

## **TAX MATTERS**

**APRIL 9, 2009, Issue #09-14, by Bernard Ridens, Executive Director  
Taxpayers Association of Vigo County, Inc.**

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### **REVIEW OF PAST TAX MATTERS**

**APRIL 2, 2009 (#09-13)**

- **A MAJOR CONCERN**
  - It appears that we have serious problems with state-level offices.
- **SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS WANTED**
  - The Taxpayers web site is very close to going public. Prior to doing so, we would like a few people to test the site and let us know what does and does not work.

**MARCH 26, 2009 (#09-12)**

- **UNION HOSPITAL TOUR**
  - There will be a tour for Taxpayers Association members of the new Union Hospital building on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-4:30 pm. RSVP by April 13<sup>th</sup> so Tom Woodason will know how many hardhats and safety glasses to provide.
- **TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING – APRIL 21, 2009 AT 12:00 NOON**
  - RSVP by Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>
- **VCSC FACILITY MASTER PLAN**
  - Several downloaded Adobe PDF documents dealing with the Vigo County School Corporation Facility Master Plan can be found at <http://www.schmidt-arch.com/owners/VigoCounty.html>.
- **LET'S GO FOR THE GOOD MONEY**
  - The differences among “good money,” “neutral money” and “bad money”

The Taxpayers Association is a not-for-profit organization supported by membership dues. Any citizen or group of citizens in Vigo County may be a member. Current members are encouraged to promote membership in the organization by giving the attached application to a potential member. [See the TA application and dues structure.](#)  
**This is NOT an invoice for your dues.**

## 1. WHERE'S MY TAX STATEMENT?

When the County Auditor certifies assessed values to the DLGF, the County Auditor is issued a 1782 notice. The assessed values were due on August 1, 2008. This is one of the first steps necessary before the budget order is issued by the DLGF, tax statements are prepared, property tax dollars start rolling in, and governmental entities receive the funds necessary to govern. Where does Vigo County stand in the property tax timeline? To view an Indiana township map, color-coded to support the timeline, visit [http://www.in.gov/dlgf/files/2009\\_Cert\\_Status.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dlgf/files/2009_Cert_Status.pdf).

We inquired concerning the process, and what can be done to cause the entire process to be completed on a timely basis. Paige Gregory, an Umbaugh CPA, wrote: "The process of certifying assessed values by the counties has been greatly affected by the legislative changes over the past few years. The DLGF cannot certify budgets, rates and levies until the certified assessed value is received from the County Auditor; therefore, the delay is often caused at the county level. Further, the delay at the county level is often due to the changes to the county's systems/processes because of new legislation. Many counties lack the money and resources to effectively implement the changes. That being said, there is not an easy fix to producing a more timely process."

Kylissa Miller, Chief Deputy Auditor, responded to our inquiry about Vigo County's progress. She said that the county is waiting on a TIF Neutralization Worksheet to send to the DLGF for approval. Once that worksheet is approved, the factors may be entered and the values certified. She also indicated that preliminary thinking "is that the Net AV (assessed value) will be down considerably due to the Supplemental Homestead Deduction implemented this year." She wrote, "The DLGF will not issue a final budget order until about 30 to 35 days after they receive the AV's. Once we have a budget order, (we) are probably looking at another 60 days (minimum) until a tax due date."

## 2. DO THE MATH

Susan's thoughts:

Since there is nothing I would rather do than 'MATH', it is refreshing to see that there are at least a few others who have been doing the 'math' the last few days. I am referring to two letters to the editor occurring in this week's *Tribune-Star*. The second letter was a rebuttal to the first one. The first letter was going to give each of the nation's 300.5 million citizens \$1 million and came up with a total investment of \$300.5 million. I think this is \$1 each instead of \$1 million each.

Bernard Ridens had this article ready for me to read and critique, so I knew there was a problem with the calculations. We played around with the numbers for a little while, and discussed the errors involved.

