

Prenzler: Madison County budget cuts 'deceptive'

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County Treasurer Kurt Prenzler thinks the \$2.15 million budget cuts officials touted last week is deceptive and takes away from people who need it most.

“I’m shocked officials are praising the proposed budget cuts, when \$2 million was taken from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP,” Prenzler said. “I

don't think they should be taking credit for a reduction of state and federal grants as budget savings. The county either gets the money or it doesn't and we don't have role in that."

County Board member Kelly Tracy asked during a special meeting Friday of the Finance and Government Operations Committee where the cuts were made. The county board chairman didn't answer Tracy, but he did admit there was a surplus in the budget.

"What's wrong with a surplus?" the chairman asked. "What's wrong with a little surplus?"

Prenzler said for years the county has padded its budget and the surplus is by design.

"But instead of making real cuts, they reduce the LIHEAP funding," he said. "This is the type of 'smoke and mirrors' officials use."

He said rather than slash the surplus, they reduced the funding that assists people in paying their heating bills, as well as more than \$180,000 in weatherization assistance.

"They are taking credit for something they don't have control over," he said. "Cheering these budget cuts as savings is wrong. It doesn't make any sense to cheer cuts that will put families out in the cold."