

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Report to the People #30

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The purpose of this report is to provide information and to assist with county government's transparency.

The Madison County Budget in Perspective of Your Total Tax Burden

The Madison County budgeting process begins. Elected officials and Department Heads will submit proposed budgets to the county board for approval. However, your county taxes might best be seen in light of state, your school districts, and federal taxes. To begin, you face a 32% state tax hike with no spending reform. Secondly, Edwardsville and Highland school districts voted for tax hikes during off cycle spring elections. Please note, 55% of the Highland School District property taxes go to schools. Third, all Madison County farmers will pay a higher Productivity Index (PI,) previously 'pushed through' by upstate politicians, which seemingly penalizes "down-staters". To cap things off, the US Congress, now 19.1 trillion dollars in debt, fails to rein in spending or create tax reform.

Why Do Your Taxes Rise?

Why do your taxes rise? ANSWER: Your government's appetite for more money reveals an insatiable desire for greater power and bigger bureaucracy. Additionally, many think unpopular local tax increases are pushed through by special interests using spring referendums when voter turnout is low.

The Madison County Board Must Lead the Way and Say "No"

Some of Madison County Department and elected officials 2018 budget requests now reflect double digit percentage increases. Apparently some elected officials and appointees want to spend more. Therefore, the Madison County Board, which has budget approval power, must show spending restraint and economize. I promise the following; (1) in the next several weeks I will ask for all budgets and review them with a "fine tooth comb". I will speak cordially with those requesting money. (2) I will report back to you "the tax payers". After all you will pay for government. (3) If any increases in specific budgets seem necessary I will report why. (4) I think there should be no overall county budget increase. Government must do more with less. However, my opinion is: any increase in the overall budget should be paid for by the highly touted county reserve . (5) I will still seek to lower the county levy. To conclude, the Madison County Board shouldn't play 'monkey see monkey do' by following the poor example of federal and state legislatures. Instead the board should "lead the way" and set an example of spending discipline.

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