

	Hear Ye, Hear Ye....
	Current Events..... 1
	Guest Columns..... 2
	Legal Chambers..... 2
	Local News..... 3
	Elected Officials Scorecard..... 3
	Government Meetings..... 3
Memorable Quotes 4	

We Support Our Muncie Firefighters!

With public safety services challenged to reduce costs in the face of lost tax revenues and looming collective bargaining contract renegotiations, Muncie Firefighters solicit the involvement of the Citizens to support their solidarity and cause.

Local Option Income Taxes (LOIT) Are they Bloated Government and Public Services “path of least resistance”?

Muncie is not a wealthy city. One third of Muncie’s residents were identified as living at or below the poverty line and Delaware County’s Median Household Income (MHI) has deteriorated to 29% BELOW the National average over the past few decades according to the last U.S. Census.

Many of Muncie’s residents are unable to keep up with the rapid increases in the price of gasoline. The increases in fuel have caused increases in food prices amongst many other things, yet there hasn’t been any increase in basic public assistance. The average person receiving food stamps in Delaware County gets only \$1.08 of assistance per meal.

Many working people in Delaware County are feeling the burden of rising health care costs causing employers to require the employees to pay more for their health benefits. The costs of health insurance have risen substantially over time and often come with reduced coverages requiring more out of pocket contributions.

The State of Indiana recently added 17% extra to their sales tax coffers by increasing our sales tax from 6% to 7%. Add in the closing of New Venture Gear and the planned closing of Borg Warner, and it’s easy to see that our problems are bound to get a lot worse.

Our local government is faced with the prospect of downsizing itself or imposing new taxes to make up for lost property tax revenues. The Local Option Income Tax (LOIT) LOIT is a tax on individuals, not on corporations. So these same individuals who are struggling to make ends meet with the rising costs

of food, fuel, other energy needs, taxes, and health care ALSO get strapped with the costs of a bloated government that refuses to face reality. LOIT is a tax shift. The tax revenue that was lost by reducing property taxes is being replaced by income tax and sales tax. The government has done nothing to reduce their size or inefficiency.

Muncie residents already pay one of the highest tax rates in the state. LOIT is not the answer to our problems. LOIT is just the path of least resistance for our local government. LOIT means our local government doesn’t have to make any changes in how they do business even though the reality of our local residents continues to worsen.

While City Council President, Sam Marshall has indicated an unwillingness to consider LOIT... **AT THIS TIME**...make no bones about it, the pressure to do so is very intense. Local taxing units are fighting tooth and nail to sustain their “business as usual” staffing levels, pay, benefits and operating revenues. With nearly all local public work forces unionized, the crescendo seems to be building towards a serious showdown.

“I would hope there would be enough votes on council that they can look at public safety and be able to fund it,” Capt. Paul Sykes, president of Firefighters Local 1348, said when asked about the possibility of LOIT to help fund public safety.

While Public Hearings are suppose to precede any serious consideration of an adoption of LOIT, only the Muncie City Council and 5 fragile votes separate us from another burdensome tax.

The yellow signs have been progressively appearing all around town and as more of them make their appearance, it becomes obvious that the Muncie Firefighters are feeling a little uncomfortable with the prospect that their union labor contract is coming to an end at the most inopportune time. To an extent, it has been a pretty successful “marketing campaign”. But the million dollar question (literally) is, what exactly are they selling?

With the new property tax legislation putting the economic squeeze on many local governments and all their tax-funded feifdoms including municipal safety services, many communities, including Muncie are faced with the prospect of having to reinvent themselves relative to their overall operations. Municipal Safety Services are not immune to these issues...or are they?

Many Firefighters will tell you that the signs are not being “marketed” to the general public, that, in fact, the citizens of Muncie are searching them out to personally request the signs for displaying on their properties. Others (Firefighters) will tell you that they’re offering a full “disclosure” regarding what they are trying to accomplish with the distribution of the signs. We’re not sure that either claim is wholly accurate.

First, what we are aware of is that Firefighter representatives are making “convenient appearances” at public venues such as bingo halls and bowling alleys to plead their case and distribute free signs. There are documented accounts of Firefighters and/or their representatives canvassing neighborhoods door to door with signs in tow. And all the while we’re not exactly sure on a case by case basis what the citizens are being told or whether the message remains

consistent when asked to display the signs supporting the Muncie Firefighters on their properties. The one message that we are privileged to is that “the Mayor is wanting to replace us (paid professional firefighters) with volunteers.” And, once again, we’re not sure that is exactly accurate.

