

## **Coeur d'Alene to hold the line on taxes**

Coeur d'Alene's 2014-15 budget will have a zero percent property tax increase under a preliminary spending plan that has received support from the City Council.

During a budget workshop Thursday, the council endorsed a budget of \$74,561,945 as outlined by finance director Troy Tymesen. The budget will be formally adopted following a public hearing at the regular City Council meeting September 2.

As proposed, the budget includes the streamlining and restructuring of some city departments. The deputy city administrator's position, which in the past was budgeted at \$148,292 including wages and benefits, was vacated last December and will not be filled. Those duties will be assumed by other city department heads and their staffs.

The spending plan also calls for the consolidation of the parks and recreation department under one director, although the departments will continue to operate under separate budgets. The parks director position vacated last year has been removed from the budget. The position would have paid \$120,871, including wages and benefits.

"It's important that the city continues to provide the services our citizens expect while maintaining a fiscally conservative philosophy," said Mayor Steve Widmyer. "I'm very pleased at this point because this budget does that."

Included in the budget are three new officers, contingent on a \$375,000 Federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant. Interim Police Chief Ron Clark said he expects to learn whether the city gets the funding in September.

One area the city does plan a slight increase spending is with Jobs Plus. Previously, the city has provided the non-profit economic development corporation with \$20,000. The 2014-15 budget calls for \$25,000 to support the organization's efforts to create and retain local jobs.

The budget also includes a \$45,000 commitment to support the ongoing effort for the 2030 visioning program – **Keith Erickson, Coeur d'Alene Today**.