

SPRINGFIELD PLEDGES TO NOT LAYOFF THIS YEAR



The city of Springfield, Illinois has, like every other city in the nation, faced its share of budgetary problems that it has to navigate in order to stay in the black and be able to meet all of their obligations. Though for this city at least, it looks like there may be a light at the end of the tunnel and that light means no more layoffs for workers in the city. Springfield Mayor Mike Houston has made a recent announcement that is plan for the upcoming fiscal year will be able to put the city on the right course. The plan is expected to allow the city to make improvements to the city's infrastructure, replace equipment upgrades to civil service departments and pay off old debts for the city. All of this is achieved without a single loss of a job. There are some layoffs in the near future for the city, because the 13 current pink slips will stand, but After the first of March, when the new budget goes into effect there should be no need to lose any more jobs. The budget, which totals about \$111.6 million, will cover the cost of 877 employees of the city without raising any of the city's property taxes. The taxes have been at the same level for several years now, and the idea of a tax hike would not have been a popular one. When you consider that both the state and local sales taxes are expected to increase by about 1.5 percent the fact that the city is not adding to that tax burden is a serious benefit to the citizens. Currently the sales taxes put in place by the city account for about 47 percent of the city's revenues. This budget is unique because it does not raise costs, it does not cut jobs and it does not put the city into more debt. The city has in the past, had problems with debt, which this budget hopes to put a dent in. If you're wondering where this money is coming from, the bulk of the funds will come from the corporate fund. That fund is expected to have more than \$3 million more than last year in revenue. The corporate fund is expected to bring in about \$111.6 million, which is just about what the city needs. Since the corporate fund does not include revenue from the City Water, Light and Power they may actually have more money on hand to help with repairs and pay off old debts than is allotted in the current budget. Currently the largest expense for the city is the cost of their employee's benefits and salaries, which is about \$61 million each year. In addition to paying those monies the plan with also pay back, \$2.38 million in loans that the city took out to get through the lean times and paying for about \$8.4 million in infrastructure improvements for city roadways, sidewalks and other improvements to the city's setup.

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