

## MARION TO CUT JOBS



What is being termed as a "radical reorganization" of the services for the city of Marion is underway and you know what that means. More people are going to be out of a job in the near future. The people who may be look for new work will be a portion of the city's police officers and fire fighters. Currently the mayor, Mr. Scott Schertzer, is not confirming that any of these layoffs are around the corner. He is waiting to speak to the member of the city council before any official pronouncement. This is fairly refreshing when you consider how many major cities have Mayors and City Councils in conflict over how to deal with budget crunches. In those situations civil service jobs tend to become a negotiating chip in a larger political game. Mr. Schertzer was willing to tell a reporter for The Marion Star that, "The most important thing for the City of Marion is to stay away from things like fiscal watch and fiscal emergency. That's why there's going to have to be a radical reorganization." He then went on to say that "I can't confirm anything until every member of council knows. Here's what I am comfortable saying: Revenue over the past four years has been dropping dramatically, while expenses have been increasing, so we're going to have to take a radically different look at the operations of city government." For those of you who did not know Marion is in Ohio and in the state of Ohio when a city has serious budget problems the state may place it in a state of fiscal emergency. When this happens a state auditor is brought into the process and take over the role of a financial supervisor. Most cities will bend over backwards to avoid having this happen. According to the city of Marion's auditor the city must reduce its spending by a minimum of 14% to stay solvent. That means that this latest reorganization will mean cutting the jobs of 15 officers off of the police force by the end of December. It will also include the loss of up to 12 fire fighters. Currently the city has a general cash reserve of about \$260,000 and they need to have about \$500,000 in order to pay the bills next year. The city auditor, Ms. Carr, said the following to the same reporter for the Marion Star, We're holding on to every penny we can right not. We're hoping to have a couple hundred thousand at the end of the year. ... If it's not a utility or an expense that has to be paid or a salary, we're not spending it. We're holding tight to get that up as much as we can." Only time will tell exactly how many of the jobs will be lost. These cuts are coming because of a loss of revenue all around. As cities get less money from the states and federal government, and cities collect less in taxes from local businesses, the situation may get worse for cities like Marion.