

Opinion

Gulf Breeze NEWS

Gulf Breeze News
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Traffic authority to present plan addressing Hwy. 98 soon

A long-term solution for our drainage problems in key areas of South Santa Rosa County has begun. The commission has authorized and funded consultants for projects as follows:

- Orion Lake - Harrison Avenue - Villa Venice - Sabertooth Circle
 - Greenbriar - Ramblewood - Ganges Trail - Madura Trail
- The commission narrowed the new judicial locations to East Milton or Avalon Boulevard. Upgrades for the South Santa Rosa Service Center and Judicial additions are anticipated as a portion of the judicial facility construction.
- Bay Street repaving and widening has begun and should be completed in a few weeks.
 - The county moratorium on new permits for Construction & Debris (C&D) disposal pits has been extended.
 - The Santa Rosa County Industrial Park Media Day was a big success. Santa Rosa County and TEAM Santa Rosa announced creation of 318 new jobs in five new industries.

Commissioner's Report



John Broxson

- Your District 5 Commissioner will serve on the canvassing board for the Special Election, February 27. Voters in the city limits of Gulf Breeze are encouraged to vote. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- Your County Commissioner will be in Tallahassee to join with the entire Santa Rosa commission to honor the designation of Representative Ray Sansom as Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, 2008-2010. The regular Commission Committee Meeting has been changed to Friday, March instead of Monday, March 5.
- You may view the Santa Rosa County Commission meetings by logging on to www.santarosa.fl.gov and click on "meetings and agenda".

It is never too early to plan ahead for Hurricane preparation. Revisit your Family Disaster Preparedness Plan soon while supplies are plentiful.

■ The Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority will soon present a comprehensive master plan. (by July 1, 2007) The primary purpose of the Authority is to improve mobility on the U. S. 98 corridor in Northwest Florida to enhance traveler safety, identify and develop hurricane evacuation routes, promote economic development along the corridor and implement transportation projects to alleviate current or anticipated traffic congestion.

Homesteads will save on House plan

Over the last several years, escalating property taxes have far outpaced Floridian's ability to pay. Between Fiscal Year 2000-2001 and 2006-2007, total property tax levies increased by 99 percent. By comparison, personal income has increased by 44 percent and population plus inflation has grown 31 percent.

Certain elements of the property tax system like "Save Our Homes" and the "Homestead Exemption" - while created for valid purposes and to offer meaningful protections - have fostered inequities among taxpayers. It is common to find two similar properties in the same neighborhood with very different tax bills. Also, local taxing authorities have increased the burden on non-homestead properties to compensate for savings enjoyed by homestead properties.

Property taxes have become an obstacle to home ownership and an impediment to job creation. Florida faces increasing competition for human and economic capital from neighboring states that offer taxpayer-friendly policies.

This Special Edition of the Murzin Report presents the House proposal for immediate relief and long-term reform. This is just a starting point, however, and may have many changes made along the way.

House Property Tax Plan

The House plan will save the average homestead property owner \$2,283 in property taxes. Commercial and non-homestead owners will save significantly from our plan as well. The House Property Tax Plan promises the three things Floridians want most: an immediate tax cut, a revenue cap to control future spending to a

The Murzin Report



State Representative Dave Murzin

level they can afford and a vote on the future of Florida's tax system.

There are two main components to the House Property Tax Plan:

Statutory Relief: requires local governments to immediately and meaningfully reduce property tax rates and caps future growth in property tax revenues.

Constitutional Reform: replaces homestead property taxes with sales tax and establishes revenue caps for both state and local government.

Property Tax Reform Constitutional Amendment

1. In a 2007 special election, voters would have the option of eliminating all property taxes on homestead property.
2. In addition to eliminating property taxes on homestead property, starting in Fiscal Year 2008-09, state revenue growth would be limited to a reasonable amount that would be allowed under a prescribed formula that accounts for population growth and inflation since 2001-2002.
3. For the first time, Medicaid revenues would be placed within the revenue growth limitation. Currently these revenues are excluded from the state's revenue limitation.
4. The state revenue limit may be exceeded in any year by a 2/3 vote of each legislative chamber.
5. The constitutional amendment would also limit the continued rapid expansion of local government by containing millage to a rate that produces the same tax revenue as was generated in the previous year plus population growth and inflation, excluding new construction and annexation. The revenue cap may be exceeded through a unanimous vote of the governing body.
6. School districts would not see their budgets reduced under the House's plan. The future growth of school district budgets from property tax revenues would be limited by the amendment, but state government could choose to put more state revenue into schools.

Abolishing Property Taxes on Homestead Property

1. If the elimination of taxes on homestead property is passed by the voters, the state sales tax will be increased by 2.5 cents on all transactions subject to sales tax to offset revenue losses to local governments, schools and other entities that used property tax revenues.
2. This additional sales tax will be used to replace revenues lost due to the Constitutional Amendment.
3. This replacement revenue will only be implemented if voters approve the Constitutional Amendment that exempts homestead property from property tax.

For more information, contact me at dave.murzin@myflorida-house.gov.

On the Spot:

WHERE WE PUT PEOPLE "ON THE SPOT" TO ANSWER A QUESTION "ON THE SPOT."
By Franklin Hayes

What do you think about the ongoing nuclear standoff with Iran?



"I think we're going to have continued difficulty with Iran. It seems the UN has been indifferent but at the same time, I don't know what the US can do about it because we are stretched thin. Nuclear proliferation is a huge problem."
-Teresa Sanquist
Pensacola

"I think it's inevitable that we have some type of conflict. We haven't had diplomatic ties with them in years. But, who are we to tell other nations what to do? I also think it's very scary. I lived abroad for 15 years and I knew many Iranian diplomats and nationals. They are ostracized from the international community."
-Shawn Duntz-Vinsky
Gulf Breeze



"I think we should deal with Iraq first to free up some of the troops. We don't have enough manpower to fight Iraq and Iran. We should stop them before they develop nuclear weapons if they already haven't."
-Erich Reitz
Gulf Breeze

"It concerns me. Our government needs to do whatever it can to protect our country and stop other countries from developing nuclear weapons."
-Sandy Boozer
Gulf Breeze



County open to all bids

I read with interest the story on the Midway Fire Department in your Feb. 22 edition. I feel some clarification is warranted in regards to quotes attributed to Midway Fire Chief Demeter. He was quoted as saying, "County Commissioner John Broxson said it would be a real test to see if you could take the Midway model and make it work across the county. He said that would be the best solution, and we think we have shown here that can be done," said Demeter."

I discussed this quote with Chief Demeter and he agrees that my comments were taken out of context. In fact, what I actually conveyed to him is that Midway Fire District is doing an excellent job in what they do and if they see fit to do so, I

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

would encourage them, as well as all private companies, to step forward with their proposals if they feel they can benefit the citizens of Santa Rosa County.

We are not limiting proposals; we welcome them. After all proposals are submitted and have been evaluated by the County Procurement Department the commission will then chose the best contractor for this important countywide service.

Sincerely,
John Broxson,
County Commissioner
District 5