhoods and communities, business and the environment. Consider the following:

- *Lake County is house-poor. 39% of homeowners and 45% of renters are paying more than 30% of their gross income toward their mortgage or rent; between 2000 and 2006, these figures increased by 50% and 29% respectively (American Community Survey, 2006).*

- *Increases in the cost of housing are outpacing increases in personal income in Lake County. Between 2000 and 2006, household income increased by 12% while housing costs increased by 42% (American Community Survey, 2006).*
- *Lake County's home prices are the second highest in the state, with a median sales price of \$305,000 in 2007 (Illinois Association of Realtors, 2007).*
- *A minimum-wage worker would have to work 97 hours per week, or 2.4 full-time jobs, to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2008).*
- *Lake County now imports more workers than it exports. More than one-third of Lake County's workforce does not live in Lake County and commuter traffic congestion has significant negative impacts on Lake County's environment and economy as detailed in the Metropolitan Planning Council's 2008 publication "Moving at the Speed of Congestion."*
- *Lake County is now a job destination and lower-wage service jobs are transforming Lake County's economic development landscape. The supply of rental housing suitable to employees at these wages has not kept pace. Between 1990 and 2000, Lake County created 128,000 new jobs and only 2,724 new rental units (Brooking Institution Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, 2003).*

Lake County described the challenges and obstacles to affordable housing in its Consolidated Plan for 2005-2009. Several goals were created to help alleviate the issue that the County has not been equipped to meet.

- *For example, the Consolidated Plan has a goal of creating 500 new units. To date, 134 units have been completed (27% of goal). Funding has been allocated to an additional 194 units, but county staff reports it is unlikely that these will be completed prior to 2010. Even assuming a success rate of 328 units, the achievement to goal measure is only 65%.*
- *A significant factor in being unable to meet these goals is a lack of funding. In 2008, the Affordable Housing Program received requests for more than \$1 million in funding, yet had only about \$400,000 to allocate. The HOME/CDBG allocation process sees similar ratios of request to availability every year. This demonstrates both a demand for housing and a willingness of developers and communities to increase the supply.*

Recommendation:

Propose the creation of a Lake County Housing Trust Fund that will catalyze the increase and preservation of affordable housing opportunities in Lake County Illinois, with a focus on serving low- and moderate- income households and neighborhoods. By offering a flexible and creative financing source that is designed to leverage other dollars as well as local policy, the HTF will help overcome market barriers to affordable housing and make possible projects that otherwise may not occur. The types of projects that would potentially be funded include:

- *Construction of new units*
- *Preservation of existing units*
- *Mortgage and/or rent assistance*
- *Acquisition and rehab of vacant or foreclosed properties*
- *Projects that respond to urgent market or community conditions (i.e, the foreclosure crisis, a deteriorating neighborhood)*

The HTF will prioritize projects that: (a) Meet multiple policy goals to improve Lake County's overall infrastructure and quality of life indicators and (b) Revitalize, maintain or create the desired character of neighborhoods and communities. Examples of priority projects include units and projects that demonstrate:

- *Proximity to employment centers*
- *Proximity public transportation*
- *Ability to leverage other public and private dollars*
- *Ability to leverage local incentives (i.e., fee waivers, expedited permitting, inclusionary zoning, etc.)*
- *Incorporation of market rate units*
- *Provision for long-term or permanent affordability*
- *Housing stock diversity (i.e., areas will less than 10% of their housing stock as affordable)*
- *Scattered site housing*
- *Improvement of vacant or foreclosed properties*
- *Inclusion of "green" or "sustainable" concepts*

The proposal is that the HTF would be funded by a \$5 recording fee on all residential property sales; thus, support for housing and neighborhoods would be generated from other invested property owners. Depending on real estate activity, it is anticipated that this would generate about \$750,000 annually. A critical element of creating a local housing trust fund is its ability to leverage other dollars. For example, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act outlines the creation of a new national housing trust fund. The existence of a local trust fund is a demonstration of local commitment and readiness to proceed, and thus may bring more of these federal dollars into Lake County. The same is also true of the dollars administered by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (both the Trust Fund and Low Income Housing Tax Credits) which is increasingly demanding greater local funding commitment before being willing to allocate state dollars to local jurisdictions. Additionally, the Affordable Housing Commission anticipates using the public investment to leverage support from private investors by actively seeking investments from banks, foundations, religious institutions and other stakeholders. Finally, it should be noted that housing trust funds have proven to be an effective tool in other parts of the country. According to the Center for Community Change which administers the Housing Trust Fund Project, there are currently 33 housing trust funds in 11 states. Additionally, the state of Pennsylvania has 51 county trust funds created under state enabling legislation (thus, a total of 84 county trust funds). County trust funds collect more than \$138 million annually, and the average amount leveraged for every trust fund dollar is \$10.46. The range of per-dollar leverage is about \$3 to \$40, and more than half of the trust funds report a leverage of more than \$1 for every \$10 of trust fund investment. There are also 55 cities of various sizes in 24 states that have housing trust funds; this includes Lake County's Highland Park and Lake Forest. Highland Park offers a dramatic example of how powerful a local trust fund can be.

Topic: **Water Safety and Enforcement Fee/License – Countywide Docking Fee**

Issue: The County pays more than \$650,000 for the Sheriff's Marine Patrol Unit. The Unit collects approximately \$43,000 from the Fox Waterway Agency and approximately \$9,088 from fees and tickets. The users of the waterways should

be fully funding the enforcement activities. The County would like to institute additional fees for services to cover the operating expense of the Marine Unit.

