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Arapahoe County adopts \$293.5 million budget for 2006

LITTLETON, CO --- Continuing our commitment to provide exceptional services while at the same time using your tax dollars wisely, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners today unanimously adopted the \$293.5 million 2006 budget – a 2.8 percent overall increase from 2005.

The 2006 budget, which begins Jan. 1, calls for the implementation of the Chevron Energy Performance Contract, which will promote energy savings, and along with a County contribution, will be used to do more than \$10 million in improvements to County facilities. This project will enable the County to pay for much needed building repairs, and save money in future years through more energy efficient buildings.

The budget includes funding for anticipated increases in energy costs; increased costs for materials due to hurricane impacts; and sets aside funding for possible future County employee military call-ups. The budget also includes a 4 percent pool of money for merit pay; sets aside money for building maintenance priorities and implements the Compensation Study, which addresses salary ranges, internal pay equity and competitiveness and pay for performance issues. It has been five years since the County last addressed its pay structure.

Only 4.3 new full-time positions were added to the budget with additions in the Sheriff's Office, Finance and Community Resources departments, Treasurer's Office and Coroner's Office. To help offset the staff increases, two positions were eliminated in the Assessor's Office and Information Technology department.

Property taxes are expected to grow by \$1.8 million, or 1.9 percent. At 15.421 mills, the County's mill levy continues to remain one of the lowest in the Denver metro area.

Moving forward, the County will continue to look for ways in which to cut expenses and find efficiencies. To help accomplish this, the County is moving forward with the Strategic Sourcing Project, which will analyze various County functions to determine if they are cost effective, or if outsourcing with private companies would save money.

The County also will be looking for other efficiencies and cost savings measures, such as the \$450,000 savings from the outsourcing of its mainframe computer and the \$202,000 saved with the renegotiation of the Public Works and Development building lease this year.

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