



DANE COUNTY

Joe Parisi
County Executive

Newsletter Column

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Contacts: Office of the County Executive (608) 267-8823 or cell (608) 843-8858

2012 Brings New Opportunities, Challenges for County Government

Column By: Dane County Executive Joe Parisi

A year ago as State Representative, I watched as working families from all corners of Wisconsin came to Madison to tell the Governor and legislature they wouldn't sit idly as decades' old basic rights were taken away.

Now as County Executive, I strive to lead in a way that shows through mutual respect and working with people instead of against them, that everyone can help solve problems.

That's how we managed through a daunting county budget last fall. Thanks to innovation, creative problem solving, and partnering with county employees on efficiencies, the 2012 county budget spends \$4.4 million more on human services (\$248 million total) while preserving public safety and other programs important to our quality of life.

This New Year certainly brings new challenges, but also many opportunities.

In addition to protecting human services, as a candidate for County Executive I also talked about the need to strengthen the county's ability to enhance economic development. My new Dane County Office of Jobs and Prosperity starts work this spring.

Soon I will unveil a new "Cow Power" facility to create local "green energy" and reduce pollution that runs into our lakes. New partnerships I've formed with the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District and the Clean Lakes Alliance serve as the foundation for the next steps in our important work to clean up our waters.

Thanks to my new partnership with Operation Fresh Start, more kids from challenged neighborhoods will spend this year learning life and job skills.

Construction starts soon on new systems to help our police and fire responders get to emergencies quicker, and communicate better through development of a new countywide radio network.

A recently completed assessment of our criminal justice system offers a menu of possible reforms to ensure our public safety tax dollars are spent effectively.

We have much to do! Together, we'll manage our challenges and maximize our opportunities in 2012.