



City of Lincoln
Mayor's Office

2009 Media Releases

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MAYOR ANNOUNCES NEW ONLINE SURVEY

Mayor Chris Beutler today encouraged residents to participate in a new online survey on the City budget now available at lincoln.ne.gov. The "[Taking Charge](#)" survey focuses on programs and services that are in danger of being eliminated or reduced in the 2009-2010 budget. Mayor Beutler said major budget choices must be made, and the community must be involved in those decisions.

"I need the community to understand that this year, the budget stakes are higher than ever," Beutler said. "The choices we make will have a real impact on what kind of City we will be down the road. It is not a circumstance where elected officials simply make a choice, because the choices will have such striking impact on the future. We need all our citizens to make their vision for Lincoln's future clear and weigh in on the choices."

The new survey is another step in the City's transition to an outcome-based budget that ties programs to the goals that citizens want local government to accomplish. That process began a year ago with the PRIORITY LINCOLN initiative, and Beutler said public input from last year was used to develop the budget for the current fiscal year. The City is again working with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center on the current survey, and the project is receiving funding from the Sloan Foundation.

The survey will take about 20 to 25 minutes to complete. Those taking the survey will answer a series of questions selected at random from a larger pool. Specific topics include Library services; pools and other Parks and Recreation programs and facilities; health programs to prevent injury and disease; Police services; stormwater, floodplain and development review; and snow removal.

Beutler said he has kept the City budget balanced through department reorganization, the reduction of 115 jobs in the last two years and other efficiencies. He said the national recession and its impact on sales taxes and property values have created a "fiscal perfect storm" and have left the City with few options.

"If the community is unwilling to financially support these services, they must understand that we will be committing ourselves to a lesser level of services in the future," Beutler said. "The Lincoln that we know and love will be diminished."

Those taking the survey also will have the opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in an in-depth discussion about the City's budget scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 16 at UNL's East Campus Union. Pre-registration is required, and participants will be compensated \$35 for their time and input. More information about the discussion is available from the Public Policy Center's Web site, ppc.nebraska.edu, or by calling 472-5678.

The Mayor is scheduled to make his decisions on the 2009-2010 City budget in May, and the budget is released to the public in June. The City Council votes on tentative changes to the Mayor's budget in July. The public hearing and Council adoption of the budget are scheduled for August.