Our memories serve that the Mayor has, in fact, raised the question as to why we couldn’t consider incorporating or supplementing a reduced number of paid firefighters with volunteers, not necessarily replacing them lock, stock and barrel. We would invite our record to be corrected with documented evidence to the contrary. One of the difficult ironies associated with the MFD and their resistance to volunteers is the fact that the lion’s share (60%-70%) of the current Muncie professional paid firefighting workforce live outside the city and they themselves are served and protected by volunteer fire departments. Additionally, by living outside the City, they do not contribute to the expense of their very existence.

Additionally, when refused an opportunity to add comment during the June City Council meeting where MFD supporters had gathered in a display of solidarity, the Mayor made another statement to the extent she might consider “privatizing” the firefighting services. Not one of her better “PR moves” in our opinion, but, once again, this could be construed in many different ways and more likely than not, any effort to privatize the firefighting services would look first to existing fire department employees for the staffing of a private force.

Our bet is that the signs are intended to coerce the deciding elected officials to adopt alternative revenue sources such as LOIT and wheel taxes to help sustain their current operational costs. Any takers?

The Delaware County Taxpayer Crier

Annual Budget Hearings Commence Local Taxing Districts line up to milk the "Sacred Cow"

The annual trek to the public watering trough has begun. August and September are annually filled with one Taxing District Budget Hearing after another as all the local taxing districts move towards adopting their next year's budgets before the statutory September 30th deadline.

Required legal notices are already starting to make the newspapers with Mt. Pleasant Schools, being one of the first in line, has their public hearing scheduled for August 19, 2008, with their Adoption Hearing scheduled for September 18, 2009. If their hearing notice is any indication of things to come, then be fair forewarned there appears to be no voluntary willingness to reduce operational costs. There are excess levies being allowed in certain taxing districts budgets and in the case of Mt. Pleasant Schools they appear to be exploiting each and everyone of them. It is our understanding that local property taxes will be directly burdened by these excess levies even if the Fund was designed to be picked up by the state in HEA1001. So be the case with the \$150,000.00 excess levy to the Mt. Pleasant Schools General Fund as indicated in their public notice.

The transitioning issues associated with the multitude of changes involved in the HEA1001 property tax legislation create issues of great confusion for everyone, especially the taxing districts themselves. Many are "rushing to notice" without fully understanding how the actual amounts of the various Funds and overall budget totals are suppose to read. The Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) has personnel traveling around the State conducting "workshops" to educate the taxing districts

regarding the changes and how to properly prepare (and publish) their 2009 budgets, but many are overly anxious to move this burdensome task forward and have initiated their 2009 budget efforts without any specific guidance. Apparently, short of timely publishing the notice as required by law, there is no penalty involved in publishing budget number erroneously.

The law that covers taxing district budgets, IC 6-1.1-17, provides for ten (10) or more taxpayers to object to a budget, tax rate, or tax levy of a political subdivision by filing an objection petition with the proper officers of the political subdivision not more than seven (7) days after the public hearing. The objection petition must specifically identify the provisions of the budget, tax rate, and tax levy to which the taxpayers object. If a petition is filed, the fiscal body of the political subdivision shall adopt with its budget a finding concerning the objections in the petition and any testimony presented at the adoption hearing.

As has always been the case, the CDCPTR strongly urges all taxpayers to take a vested interest in their community, government and associated operations and costs by attending these hearings. If you don't like what you're hearing or seeing, don't understand and are feeling stonewalled or suspect that legal issues have been breached, review and possible redress is only ten valid signatures away.

The CDCPTR website has the previously filed objecting petitions as well as samples that can be used as templates for customizing and developing petitions objecting any taxing district's budget. Please remember that inaction is action. And the government often banks on it!

CDCPTR Dunk Tank at Delaware County Fair raises \$1,000.00 for United Way of Delaware County!!

The CDCPTR made a huge splash at the Delaware County Fair with their booth and dunk tank as they raised \$1,000.00 for the United Way of Delaware County.

Prior to the Fair, solicitations to participate in our charitable fundraising effort were made to all current public elected officials as well as important public, civic and media personalities throughout the County. Many jumped at the opportunity to participate for a good time and a great cause including; Mark Conatser, Kevin Nemyer, Steve Lindell, Bill Davis, Todd Donati, Joe Russell, Lee Ann Mengelt, Bob Wilson, Will Statom,

Matt Wagley, Tom Cannon and we're sure we've missed a few, but all were great sports. They all appeared to have had a great time and took a pretty good soaking!

