

# **City Could Learn Lesson from LV Budget Actions**

*Special to BC Free*

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City of Las Vegas officials released information today as to how they plan to handle their budget shortfall in the coming year.

While conditions are not the same in Boulder City as they are in Las Vegas, their actions speak volumes about how similar problems could be solved here.

Here is the news release issued by Las Vegas today.

## **City And Largest Union Reach Tentative Agreement**

*Agreement Could Save \$20-\$24 Million Over Next Two-And-A-Half Years*

The city of Las Vegas and its largest bargaining unit, the Las Vegas City Employees Association (CEA), have reached a tentative agreement on labor concessions. If approved by the City Council and the CEA membership, the plan will save the city between \$20 and \$24 million over the next two-and-a-half years. This is a major step in helping the city address the estimated \$47 million budget shortfall it is facing in the next fiscal year. The city has contracts with four unions.

Some of the major deal points include those covered under the CEA contract going to a 38-hour workweek of four, 9-and-a-half hour days starting in January. The plan currently is to close many city functions on Fridays. Employees under this agreement would be paid for 38 hours, rather than the current 40 hours. The city has the flexibility to return to a 40-hour workweek when needed.

The city will also close the week of Dec. 26, 2010. This week will amount to a week of unpaid furlough for employees covered under the CEA agreement. In addition, cost of living adjustments (COLAs) will be suspended for two years starting in June 2011, and annual step increases will be suspended for two years starting in January 2011. Longevity pay will be frozen for two years starting in January as well.

The city is working on plans to reduce service impacts to the public as a result of the shortened workweek. The city will have the opportunity for expanded business hours Monday through Thursday, and will work as much as possible to not adversely impact citizens needing to do city business on Fridays.

“I am so glad management and labor were able to roll up their collective sleeves and hammer out an agreement in these difficult economic times,” said City Manager Elizabeth N. Fretwell. “This agreement achieves our goals of maintaining critical services, preserving the city’s fiscal integrity and saving jobs.”

Don King, president of the CEA, acknowledges that the agreement means a sacrifice for city employees and their families. “No one wants to see a reduction in pay, but we know this move will save a lot of money, and ultimately a lot of city jobs,” said King.

The CEA is the city’s largest union representing about 1,400 employees.