

Dunstan calls for property tax reform in Illinois

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Asks Board to Place Two Advisory Referendums Supporting Education Funding Reform And Tax Relief On November Ballot

EDWARDSVILLE – Madison County Chairman Alan J. Dunstan today called for true property tax reform in Madison County and throughout Illinois to provide taxpayers with much needed relief.

“In Madison County and throughout the State of Illinois, the burden of funding the numerous taxing districts is increasingly, and unfairly, being put on the backs of taxpayers through the payment of property taxes,” Dunstan said

According to Dunstan, real property tax reform is needed. Real property tax reform means adequately addressing education funding from the state, eliminating unfunded mandates imposed on school districts and local governments, and controlling costs including the streamlining and sharing of governmental services at all levels.

Dunstan said one of the largest drivers of rising property taxes is attributed to inadequate state funding for public education.

“The Illinois Constitution requires the state provide for the primary funding for public education. The state does not meet this obligation, only providing 28 percent, forcing school districts to rely on property taxes to pay for public education,” Dunstan stated. “Since the school education taxes represent the largest portion of the property tax bill, the level of state funding for education has had a significant impact on rising property taxes in Madison County.”

Dunstan also stated all local taxing bodies need to be held accountable for their actions. “Every taxing body in Madison County needs to be transparent when considering increasing property taxes.”

Currently, taxing bodies are only required to place an advertisement in a newspaper prior to holding a public hearing increasing property taxes more than five percent. The public hearings are typically not well attended by taxpayers. “It should be required that taxpayers are directly notified by mail of any pending tax increase at least 30 days prior to a vote of the respective board. This will help assure taxpayers have a voice in their government,” Dunstan said.

The chairman also announced he is asking the Madison County Board to place two advisory referendums on the November ballot. The first referendum addresses state funding support for education and a permanent reduction in property taxes, while the second referendum addresses a requirement that property tax increase notices be mailed directly to taxpayers.

“It is important our residents have the opportunity to share their opinions, through their vote, on these important issues,” stated Dunstan. “This will help send a message to Springfield that property tax reform is needed in Illinois. And it is absolutely essential that the state fulfills its constitutional obligation to provide primary funding for education. That alone would provide significant property tax relief to taxpayers.”

According to Dunstan, property tax reform does not end there and additional reforms are needed. The chairman cited his Property Tax Reform Report, which he published with the help of a bipartisan, blue-ribbon panel of businessmen and women, community leaders and elected officials who extensively studied property tax reform.

Dunstan has presented the report to state organizations and provided testimony to the Illinois Legislature. The report provides a detailed analysis of problems with property tax system in Illinois and makes recommendations. A list of other recommendations are included in the report which may be found on the county web site www.co.madison.il.us.

“Madison County government is leading by example,” commented Dunstan, adding that in Madison County officials have reduced the county’s portion of property taxes. “We have a balanced budget and operate within our means, unlike the state and federal governments.”

Dunstan has streamlined county government, currently operating with 25 percent fewer employees than when he became chairman. “By being more efficient and utilizing state-of-the-art technology, Madison County has been able to reduce our workforce will still providing our residents with the outstanding service they deserve. And we have been able to accomplish this without jeopardizing public safety,” Dunstan stated.

“As chairman, I am very proud of what has been accomplished in Madison County,” Dunstan added. “The county is 100 percent debt free and is in a strong financial position.”