Ted Baker, Candidate for District 34 of the Indiana House of Representatives was the big money maker, raising \$115.00 with his time in the "wet seat".

While the effort was very fun, exciting and satisfying, it was also a huge amount of work and as usual, the citizen volunteers did a marvelous job of working the event all week long. A huge thank you goes out to everyone that both helped and participated.

Legal Chambers: IC 36-1.5 Modernization: A time to be optimistic?

The CDCPTR is extremely proud of the fact that it has led the effort to position Delaware County as the **ONLY** County in the State of Indiana with either a County Board of Tax Adjustment or an IC 36-1.5 Modernization and Reorganization Committee.

The very existence of these legal entities is the result of some extremely hard work and forward thinking by both Citizens and Elected Officials alike. The whole State of Indiana is intensely watching Delaware County in its fight for survival and attempt to make a 158 year leap in moving our government's structure out of the 19th century into the 21st.

Most recently the appointments to the Modernization and Reorganization Committee were made by the Executive wings of both our City and County governments. With few exceptions, the CDCPTR is optimistic regarding the members and their qualifications to serve the

best interests of the County and City as a whole. The Members are:

Mayor McShurley's appointments:
Jim Gooden, Eric Kelly, and Gary Addison.

Delaware County Commissioners appointments: **Valerie Alexander, Dave Robertson and Mike Whited.**

For many, most being either employed, appointed or elected to public service, this is a rather intimidating and apprehensive period. That's understandable. But what needs to happen at this point is that all governing bodies to be cooperative, supportive and remain optimistic that the end result will be a greatly improved, more efficient and marketable area to live and prosper.

Any individual or unit of government running resistant to or trying to undermine this effort would be tantamount to a petulant child who fouls their own bedding to get even for being sent to their room.

Don't count on your property tax relief until it's made permanent!

Most **homesteaded** Delaware County property taxpayers will receive their tax statements over the next 60 days and will undoubtedly be overjoyed at the reductions in the amounts requested relative to what they experienced last year.

It should be specifically noted that this will occur to owner occupied, **homesteaded**, properties only. Those that lease will get an increase in their "renters deduction" that will allow them to further reduce their Indiana taxable income for a modest savings as well. The commercial and residential rental owners have been made the "sacrificial lambs" of the new legislation and will again see substantial increases in their taxes until the caps are phased in.

While this is a really good thing for homeowners, it is very important to note that it is the direct result of a one time influx of increased property tax credits, if for no other reason, designed to try and make right the terrible wrongs that occurred in 2007.

The timing of this "windfall" to most permanent residents and consequently the VOTERS in a very important election year is undoubtedly very "convenient" for incumbents seeking re-election. Furthermore, beyond this year (AND THE ELECTIONS!) as the property tax caps are phased in, all these property tax credits and most other credits such as the homestead are **phased out**. All this is being done

under the pretense that the property tax caps will be made permanent and protected by law with an Indiana Constitutional Amendment.

But hold the boat! The fact is that none of this "permanent" protection has been enacted yet! That's right, in one fell swoop all that has been given can be taken away!

Even after already increasing our sales taxes by 17% (6% to 7% is a 17% hike folks), and tapping various other resources, to bring a "shot of relief" in 2008, if the Indiana General Assembly does not pass for a second time an identical reading of the property tax cap Constitutional Amendment Legislation, SJR1, it will fail to go on the ballot and subsequently into law.

Already legislators across the state are trying to dodge officially stating their position on this issue including our very own Senator Sue Errington. Senator Errington as well as many others are now indicating that they may not be supportive of a second reading of SJR1!

The CDCPTR very strongly recommends and urges that you contact your State Representatives and Senators, NOW! If they're trying to renege upon their previous positions, and won't support the second reading of SJR1, in the 2009 Session, that will permanently protect the taxpayers from the abomination of last year, they need to be voted out of office!!

