

Mayors: Brace for deep cuts and significant property tax increases

Written by

Thursday, 02 July 2009 14:49

Normal 0 false false false MicrosoftInternetExplorer4
st1:*{behavior:url(#ieooui) } /* Style Definitions */ table.MsoNormalTable
{mso-style-name:"Table Normal"; mso-tstyle-rowband-size:0; mso-tstyle-colband-size:0;
mso-style-noshow:yes; mso-style-parent:""; mso-padding-alt:0in 5.4pt 0in 5.4pt;
mso-para-margin:0in; mso-para-margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan;
font-size:10.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-ansi-language:#0400;
mso-fareast-language:#0400; mso-bidi-language:#0400;}

Minnesotans need to prepare for significant property tax increases and major cuts to public safety, libraries, parks, and other city services, mayors said in response to the announcement that Governor Tim Pawlenty will unallot \$192 million of funding to Minnesota cities.

“Minnesota communities were critically hurt today by the governor’s action, and nearly every Minnesotan will personally be affected. It could be in the form of no cop in their kid’s school, higher property taxes, or a local library that is no longer open,” said St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. “Many Minnesotans will think in the coming year that this is not the state they knew, or the state they want it to be.”

Over the past six years, Minnesota cities have lost \$750 million in local government aid, and as a result property taxes have increased over 65% statewide. This increase in property taxes, however, has fallen short of replacing the lost aid, so essential city services have also been cut back.

“The effects of cutting aid from Minnesota communities are as predictable as a Minnesota winter—every year we see higher property taxes and cuts to critical services,” said Wadena Mayor Wayne Wolden, who is also president of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities.

Mayors: Brace for deep cuts and significant property tax increases

Written by

Thursday, 02 July 2009 14:49

Responding to the governor's constant calls for cities to do more with less, the mayors shot back citing evidence that cities have been more fiscally conservative than the state over the past six years. While funding for state programs has actually increased 3.2% since 2002, the revenues available for local spending have decreased 13.7%. Furthermore, cities shrunk their workforce by 6% between 2003 and 2008, while the state's workforce ballooned by 10% in the same period.

"Minnesotans see right through this blame game and will hold state lawmakers responsible for the community cuts and property tax increases that emerge from the governor's actions," Wolden said. "The governor's cuts are wrong, and it's time for state leaders—both Republicans and Democrats—to put their residents first and prioritize funding for safe, affordable communities. They need to speak out against the governor's cuts now."