

# Orange will institute employee furloughs

By John Zucal Managing Editor  
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As Orange enters the last five months of the fiscal year, residents who expect to conduct business inside City Hall should know one thing: don't come on most Fri days.

As in many New Jersey municipalities during the economic down turn, city officials have watched expenses increase, which means asking local property owners for higher taxes.

With the taxpayers arguing against increases, city officials have been forced to look at cost cutting options. One of the decisions in Orange, as in many municipalities, is to enforce furlough days on the majority of its employees.

Under the city's plan, more than 120 administrative employees and Orange's eight elected officials will be required to accept 12 unpaid days off during the final five months of the fiscal year, which ends June 30.

The scheduled days will be Fri days: Feb. 19 and 26, March 12 and 26, April 9 and 23, May 7, 14 and 28 and June 11, 18 and 25. City Hall will be closed on those days as well as on April 2, which is Good Friday.

Only members of the police and fire departments, as well as school crossing guards, will not face furloughs. Contracted services, such as trash collection, senior transportation and animal control, will not be interrupted.

John Mason, the city's business administrator, said Tuesday the city will save approximately \$326,000 from the furlough. For an owner of a property at the city's average assessment of \$245,000, the furlough will reduce the tax bill by about \$40, said Mason.

"Our Extraordinary Aid will save about \$78, so every little bit helps to keep the estimated tax increase as low as possible," he added.

City Council President Edward Marable said Monday night he believed the 2010 budget, which the council accepted Dec. 1, 2009, factored in the furlough of at least some employees.

One area of contention in most discussions of furloughs is the unions. Mason said city officials would prefer not to reduce work hours, but the alternative would have been more damaging.

"It's not something we want to do, but we have to take all the options that we could," he said. "We did avoid layoffs. In this economy, we did not want to lay anyone off because there is little available in the private sector."