Fortunately, other readers also found the discrepancies. The last writer, Greg Spurgeon, demonstrated better estimates of population and better math skills. He estimates that to give each of the 217.8 million citizens over the age of 18 a bailout of \$500,000 would cost \$108.9 trillion, or the equivalent of 155 bank bailouts of \$700 billion each. He did however suggest that the first writer invest in a calculator and stimulate the economy himself. As a former math teacher, I think that maybe the stimulus investment should be directed toward education instead of being used to

bailout those who misused their own education to lead the financial groups toward their demise. Maybe Greg could volunteer to help President Obama and his financial team.

Today's Update –

Another day, another math error...the original letter writer has since tried to redeem himself for his "careless" math (blamed on the calculator not being able to handle such large numbers), and has made yet another error...this time he says that he is giving \$500,000 to 2 million, not 200 million, people....but this whole story is getting older by the minute...

Bernard's thoughts:

This reminds me of my teaching days where the calculator was blamed for all wrong answers. In turn, I would accuse the students of suffering from FFF (Fat Finger Factor).

The sad fact is – this is basic math and can and should be done without a calculator. To calculate:

$$500,000 \times 300,000,000 = (5 \times 10^5) \times (3 \times 10^8) = 15 \times 10^{13} = 150,000,000,000,000 \text{ (150 trillion)}$$

In the letter writer's last letter, this would be:

$$500,000 \times 200,000,000 = (5 \times 10^5) \times (2 \times 10^8) = 10 \times 10^{13} = 100,000,000,000,000 \text{ (100 trillion)}$$

Matt's thoughts:

If I-STEP would have been in place 35 years ago, the original letter writer would not have made the error, leading to the second letter writer not needing to respond, leading to the first letter writer not having to re-track his original incorrect mathematics with another incorrect statement...

### **3. LEGISLATIVE CRACKERBARREL SESSIONS – MEET AND TALK WITH YOUR AREA LEGISLATORS – 1 SESSION REMAINING**

**Saturday, April 11, 10:00 AM, Vigo County Main Library Lower Level**

We need to make our lawmakers aware of our thoughts. The Crackerbarrel sessions are a tremendous way of getting this done. The members of the TA are very knowledgeable and are obviously interested in the manner in which taxes are levied and spent. It would be very beneficial to our community and state if many of you would attend the remaining session listed below. If you are unable to attend, please send someone in your place. When our representatives return to Indianapolis, it would be beneficial if they could state that the Crackerbarrels held in Terre Haute were attended by many area citizens concerned about items under consideration by the 2009 assembly.

This week's Crackerbarrel Session is the last in the series. The other two have been well attended and the questions and comments addressed to the legislators have resulted in interesting dialogue.

Take the time this Saturday morning to stop by, say a few words if you choose, and at least have a cup of coffee.

(10:00 am at the Main Branch of the Vigo County Public Library  
Lower level - rooms A, B, and C.)

#### **4. UNION HOSPITAL TOUR**

There will be a tour for Taxpayers Association members of the new Union Hospital building on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-4:30 pm. RSVP to Tom Woodson at [twoodason@hwcengineering.com](mailto:twoodason@hwcengineering.com) or 812-234-3714 by April 13<sup>th</sup> so he will know how many hardhats and safety glasses to provide.

#### **5. CALL FOR DOOR PRIZES FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING**

"Brother, can you spare a dime?" Or better yet, can you spare a few dimes and donate a door prize for the Annual Meeting? Your company, or you, will receive recognition for your donation, and you will have a warm, fuzzy feeling attributed to your generosity!

#### **6. KEEP DONATING**

If you would rather donate to the high school taxation contest, we are still collecting donations for this project. The traveling trophy "**The Eagle**" is being sponsored by Indiana State, Ivy Tech, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, and Rose-Hulman. The 2009 competition will be held Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. "The Eagle" will be presented to the winning school at the Taxpayers Association Annual Meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Cash rewards will also be given to the winning students and school.

