

## 2011–2013 State Budget Implications: An AFE Series

### PART 3

## WI State Budget Timeline

### *Fall*

In November and December of even numbered years, agencies across the state submit budget requests to the Governor's office. The Governor's office does provide some guidance in creating the budget, such as suggesting areas for cost reductions, promoting certain services or creating new initiatives. These requests are then compiled to produce a state budget proposal that is announced in February or March.

### *March*

Governor Walker introduced his proposed budget on March 1, 2011. It was then referred to the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) made up of legislators appointed by leaders in both houses of the Legislature. The JFC conducts a series of briefings and public hearings around the state so constituents can give their input.

Representatives from state agencies began testifying before the JFC on March 29 and will likely continue for about two weeks. No public testimony is taken at these briefings.

### *April - May*

Public hearings on the budget will begin on April 7 in Stevens Point and continue for two weeks. A Milwaukee area hearing will be held on Monday, April 11 from 10am-6pm at State Fair Park, Expo Center Hall A, in West Allis.

Due to the volume of expected persons wishing to testify, community members may be given as little as two minutes to speak.

The public hearing announcement stated it will conclude taking testimony at the time specified.

Written comments can be emailed to the committee at [budgetcomments@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:budgetcomments@legis.wisconsin.gov) or sent by US mail to: Joe Malkasian, Room 305 East, State Capitol, Madison, WI 53703.

If you are interested in speaking with your legislator about the upcoming budget, April and May are the key months to make a contact. Mondays and Fridays are typically days lawmakers spend in their districts.

After gathering information from the briefings and hearings, the JFC usually spends the month of May debating the budget's provisions and making changes. The JFC then prepares its own version of the budget.

## *June*

Historically, the budget bill moves to both houses for passage, first in one house then in the other. Each house will take about a week to meet in caucus to discuss amendments and then bring the bill to the floor for final debate. If the two houses end up passing versions of the bill that are significantly different, a Conference Committee consisting of members from each house is usually appointed to iron out the differences between the two. A budget resulting from a Conference Committee process is not amendable; just a yes or no vote is allowed.

Wisconsin Governors have the authority to veto budget bills "in whole or in part." Governor Walker can modify sentences, reduce appropriation amounts, and/or strike out objectionable provisions. The Legislature has the power to override the Governor's veto, but it takes a two-thirds vote of both houses to do so, and that rarely happens.

## *July*

The budget is to be signed into law by July 1, but sometimes the process takes longer. It is not unusual for the budget not to be signed until the Fall. If so, revenues and spending are carried over at the level from the previous budget until the budget is finalized.

### **Resources Used:**

- Wisconsin Association of School Boards, March 25, 2011 Legislative E-News Update.
- Wisconsin Budget Project, Budget Basics, The Biennial Budget, An initiative of the WI Council on Children and Families.