

County Begins Preparation of 2018 Budget – Funding for New Jail and Major Airport Improvement Included

Becker County's 2018 budget will include funding for a new county jail and significant airport design and improvements.

The County will begin construction of the \$20 million, 186 bed facility later this summer. Bonds to finance the jail project were sold at an interest rate of 2.39 percent. The bond rating agency noted that Becker County has strong management, a strong budgetary performance, very strong budgetary flexibility, very strong liquidity, a very strong debt and contingent liability profile, and a strong institutional framework. "The county has very much taken care of the things you can take care of (to improve your credit rating)," said bond consultant Bruce Kimmel. "Your financial house is in order, so to speak. There are really no negatives. The Auditor-Treasurer's Office and Administrator did a great job in preparing for this."

Becker County/Detroit Lakes Airport is scheduled for more than \$18 million in improvements over the next 3 years. Most of the project will be funded by the Federal Aviation Administration with contributions from the County and City.

Revenue enhancements for next year's budget will come from the State's increase to county participation aid as well and funding for carrying out the State's water quality buffer initiative.

Proposed county budgets are due from departments by August 11. The County Commissioners are expected to set Becker County's preliminary levy on September 19. Questions concerning the 2018 County Budget should be directed to County Administrator Jack Ingstad at jwingst@co.becker.mn.us or 218-846-7201

The tentative date for the public hearing is December 14 with final adoption on December 19.