

Give Manager's View

**A message from
County Manager Tom Zdunek**

“Give and Take”

July-August 2013

A new fiscal year is upon us and I would like to thank each of you for helping the county make last fiscal year a success as we kick off this year's efforts. Although the county's financial position remains on a solid footing, there is not much margin for error as we face the changes that come with the new funding year.

As I'm sure you all are aware, last fiscal year county employees in rules and regulations positions, as well as most bargaining unit positions, received base pay increases. For the vast majority of you there will be additional increases beginning this pay period, depending on your particular bargaining unit contractual language, should one apply to you. But with this good news comes some bad—or more good—depending on your viewpoint.

As you probably already know, employees and the county are each required to contribute to the retirement fund. You put in some out of your paycheck and the county puts in some out of its budget. What some of you may not know is that in addition to the county's contribution the county made a decision many years ago to pick up a substantial portion of the employee share of the retirement contribution for most employees. In other words, the county pays its own share into the retirement fund and also pays most of your share as well.

During its session in January of this year the state legislature passed and the governor signed into law Senate Bill 27. This law makes numerous changes to the Public Employee Retirement Act (PERA) which affects us all. Most immediately, you will notice that beginning this month your PERA contribution rate will increase by 1.5%. This increase will mean a bit more money out of your paycheck now to ensure you will have a retirement check in the future.

The new law also makes a variety of other changes, but the increase in the employee contribution rate is the one you will see beginning with the paycheck you receive on August 2. So while the county is in the midst of granting multi-year pay increases to its employees, PERA increases and increases in health care benefits will have the effect of taking some of that back. Fortunately, the increased “take” from PERA now will assist its continued ability to “give” in the future.