

Placer County not done making financial-personnel cuts

By Loretta Kalb, Sacramento Bee

In theory, Placer County and its 2,300 workers already have endured the recession's toughest budget tests.

In the last three years, county supervisors froze hiring, imposed furloughs, downsized departments and laid off workers.

But this year, county officials say those efforts combined won't offset the added burden headed their way if the state realigns prisons and mental health services without adequate funding.

Property taxes, the county's single largest source of discretionary spending for general government operations, have declined 17 percent since 2008, County Executive Tom Miller said. And sales tax revenues are just now starting to show signs of recovery.

Gov. Jerry Brown is seeking a prison realignment – shifting low-level inmates to county jails – as part of a larger plan to close a \$15.4 billion state budget deficit.

Counties also would administer juvenile court cases and mental health programs and supervise adult parolees.

Miller figures the county's cost to carry out realignment would run between \$30 million and \$60 million yearly.

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