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Imagine this! "Our idea to cut costs and increase efficiencies helped reduce the structural deficit!" [Photo credit](#)

Heads up! Hands on!

CEO wants your help to 'defeat the deficit'

- What's your solution?
- Fast track: Submit your idea by Jan. 5 to DefeatTheDeficit@metro.net

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 12, 2008) Facing a 10-year financial forecast that puts the Metro operating shortfall at \$2.4 billion, Metro is determined to 'defeat the deficit'. In that light, CEO Roger Snoble is turning to employees to tap into their collective creative energy and come up with ways to save money, cut costs, and boost production in new, efficient ways.



CEO Roger Snoble:

"We want to defeat the deficit. We can do that by finding more efficient ways to work and better ways to stretch

"It can be done," said Snoble. "Employees on the front line know how to turn efficiencies into solid budget dollars and should have a hand in helping to defeat the deficit."

In advance of the January Board Meeting, when the Board must take a hard look at the quandary posed by high expectations for traffic improvement against the reality of budgetary shortfalls, Snoble is convinced employees can come up with ideas to cut costs and increase efficiencies enough to help reduce the structural deficit.

State Budget cuts have resulted in funding shortfalls to the FY09 budget totaling \$136.3 million. Current State budget proposals under consideration may increase the shortfall by \$60 million to a total shortfall of \$196 million.

dollars."

Even though Measure R passed and will provide money for new transit and highway programs, the Metro Board has made it clear they don't wish to use Measure R monies to plug the structural deficit.

"We want to improve our services," said Snoble. "We can do that by finding more efficient ways to work and better ways to stretch dollars."

Contribute your ideas by Jan. 5 to DefeatTheDeficit@metro.net. Your ideas will be evaluated by the Office of Management and Budget in time to go to review by Board Committees, which will convene beginning Jan. 12. If your idea is developed and implemented, you will be acknowledged and commended in the CEO's personal recognition program.

The 'think tank' concept came out of a recent roundtable discussion in the Financial Services staff meeting last week. "Look," said Shawn Lowe, financial services manager, "I don't know how to save \$100,000 in another department, but I bet someone in that department knows how! Let's ask them!"

To get the gearbox cranking, the CEO is asking employees to "Look around your department and think about ways that you could do your job better and that may save the agency a few dollars."

"No idea is too small," said Michelle Caldwell, Executive Officer, Management & Budget, "every single idea submitted will be reviewed and evaluated."

For example, an idea where 100 people could save the agency \$5 a day — by turning off their computer every night or reducing office supplies — is equal to an idea that saves a department \$5,000 a month, she said. "It all works."

"We must go beyond the standard hard measures that are usually applied," said Snoble. "We don't want to cancel essential functions. We want to develop a budget that we can live with."

Noting the recession and actions by the State seriously impair Metro's ability to provide the best transportation system in the nation, the CEO is asking employees to contribute their ideas to reduce Metro's structural deficit.

"We need every Metro employee's help in overcoming the deficit," said Snoble.

- *Photo of Equipment Maintenance Specialists Toshi Manaka, Ronnie Burt and Eric Czintos used in this illustration was taken by photographer Deniz Durmus after the Metro Rail team took first place at the 2007 APTA International competition in Toronto.*