

## FY19 Budget Report

The DeSoto County Board of Supervisors passed a budget for FY19 (October 2018 – September 2019) that prioritizes infrastructure and public safety. Once again, requests for budget dollars far exceeded growth in revenue. As always, it was necessary during the eight budget meetings for the Board of Supervisors to consider all budget requests, and fund the budget requests that were of the highest priority.

The Supervisors used growth in assessed values to fund essential operations, new Legislative or Court mandates, and unfunded or underfunded state responsibilities. They assigned money they have put back for several years to address infrastructure and public safety. Infrastructure was the Board’s major priority in FY19.

During the recession years, specifically from FY12 through FY17, the Board of Supervisors could not fund many major infrastructure projects since growth in assessed values slowed or reduced. Keeping up with the demands of operating county government, additional federal regulations, addressing county employee needs, some substantial infrastructure projects, and building space shortages were accomplished during the recession years without a tax millage increase. No essential services were cut or reduced. County residents should see evidence the Board of Supervisors are conservative leaders when they are reminded the Board of Supervisors has not increased millage in 15 years—even during a recession!

The Supervisors work to maintain county services by watching every dollar spent under their control, and by encouraging other elected officials to do the same. As a result, during the period of recession and recovery, spending in many budgets remained nearly flat. The Board of Supervisors held GIS, Human Resources, Animal Shelter and Animal Services budgets to nearly flat spending over the decade, but Legislative mandates, new rules of court, environmental regulation, and population growth caused other budgets to increase. During this time of low or no growth, the Supervisors continued to maintain their \$2,000,000 yearly overlay maintenance program for the county’s 642.5 miles of unincorporated roads and did maintenance that kept our roads in good shape. Many road projects were accomplished in the unincorporated county during this time, and they partnered with municipalities for projects inside city limits. During recession years, areas of county government requiring the greatest growth in funding were accomplished without a millage increase, and were as follows:

	October 1-September 30	
DESCRIPTION	FY08	FY18
Even though the Board controlled the number of employees , the county’s cost for the PERS Retirement system increased. These costs are out of the control of the Supervisors (\$4,486.512 in FY19 after increase in July 2019)	\$2,104,628	\$4,262,356
Management of buildings and grounds	\$1,822,772	\$2,775,344
Sheriff’s Department budget increases show public safety is a priority for the Board of Supervisors	\$13,830,866	\$23,376,451
Chancery, Circuit, Youth, and Justice Courts budgets increased as new laws mandate additional services at the cost of the taxpayers	\$4,114,089	\$5,653,305
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,872,355</b>	<b>\$35,450,616</b>

During this recession period, the Supervisors saved money where they could as they planned for future infrastructure needs in the county. Their plan was to have some cash to pay portions of projects—like environmental studies, engineering and/or right of way acquisition when the economy recovered and the county could safely bond priority projects on county roadways. They protected the county’s excellent bond rating, so future bonds would cost as little as possible. Using cash savings first will prevent any interest being paid until absolutely necessary. In FY20, the Supervisors will issue a bond of \$25,000,000 to address infrastructure needs. No such plan was considered until they knew it could happen without a millage increase, based on current conditions. Nobody knows what the future holds, but careful planning should protect DeSoto County taxpayers.

Major highlights of projects budgeted in FY19 include the following list:

	<b><u>FY19 Budget</u></b>
• Public Safety:	
✓ Sheriff’s Department – 6 SRO officers, range master, bailiff, vehicles	\$24,169,651
✓ EMS – 1 county ambulance & savings for municipal ambulance	\$ 152,000
• Holly Springs Road Improvements (\$18,500,000)	\$ 5,500,000
• Corp of Engineers Flood Study	\$ 1,500,000
• Nail Road Extension (\$8,574,410)	\$ 3,000,000
• McInvale Road Extension (Allocation to Hernando)	\$ 1,000,000
• Craft Road Improvements from Hawks Crossing to Bethel (\$ 5,500,000)	\$ 2,000,000
• Craft at Bethel Road Widening	\$ 1,119,871
• Swinnea Road – Starlanding to Bankston (\$ 4,500,000)	\$ 3,000,000
• Various State Aid Road Projects	\$ 666,144
• NRCS –Various Projects	\$ 633,000
• Engineering – Starlanding from Tulane to Getwell	\$ 1,086,875
• Craft Road Overpass – I-269	\$ 500,000
• Armory/Ag Infrastructure	\$ 1,000,000
• Lewisburg sidewalk project – grant funded	\$ 255,000
• Johnson Creek Greenway	\$ 1,341,118
• Rubbish Pit Utilization Project	\$ 202,000
• Software Upgrade Savings	\$ 1,000,000

Other items of interest funding in the FY19 budget:

- Software for safekeeping of marriage licenses \$ 26,000
- Additional support for State Underfunded District Attorney \$ 38,500
- Recurring funding for District Attorney \$ 332,882
- Increase in Utility Rates \$ 50,000
- Various projects in county facilities \$ 108,500
  - ✓ Ingrams Mill School improvements
  - ✓ Flooring projects in some county buildings
  - ✓ Lighting at the Jail
  - ✓ Various building improvements and upgrades
- 2% raise for employees disbursed on work ethic
- Environmental Services – Consultant to streamline cost of MDEQ regulations for water quality management \$ 25,000
- Replacement of 4 county vehicles (excluding Sheriff) \$ 117,200
- Workers Compensation premium increase \$ 88,700
- 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Library Support \$ 87,525
- Circuit Courtroom video technology \$ 51,900
  
- Additional Personnel:
  - ✓ Part-time to full-time position in the Tax Collectors office
  - ✓ Part-time to full-time position in Information Technology
  - ✓ Temporary Intern for the Planning Commission
  - ✓ 12-month funding for part-time Prosecutor in Justice Court

The DeSoto County Board of Supervisors funded the FY19 budget for the 15<sup>th</sup> year with no additional millage increase. That's what you get from engaged, informed, and conservative leadership!