

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Teamwork is a very important facet of law enforcement. This does not stop at the front door of each individual department, city limits, or county line. Facing reduced budgets and pressure to reduce current tax limits, each and every governmental entity has had to find new ways to cut costs. These same steps are taken in our personal lives as we send children to college, purchase a home, or by that boat we always wanted. It all comes down to important decisions and what can you have? I categorize these “things” into three areas. Things can be anything from equipment to personnel, to services provided. Those areas are: 1) things I must have, necessary services I must provide to be effective, 2) things I would like to have but are not necessary to do the job, knowing I will experience some degradation in services provided, and 3) things that would be nice to have but really can do without, w/o then will not impact operations at all.

This thought process has been forced upon all managers in government. Fewer grants, reduction in state and federal aid and rising costs make this process a painful yet necessary part of the job. It is not all doom and gloom. The process also requires managers to look at ways to join forces, reduce costs through sharing or consolidation, and building teams to work together for the greater good. An example of this type of teamwork was our recent additions to our Sheriff’s SWAT Team, two members of the Mayville Police Department. Teamwork was essential in two recent homicide investigations that occurred out-of-state but the perpetrators were here in Dodge County. It was the teamwork, several agencies and departments, unselfishly working together for the good of those we serve. Sharing resources, coming together to provide a necessary service for an investigation.

No longer can each and every level of government be assured they can maintain every service they have provided for years. Government is very redundant. Redundancy costs \$\$\$\$. Redundancy is not always necessary. We have several layers of services, many serving the same customer base, providing similar services at different levels of expertise. These redundant systems do not automatically equate to better service. It is those redundant services that we must take and place in the category of must have, nice to have, not necessary to have flush out those we can reduce. Why? Because the only way we can continue to fund all the must haves and some of the nice to haves is by eliminating those “not necessary” to have or redundant services. We can then use those savings to fund the others. Local units of governments must develop the necessary partnerships on behalf of the taxpayer.

The fiscal picture is not going to get much better anytime soon. Government must knock down the walls of one-upmanship and build teams that will work together for the good of the customer. It is time for all to step up to the plate and really categorize everything we do and determine which are most important. What services do we provide that are nice to provide but not necessary? What services can I team up with and reduce my costs w/o jeopardizing the safety of the public?

These are not always easy decisions as many may affect others personally. Change is always difficult does not need to be so. Take the personalities out of change. Change can be very positive if carefully thought through, planned, and explained. I think back 30-40 years. Each car manufacturer had their own dealership. Not we see mega lots selling a variety of brands. Why? They provide a better service at a reduced cost with lower overhead? The private sector got it years ago, now its time for the rest of us. Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us