The Delaware County Taxpayer Crier

Citizens of Delaware County
for
PROPERTY TAX REPEAL
www.propertytaxrepeal.com

**CDCPTR'S
"4-CORNERS"
COMMUNITY
UPDATE**

**CITIZENS OF DELAWARE COUNTY FOR PROPERTY TAX REPEAL
COMMUNITY UPDATE**



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

THE CDCPTR HAS BEEN HARD AT WORK BECOMING MORE AWARE, INFORMED AND INVOLVED IN ALL ASPECTS OF LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AND ISSUES THAT AFFECT ALL OF US. COME HEAR DETAILS ABOUT HB 1001, THE PROPERTY TAX REFORM LEGISLATION AS WELL AS LOCAL OPTION INCOME TAXES THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED TO SUSTAIN CURRENT SAFETY SERVICES. INDIANA SENATE DISTRICT 26 SENATOR, SUE ERRINGTON AND INDIANA HOUSE DISTRICT 34 REPRESENTATIVE, DENNIS TYLER, WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE TO HELP SORT OUT THE NEW LEGISLATION AS WELL AS THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. IN ADDITION, HEAR MORE ABOUT WHAT EFFORTS THE CDCPTR HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON LATELY.

DO YOU WANT TO STAY INFORMED OR MAYBE EVEN GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS? WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE AND WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR COMMENTS AND CONCERNS.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 2008
STARTING AT 9:00 AM**

**TASTE OF THE SOUTH RESTAURANT
2700 S. HOYT AVE., MUNCIE, IN**

**GUEST SPEAKERS:
INDIANA DISTRICT 26 SENATOR SUE ERRINGTON
INDIANA DISTRICT 34 REPRESENTATIVE DENNIS TYLER**

For more information call 765-881-0183 or logon to:
www.propertytaxrepeal.com

Muncie CDCPTR 4-Corners Community Update scheduled on August 16th at Taste of the South Restaurant at Hoyt Avenue and Cornbread Road.

The first three CDCPTR Community Updates turned out to great events for local citizens to interact personally with their elected State Legislators and learn some of the details associated with the new property tax legislation, HB1001.

The first event, held on April 26th at Delta High School auditorium, featured Indiana House District 33 Representative Bill Davis who was extremely well prepared as to the most important issues regarding the property tax reform.

The second event was held at the Mill Street Inn in Gaston the following Saturday, May 3rd. The banquet room was packed to capacity as nearly 50 people showed up to hear Indiana House District 35 Representative Jack Lutz speak to his insights of the legislation and answer citizen's questions.

The third event held in Yorktown on June 28th at Osborn's Country Kitchen, like Gaston, played to a full house. Although scheduled for 2 hours, the public and Legislators hung out for long afterwards to exchange concerns and information.

The fourth event is now on the schedule for August 16th at Taste of the South Restaurant in Muncie. Currently, both Indiana Senate District 26 Senator Sue Errington as well as Indiana House District 34 Representative Dennis Tyler are scheduled to be on hand. Although questions, concerns and information relative to HEA1001 will still be addressed, the focus of discussions will be directed towards Local Option Income Taxes as well as ongoing property tax assessment and appeal issues. CDCPTR will also update you on their efforts and answer questions as well. Hope to see you there!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

CDCPTR's 2008 General Election Candidate Forum is scheduled for October 30, 2008 at 6:30 pm at the Cornerstone Center for the Arts! You won't want miss this one!

Elected Officials Scorecard

The voting and public positions of our elected public officials.

Legend	Property Tax Repeal	Cap.Proj.Referendums	County Consolidations	City Consolidations	City/Co. Consolidations	Dept. Consolidations	Personnel Reductions	Privatization of Svcs	Tax Abatement	TA Non-compliance Penalty	Forced Annexation	Allied with Spc. Interests	Favors Alt. taxes (LOIT)
Y = Yes, in favor N = No, not in favor - = Undecided..... (yet to demonstrate by vote)													
Sen. Sue Errington	N	N											
Rep. Bill Davis	Y	N											
Rep. Dennis Tyler	N	N											
Rep. Jack Lutz	N	N											
DC Cms. John Brooke			N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y		
DC Cms. Tom Bennington			N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y		
DC Cms. Larry Bledsoe			N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y		
DC Cnc. Brad Bookout			Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N		
DC Cnc. Joe Russell			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N			
DC Cnc. Ron Quakenbush			Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N		
DC Cnc. Mary Chambers			N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N			
DC Cnc. Mel Botkin			Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	N	N		
DC Cnc. Ted Bowman			N	N	N	N	N	Y	-	Y	-		
DC Cnc. Chris Matchett			Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N			
Mayor Sharon McShurley				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	
MC Cnc. Sam Marshall				N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	
MC Cnc. Alison Quirk				N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y		
MC Cnc. Mary Jo Barton				N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	
MC Cnc. Monte Murphy				N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	
MC Cnc. Jerry Dishman				N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y		
MC Cnc. Mike King				N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y		
MC Cnc. Linda Gregory				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	
MC Cnc. Brad Polk				Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	-	N	
MC Cnc. Mark Conatser				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	

Important Government Meetings Schedule

Please plan on attending at least some of these meetings!
Cut this schedule out and place it where you can't forget!

