

From the Desk of Commissioner Bill Kendall

1. STATE FUNDING CUTS FOR DAYCARE 2. NOTICE OF 23% HEALTH INSURANCE INCREASE FOR ALL INSURED COUNTY EMPLOYEES

1. DAYCARE - We received notice of funding cuts by the State eliminating supplemental funding for Towns County Daycare. I had to make an unpleasant decision this past week of either passing these cuts on to the Towns County property taxpayers or to implement one day per month unpaid furloughs for the Daycare workers and increase the fees by \$10 per week for each child enrolled.

With no good option to solve this budgetary problem, **I made the unpleasant decision to furlough the Daycare workers and increase the fees.** Our Daycare program is an important part of our economy and is imperative to working moms. We will continue to closely monitor our spending and operate the Daycare as conservatively as possible. The \$10 weekly fee increase brings the total to \$85 per week per child (reduced for additional enrolled siblings), and is still the lowest fee of all Daycare Centers in the surrounding counties. I want to commend our Daycare employees as being very dedicated and for carrying out their duties in a professional manner. Parents, your child is left in good hands while you are at work.

I feel that as a local official elected with taxing powers we should look for every alternative before shifting state funding cuts on to the backs of the local property tax payers, especially in the midst of this severe recession with decrease of property values, severe job losses, record home foreclosures and many empty commercial rental buildings.

2. 23% HEALTH CARE COST INCREASE - I received word this week that health insurance cost for Towns County employees would increase 23% beginning in Oct. 2009. This is in addition to a 16% increase last year making a total increase of 39% in a 2 year period. We are on track to seeing Towns County employees health insurance cost increase 100% in 5 years, instead of the TV reports that we keep hearing stating that if Congress does not put into place controls to curb the cost of health insurance, the cost increase will reach 100% over the next 10 years.

I will use every means at my disposal to solve this increase by restructuring a policy to offer the employees a choice of a QUALITY BASIC HEALTH INSURANCE option that will result in no extra cost to them or the taxpayers. However, at some point and quickly, Congress must address and help get a handle on these enormous healthcare cost increases.

It is a time when we must look for alternative funding other than property taxes, tighten our budgetary belts, restrain our spending and **not keep reaching deeper into the pockets of the homeowner and property tax payers.**