

Chairman Alan Dunstan: Prenzler again attempts to deflect attention from discrimination verdict

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EDWARDSVILLE – Here we go again. In another attempt to deflect negative attention following a \$450,000 verdict against him by a jury in federal court for violating federal disability laws by discriminating against a female employee in the Treasurer's Office, Kurt Prenzler is attempting to create an issue related to the credit card purchases of the county board chairman.

All credit card payments made by Madison County which were incurred while the chairman was on or handling county business were for valid county expenses and were reviewed by the Auditor's Office.

In no case were any county funds expended to cover non-reimbursable expenses incurred by the Dunstan. In every instance, the chairman attached a check -- made payable to card member services -- to the receipt that was submitted to the Auditor's Office. "There were absolutely no payments made by Madison County for any personal or non-reimbursable expenses," Dunstan stated emphatically.

"Mr. Prenzler has cost county government -- and Madison County taxpayers -- thousands of dollars in retrieving years worth of credit card history. He issued a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to the Auditor's office for every credit card statement and documentation for all of county government. The task of complying with Mr. Prenzler's request took more than 80 hours of time by two employees of the Auditor's office to retrieve the information," Dunstan stated.

"Interestingly, Mr. Prenzler made this request in his capacity as Madison County Treasurer and utilized the staff in the Treasurer's Office to review the more than 8,400 pages of credit card statements," Dunstan said. "He is using staff paid by the people of Madison County to conduct a campaign activity for his campaign to be elected county chairman."

Prenzler and his staff poured over 10 years of credit card statements and did not find a single instance where county funds were used for personal purposes despite using tax dollars to support his campaign efforts.

Dunstan said he welcomes public scrutiny of the expenses he has incurred while working on behalf of Madison County taxpayers. "The expenses I incurred were done so while I was working for the people of our county," Dunstan added. "Mr. Prenzler is obviously more worried about his campaign than he is about working for the people who are paying his and his staff's salaries."

The chairman responded to several specific allegations leveled by Prenzler, including

- The California meeting in 2008 was with the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies. Madison County is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program. Meetings were held Federal Emergency Management Agency and national U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives to address the decertification of our levees and determinations of flood risk for Madison County residents. Dunstan said he was able to interact with FEMA and Corps officials about the emerging issue related to the Metro-East Levees. Dunstan led the effort to rehabilitate the levees, an extensive project which will be completed this year.

- The plane ticket for Dunstan's wife was placed on the county credit card because it was necessary to book the flight for Mr. and Mrs. Dunstan together. Again, no county funds were used for the payment of the plane ticket, a personal check from Dunstan was sent directly to the credit card company.
- The allegation of two personal nights at a hotel is entirely false. The chairman was a member of a steering committee which required his attendance two days in advance of the scheduled start of the meeting.

"A detailed explanation of the additional nights in Chicago was addressed in correspondence that accompanied the receipt. That documentation was also provided to Mr. Prenzler who, obviously, intentionally ignored the documentation in a rather feeble attempt to make me look bad," Dunstan said.

"Mr. Prenzler is being widely criticized for his discriminatory tactics against a female employee in the Treasurer's Office. Since he doesn't have any defense for the criticism, he's grasping at anything to deflect attention from how he is mismanaging his office."

"In fact, as good as Kurt (Prenzler) is at deflections, he should be playing defense for the St. Louis Blues," the chairman quipped.