Monday, 8/4/08 @ 9:30 am: Del. Co. Commissioners Meeting Commissioners Court, Room 309 County Building, Muncie, IN	Tuesday, 9/9/08 @ 6:30 pm: Muncie Schools Board Meeting MCS Administration Building 2501 N. Oakwood Avenue, Muncie, IN
Monday, 8/4/08 @ 7:30 pm: Muncie City Council Meeting (Public meetings and special meetings may begin earlier) City Hall Courtroom Muncie City Hall	Monday, 9/15/08 @ 9:30 am: Del. Co. Commissioners Meeting Commissioners Court, Room 309 County Building, Muncie, IN
Tuesday, 8/12/08 @ 6:30 pm: Muncie Schools Board Meeting MCS Administration Building 2501 N. Oakwood Avenue, Muncie, IN	Tuesday, 9/23/08 @ 9:00 am: Delaware County Council Meeting Commissioners Court, Room 309 County Building, Muncie, IN
Monday, 8/18/08 @ 6:30 pm: Del. Co. Commissioners Meeting Yorktown High School Auditorium Yorktown, Indiana	Tuesday, 9/23/08 @ 6:30 pm: Muncie Schools Board Meeting MCS Administration Building 2501 N. Oakwood Avenue, Muncie, IN
Tuesday, 8/26/08 @ 9:00 am: Delaware County Council Meeting Commissioners Court, Room 309 County Building, Muncie, IN	Monday, 10/6/08 @ 9:30 am: Del. Co. Commissioners Meeting Commissioners Court, Room 309 County Building, Muncie, IN
Tuesday, 8/26/08 @ 6:30 pm: Muncie Schools Board Meeting MCS Administration Building 2501 N. Oakwood Avenue, Muncie, IN	Monday, 10/6/08 @ 7:30 pm: Muncie City Council Meeting (Public meetings and special meetings may begin earlier) City Hall Courtroom Muncie City Hall
Tuesday, 9/2/08 @ 9:30 am: Del. Co. Commissioners Meeting Commissioners Court, Room 309 County Building, Muncie, IN	Tuesday, 10/14/08 @ 6:30 pm: Muncie Schools Board Meeting MCS Administration Building 2501 N. Oakwood Avenue, Muncie, IN
Monday, 9/8/08 @ 7:30 pm: Muncie City Council Meeting (Public meetings and special meetings may begin earlier) City Hall Courtroom Muncie City Hall	Monday, 10/20/08 @ 6:30 pm: Del. Co. Commissioners Meeting Cowan Schools Cowan, IN

The Citizens of Delaware County
for Property Tax Repeal, Inc.
1716 N. Wheeling Ave.
Muncie, IN 47303

August/September, 2008

Committed to educating the taxpaying and
voting citizens of Delaware County for the betterment
of government, community and reduced taxes.



The Delaware County
Taxpayer Crier



HELP US HELP YOU!

August challenge: Please consider a donation to help with our ongoing expenses associated with our efforts, including this newsletter.

September challenge: Register one new voter!!
Voter registration form can be found on web site.

If your name is "Current Resident", please update your information with the CDCPTR!!



The Delaware County
Taxpayer Crier

The Delaware County Taxpayer Crier is published bimonthly by the Citizens of Delaware County for Property Tax Repeal, Inc. promoting the dissemination of information for the purpose of educating the Citizens, Voters and Taxpayers in pursuit of our primary goals:

Responsible Government Spending;

Responsible and Responsive Public Officials;

Repeal of Indiana Property Taxes.

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Memorable Quotes:

"Why wouldn't the citizens of Muncie want the City Council involved?" –

Sam Marshall, President of Muncie City Council upon the convening of a City Council Special Meeting to make unsolicited appointments to the IC 36-1.5 Modernization Committee

"When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty." –
Thomas Jefferson

"Politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians" –
Charles de Gaulle

"There is no such thing as a good tax." –
Winston Churchill

"All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent." –
Thomas Jefferson

"You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life." –
Winston Churchill