



NEWS

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CONTACT: Robert Weissert
Director of Communications
850-222-5052, ext. 18

Florida TaxWatch Releases Preliminary Results of its Analysis of Escambia County's Tax and Spending Practices

TALLAHASSEE — The Florida TaxWatch Center for Local Government Studies presented the preliminary results of its analysis of Escambia County's revenues and expenditures today. The study was requested and funded by a group of Escambia County citizens who were concerned about escalating property taxes and the need for fiscal responsibility and integrity.

This analysis was based upon (1) Escambia County's historical spending practices and (2) a comparison of three comparable counties and the 67-county average for the State of Florida.

The key highlights of the analysis are as follows:

- Escambia County's operating millage rate was the highest of the three comparable counties – Leon, Manatee, and Marion counties;
- Taxable property value in Escambia County doubled between fiscal years 1999 and 2006 as millage rates remained unchanged during those years – essentially doubling the county's property taxes;
- Population growth has been minimal since 1999 in Escambia County;
- Total revenues and expenditures per person increased more than the 67-county average, exceeding amounts necessary for inflation adjustments.

Florida TaxWatch offers its analysis to assist the county in budget adjustments necessary to implement Amendment 1, now part of the Florida Constitution following its recent passage on January 29th. According to Escambia County officials, Amendment 1 is expected to reduce county tax revenues by approximately \$11 million.

Florida TaxWatch is scheduled to release its final report on Escambia County on March 31, 2008.

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Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 29 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida state and local government. Its support comes from homeowners and retirees, small and large businesses, philanthropic foundations, and professional associations. On the web at www.FloridaTaxWatch.org.