

## SIMPLE ECONOMICS

As everyone knows by now, the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District finds itself with a severe financial problem. If there is anyone who doesn't know that by now, they simply have not been paying attention. Because of a decrease in state funding and higher operating cost, our budget deficit is predicted to be around \$3.5 million by the end of the 2011-2012 school year. The problem is school districts cannot legally operate with a budget deficit.

Simple economics tell us in order to balance the budget, you must have more money or cut expenses. We attempted an emergency tax levy in November that was soundly defeated at the polls. That brings us to this point, reduction in expenses.

It is very unfortunate we are in this situation. Eighty percent of our budget goes for salaries and fringe benefits so when a substantial cut must be made, it unfortunately involves a loss of positions and jobs. Cost reductions totaling around \$2.2 million were made in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. The additional reductions needed would include at least 68.5 positions or about 12% of our employees. These positions include almost every category of our employees including administrators, counselors, elementary teachers, high school teachers, CTC instructors, cooks, custodians, and secretaries.

This level of employee reduction is going to negatively affect every aspect of our school district and educational services. It will affect every employee, student, and parents, and

ultimately, I fear the Excellent academic rating of the district. Class sizes for elementary classrooms will increase to the range of 26 to 33 students per class.

There are other reductions in the works involving facilities and many extracurricular activities/athletics. This includes a “pay-to-participate” fee for athletics. The fee per sport for high school athletes (9-12) will be \$200.00, and for junior high athletes (7-8) \$150.00. This fee will help cover the cost of coaches, transportation, and facility expenses.

The next reduction in state funding could be more than we predict. In that case, the proposed reductions will not be enough. These reductions may only balance the budget for one year. We may find ourselves reducing the budget once again for the following year.

In response to this financial crisis, the need to reduce so many positions and the hope to maintain excellent academics, the district will once again ask voters to approve a tax levy on May 3rd. The levy will be a \$3 million Emergency Levy for five years. I believe the citizens of Adams County support their schools and their young people. I also think they know the future of our communities lie in the education of our youngsters. In order for them to go to college or get good jobs, they must have a good education.

Public meetings are scheduled in each attendance area to discuss the upcoming levy. The dates, times, and locations for these meetings are:

- February 22nd at 6:30 p.m. – North Adams Elementary Library
- February 24th at 6:30 p.m. – Peebles Elementary Library
- March 1st at 6:30 p.m. – West Union Elementary Library

Please support the tax levy and feel free to contact me with any questions at 544-5586.

Rodney A. Wallace

Superintendent