If you can support this endeavor, please send a special contribution to:

**Taxpayers Association of Vigo County**  
**7 S Meadows Shopping Center**  
**Terre Haute, IN 47803**

## 7. PUBLIC MEETINGS

The purpose of this calendar is to encourage taxpayers to attend public meetings. Taxpaying persons working at your business or living in your neighborhood should be encouraged to attend a meeting of their choice at least once per year. The date and time for the meetings listed below are always subject to change. Organizations that are underlined have a web page that can be accessed by clicking on their respective hyperlinks. The contact person is also listed. You should call the appropriate office and confirm the date and time if you plan to attend.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Public Meeting</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contact Info</b>
Sat. Apr. 11	10:00 am	<b>LEGISLATIVE CRACKERBARREL</b>	<b>Library – Main Branch</b>	<b>Nancy 232-1113</b>
Mon. Apr. 13	2:00 pm	<u><b>Board of Public Works and Safety</b></u>	City Hall – 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	Robin 232-4767
Mon. Apr. 13	6:00 pm	<b>West Terre Haute Town Board</b>	500 W. Nat'l, WTH	Melody 533-2034
Mon. Apr. 13	7:00 pm	<u><b>Vigo County School Board</b></u>	VCSC Board Room	Judy 462-4216
Tue. Apr. 14	9:00 am	<u><b>County Commissioners</b></u>	County Annex	Judy 462-3367
Tue. Apr. 14	10:00 am	<u><b>City Board of Sanitary Commissioners</b></u>	City Hall – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor	Sally 235-5458
Tue. Apr. 14	4:15 pm	<u><b>Vigo County Redevelopment Commission</b></u>	County Annex	Amanda 234-2524
Tue. Apr. 14	7:00 pm	<b>Seelyville Town Board</b>	Seelyville Water Office	Tamara 877-2665
Wed. Apr. 15	9:30 am	<b>Clay-Owen-Vigo Solid Waste District</b>	109 E. Nat'l, Brazil IN	Janet 800-387-3380
Wed. Apr. 15	10:00 am	<u><b>County Board of Zoning Appeals</b></u>	County Annex	Judy 462-3367
Wed. Apr. 15	4:00 pm	<u><b>City Redevelopment Commission</b></u>	City Hall – 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	Phenny 232-0018
Wed. Apr. 15	5:00 pm	<u><b>Vigo County Board of Health</b></u>	County Annex	Louise 462-3428
Thur. Apr. 16	2:00 pm	<b>Tree Advisory Board</b>	City Hall Mayor's Conf. Room	Jennifer 232-4028
Mon. Apr. 20	5:30 pm	<u><b>Human Relations Commission</b></u>	Booker T. Washington Center	Jeff 232-0110
Mon. Apr. 20	7:00 pm	<u><b>Vigo County Public Library</b></u>	Library – Main Branch	Nancy 232-1113
Tue. Apr. 21	9:00 am	<u><b>County Commissioners</b></u>	County Annex	Judy 462-3367
Tue. Apr. 21	10:00 am	<u><b>City Board of Sanitary Commissioners</b></u>	City Hall – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor	Sally 235-5458
<b>Tue. Apr. 21</b>	<b>12:00 noon</b>	<b>TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING</b>	<b>Idle Creek Banquet Center</b>	<b>Bernard 235-1361</b>
Wed. Apr. 22	4:30 pm	<u><b>City Park Board – Business Meeting</b></u>	Deming Park	Eddie 232-2727
Wed. Apr. 22	5:30 pm	<u><b>Information Technology Advisory Board</b></u>	City Hall – 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	Brad 244-2316
Wed. Apr. 22	7:00 pm	<u><b>Airport Authority</b></u>	Airport	Kara 877-2524
Mon. Apr. 27	2:00 pm	<u><b>Board of Public Works and Safety</b></u>	City Hall – 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	Robin 232-4767
Mon. Apr. 27	4:00 pm	<u><b>County Park Board</b></u>	County Annex	Julia 462-3391
Mon. Apr. 27	5:30 pm	<b>Terre Haute Housing Authority</b>	2001 N. 19 <sup>th</sup> Street	
Mon. Apr. 27	7:00 pm	<u><b>Vigo County School Board</b></u>	VCSC Board Room	Judy 462-4216
Tue. Apr. 28	9:00 am	<u><b>County Commissioners</b></u>	County Annex	Judy 462-3367
Tue. Apr. 28	4:30 pm	<u><b>County Council</b></u>	County Annex	Auditor 462-3361

**END**

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