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Mayor Becker Pushes for a Leaner, More Efficient Government in Challenging Economic Times

Mayor Has Proposed Nearly 5 Percent Mid-Year Budget Reduction

SALT LAKE CITY – Mayor Ralph Becker today proposed a nearly 5 percent budget reduction scenario to the City Council in order to keep the City’s 2008-09 Budget balanced. Mayor Becker’s revised budget seeks to avoid major layoffs and maintain the current level of City services for residents.

Along with many other cities across the nation, Salt Lake City is facing a budget gap due to steady decline in sales tax collection over the past several months. In addition to the \$3 million decline in sales tax revenue, another \$1 million decline in property tax revenue is expected. These two factors have resulted in an estimated \$4 million shortfall in the City’s budget.

In deciding how best to address the problem, Mayor Becker asked City department directors to find ways to tighten their belts without resorting to major layoffs or reducing service levels. Together with department heads, the Mayor developed a budget reduction scenario and identified savings of nearly 5 percent across each department, including the Mayor’s Office.

The budget proposal delays new hires to fill several vacant positions and recommends a year’s extension to the computer replacement program from a three-year cycle to a four-year cycle. The Administration also recommends a reduction in the number of police field laptop computers to be replaced this year. Under the proposal, many departments would release encumbered funds and decrease the amount of money spent on office equipment and supplies.

“Just like our residents, Salt Lake City government is facing a different financial reality today than we were even six months ago. And just like our residents, we are committed to finding ways to do more with less. We are committed to keeping our City government strong during this financial crisis,” explained Mayor Becker.

“I appreciate the work of each department director to help me identify a smart approach that keeps our budget balanced while still moving our City forward,” added Becker.

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