Gov. Buddy Roemer ordered $18.1 million in deficit reduction steps Friday and said he is optimistic that by the end of next week he can meet or exceed his goal of $50 million in economy moves for the balance of the current fiscal year.

Roemer issued two executive orders Friday morning outlining new budget actions. The bulk of the savings are gained by forcing state agencies to come up with $15.5 million within their own budgets to cover mandated Civil Service pay increases and state employee insurance premium hikes.

Later, Roemer indicated that the next round of budget cuts—which likely will be issued Monday—will involve closure of certain motor vehicle offices, “some smaller” vo-tech schools and some health-related facilities.

As a result of Friday’s orders, state agencies have to come up with $7.9 million to implement the Civil Service pay plan and another $7.6 million to cover the State Employees Group Benefits Program rate increases.

The state is required by law to make the payments Roemer said Gov. Edwin Edwards implemented the increase but didn’t provide the money.

“It will be more difficult for some budget units than others. It’s just something that has to be done. I won’t tell you it is going to be done quickly and with no pain,” the governor said Friday afternoon prior to the start of a meeting with budget advisers about more potential areas for savings.

Roemer said his budget advisers have given department heads some suggestions on how to come up with the funds but are leaving it up to individual agencies to devise plans to fill their own situations.

The move, in effect, forces state agencies either to trim operations or to locate surplus funds to make the payments between now and the June 30 end of the current fiscal year.

Roemer said he is working on another three or four executive orders which will be issued next week.

“I’ll try to finish $50 million in cuts next week,” the governor said, adding that his budget advisers have been working on another three or four executive orders which will be issued next week.

The state is facing a $121 million budget shortfall in the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. Each of the orders issued Friday are steps the governor said are being taken to “avoid incurring a cash deficit.”

In a first round of cuts announced Tuesday, Roemer trimmed $3.3 million from the budget and collected some surplus funds to push the budget reduction to almost $10 million.

Friday’s second round of budget cuts include recovery of $781,250 in surplus funds in the Agricultural Industry Incentive Fund, which is projected to save $100,000, the governor said, adding that the move will make the law to make the payments.

The state is also gaining $50 million in cuts next week, which is projected to save $100,000, the governor said, adding that the move will make the law to make the payments.

The actions also call for the elimination of 23 state jobs by closing police troops in Leesville and Opelousas, shutting the state Department of Revenue and administering $60,000 in state budget by shifting to the department-level payroll increases associated with new pay plan and with insurance premium increases.

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