- Recommendation:** Pursue legislation that would authorize the County to establish the following fees:
- *Waterway Safety and Enforcement Fee/License*
 - *Countywide Docking Fee*

These fees could be administered either through a fee collected by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and returned back to the county where the boat is registered or through imposition of a one-time fee collected by local marinas. There are approximately 27,000 boats registered in Lake County.

Topic: **Constitutional Amendment regarding Home Rule Status for counties**

Issue: Municipalities are eligible to become home rule units of government either through: (1) population over 25,000; or (2) by referendum. Counties do not have either of these options. Under the existing Constitution established in 1970, counties must have a Chief Executive Officer elected by the electors of the county in order to be eligible to become a home rule unit of government. This provision was enacted when counties did not have the professional staffs now evident throughout the State.

Recommendation: Support passage of a Constitutional Amendment (amending Article VII – Local Government, Section 6 - Powers of Home Rule Units) that would permit counties over 500,000 in population without a Chief Executive Officer elected by the electors of the county to put a question to the electors in the county of whether the county government may become a home rule unit of government.

Topic: **Public Facilities used as Polling Place – Electioneering Access**

Issue: Under existing statutes, during early voting and on Election Day, electioneering is not permitted within 100 horizontal feet of the polling site. In addition, churches and private schools used as polling places may elect to make their entire property a campaign free zone. That same opportunity is not extended to public facilities and private businesses that are used as polling sites.

Recommendation: Support passage of legislation that would enable units of local government and private businesses to establish their property as a campaign free zone for purposes of excluding electioneering on the property during early voting activities.

Topic: **Tax Credit for Jury Duty Service**

Issue: The issue of raising the daily pay for jury duty service up to \$50 per day has been attempted through a number of legislative proposals without success. Currently in Lake County, a sliding scale has been established for jury duty. Jurors receive \$5 per day for one or two days of jury service, \$7.50 per day for days three

through five and \$10 per day for trials over six days in duration. In addition, jurors also receive: mileage reimbursement (based on the juror's zip code) of \$3.00 to \$9.00/day; a \$5.00 on-site lunch credit for each day of service; free parking; and childcare reimbursement in certain circumstances.

Another avenue that has been suggested is to have legislation passed creating a state tax credit given for each day of jury service. This avenue would not financially impact local governments, with the exception of issuing documentation for the jurors to use in preparation of their state taxes.

Recommendation: Support passage of legislation that would establish a state tax credit of \$50 per day for individuals serving jury duty.

Supported Initiatives

Topic: Use of Reclaimed Water

Issue: There is a growing urgency in promoting innovative approaches to water conservation; Lake County has led the region in working for water conservation and water supply protection solutions. In light of this water resource crisis, the Lake County Forest Preserve District designed its Ryerson Woods Welcome Center facility to use a reclaimed water system (employing a mixture of stormwater, AC condensate and potable water when necessary) to flush toilets and irrigate the facility's landscaping. However, the District was unable to implement its design because it is inhibited by the Illinois Plumbing Code, which does not recognize reclaimed water systems.

Recommendation: Support the Forest Preserve's effort to adopt legislation requiring an amendment to the Illinois Plumbing Code (77 Adm. Code, Part 890) to explicitly authorize reclaimed water recycling systems for use in flushing and landscape irrigation, provided such systems have adequate safeguards to maintain system integrity over time and to ensure sanitary conditions for users.

Topic: Coroner's Fees

Issue: The fees paid to the Coroner's Office have not been increased since 1987. Legislation was proposed in 2004 (HB 4175) to increase the fees, but the bill was tabled by its sponsor after passing through the House's Local Government Committee.

Outside resources are used to produce results and documents relating to the Coroner's Office including court reporters, physicians, hospitals and laboratories. Public requests for Coroner's report have been increasing. Reproduction costs rise annually with increases along with salaries and other related expenses.

Recommendation: Support legislation that would raise the following fees:

- For a copy of a transcript of sworn testimony: \$6.00 ~~\$3.00~~ per page.
- For a copy of an autopsy report (if not included in transcript): \$50.00 ~~\$30.00~~.
- For a copy of the verdict of a coroner's jury: \$25.00 ~~\$5.00~~.
- For a copy of a toxicology report: \$50.00 ~~\$15.00~~.
- For a coroner's or medical examiner's permit to cremate a dead human body: \$25.00 ~~\$10.00~~.

Policy Issues

Restore and Protect Medicaid Funding for Nursing Homes

Lake County urges restoration of the past cuts the State of Illinois has made to Medicaid reimbursement for Nursing Homes. In addition, the County supports efforts to begin the process of revamping the Medicaid system in Illinois.

No Diversion of Road Funds

Lake County opposes action that will divert monies from the State's road fund to the State's General Revenue Fund. Lake County roads are in need of rehabilitation and expansion and the State is falling short of its responsibility to maintain and improve State roads in Lake County. The continued diversion of the State's road monies to the General Revenue Fund will only exacerbate this problem.

Statewide Wetland Regulations

Lake County supports the development of a statewide standard to govern unregulated wetlands for other parts of the state. It is appropriate, however, that counties such as Lake that already have a stormwater/wetland protection program in place be exempted from any statewide program to avoid pre-emption of County authority.