



Advisory

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CONTACT: Robert Weissert
Director of Communications
& External Relations
850-222-5052, ext. 20
850-321-5052 (cell)
robert@floridataxwatch.org

STATE EMPLOYEES HONORED FOR INNOVATIVE IDEAS *Florida TaxWatch Honors Those Who Save Taxpayers Money*

Jacksonville — Florida TaxWatch recognized 52 state employees from the Jacksonville area for their innovative and cost-saving ideas. The winners were honored, individually and in teams, with 16 awards on **Monday, June 9 (noon – 1:30 p.m.)** at the **Prudential - Davis Productivity Awards Luncheon in Jacksonville at the Omni Hotel – Downtown, 245 Water St.**

The Prudential - Davis Productivity Awards program is a major government improvement initiative chaired by Lt. Governor Kottkamp, administered by Florida TaxWatch, and sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, The Florida Council of 100, and the State of Florida. Now celebrating its 20th Anniversary, the program recognizes and rewards (with cash awards of \$250 to \$2,500 plus commemorative plaques and certificates of commendation) state employees who clearly exceed their job descriptions and performance expectations in ways that improve service delivery and save money for Florida taxpayers.

“For 20 years, this award has recognized the importance of rewarding and replicating the cost saving innovations generated throughout Florida by state employees like you,” the Lt. Governor told the audience. “On behalf of Governor Crist and the 19 million people who call Florida home, thank you for the exceptional work you do to improve the quality of life we all enjoy and for your dedication to our great state.”

The 2008 competition awarded 489 individual and team winners statewide for their innovations and productivity improvements worth \$332 million in cost savings, cost avoidances, and increased revenue for state government. The program saves even more money by working with agencies and government officials to replicate the cost-savings measures recognized and rewarded during the annual competition.

“It is important that cost-saving innovations generated by devoted state workers are recognized, rewarded, and replicated throughout Florida,” said David A. Smith, Chairman, CEO and President, PSS World Medical and Chairman of Florida TaxWatch. “In this way, we can assure the citizens of our great state that their government is operating as efficiently as possible in providing the high-quality services they deserve, at the lowest possible cost.”

“Now more than ever, it is necessary that the state government deliver services more efficiently and effectively; each of these award winners is a model of how we can improve government together,” said Dominic M. Calabro, President and CEO of Florida TaxWatch. “

Some winners from Jacksonville who are being honored at today's luncheon include:

Assistance for Children in Protective Custody (3-member team)

Department of Children and Families, Jacksonville

Commemorative plaque

A facility named "Lea's Place", which is co-located with Department of Children and Families protective investigation staff, provides nourishment, clothing and safety in a fun, caring environment for children in protective custody. The time a child spends in Lea's Place awaiting placement is an antidote to the chaos of removal from home. Through on-call volunteer time and donations valued at \$200,000, Lea's Place served 479 children in 2006-07. Lea's Place provided protective investigators a cumulative estimated 960 extra hours to focus their efforts on finding quality placements faster.

Permanency Team (7-member team)

Department of Children and Families, Judicial Circuit 4, Guardian Ad Litem Program, and Family Support Services, Jacksonville

Cash award and commemorative plaque

This seven-member multi-agency team decreased the length of time children remain in foster care prior to adoption in Duval County from 12 months to four months, saving more than \$1 million.

Vilma Tipps (individual)

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Cash award and Commemorative plaque

Utilized online resources to prescreen forensic cases.

Jack Groves (individual)

Department of Children and Families

Commemorative plaque

Redesigned long distance call access reducing costs by \$10,000 annually.

Sandra Rentfrow (individual)

Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Commemorative plaque

Found creative way to obtain vehicles to supplement and replace an aged fleet.

Limited Use Water Section (4-member team)

Department of Health

Commemorative plaque

Expanded the Limited Use Water Program by innovation.

All 16 Jacksonville area award winning achievements of the 52 state employees who will be honored at the luncheon, and those of many other extraordinary state workers from around Florida, are detailed in the **2008 Prudential - Davis Productivity Awards Magazine**, distributed at the luncheon and available at www.FloridaTaxWatch.org/dpa. Additionally, in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the Prudential – Davis Productivity Awards program, another publication **Celebrating the Top 20 Adaptable Achievements from the Prudential – Davis Productivity Awards** was also compiled and is available at www.FloridaTaxWatch.org/dpa.

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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.