

# Treasurer latest to blast DuPage budget cuts

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If county board members and law enforcement leaders weren't enough, now DuPage's top financial officer is joining the chorus of disapproval over proposed budget cuts.

Treasurer Gwen Henry warned today that staff reductions in her department would end up costing the county money instead of saving dollars.

The county is facing a fiscal crisis and anticipates 235 layoffs.

County board Chairman Robert Schillerstrom's 2008 budget proposal is \$50 million less than the 2007 plan.

The money crunch comes as the county has used up the last of a \$75 million subsidy from the DuPage Water Commission and hopes of a windfall from a cigarette tax pending in the Illinois General Assembly are fading.

But slashing the treasurer's budget by \$153,500 is counter-productive, Henry said.

"They didn't use a scalpel, they used an ax," she said. "We submitted a budget and they didn't use it. Instead they took the 2007 budget and cut that."

The treasurer's office collects more than \$2 billion in property taxes annually and distributes much of that money to local governments such as municipalities and school districts.

The proposed cuts would mean losing three to four experienced employees, which will cause delays in processing taxes, Henry said.

If the county misses state deadlines for distributing revenues, it could mean daily fines of .1 percent that translate into up to \$500,000 a day.

The domino effect of slower response times also could affect interest income by at least \$20,000 a day, officials estimated

Another sore point is a proposed \$18,600 cut in postage. With postal rates going up this year, it's an unrealistic reduction that will affect mailings to constituents, Henry said.

In response to the concerns, county communications manager Jason Gerwig said, "these impacts show the need for a new revenue source - like a cigarette tax - so county agencies and departments can ensure these services are not interrupted and the public is not inconvenienced."