

## Bryan's Brief - December 2009

Merry Christmas to all and Happy Holidays! Well it looks as if the cold weather is here, leaves to rake, fires in our fireplaces and the holidays are upon us. Now that my term as the Leon County Chairman has ended, I just want to share how truly honored and humbled I was to have been given the chance to serve. I never clearly understood the time commitments of the Chairman and have a new respect for those who've gone before me. I'm looking forward however to having more time to be out and about in my district.

Thought I would share with you my perspective on this past year. I am a firm believer that there is a vital role played by government to provide essential services. I also know that the citizens of Leon County expect the highest quality of these services. The balance however is that we must manage the tax burden and be cognizant of the overhead we create to support these services. To find that razor balance, we have to work harder and smarter. We were faced with unprecedented challenges this year in the form of economic pressures, soaring unemployment and continued property tax reform. Nevertheless, when it came to dealing with its significant impacts, Leon County was arguably in the best position of any county in Florida.

My focus during my year as chair covered primarily three areas:

- 1. *Improve the general perception of the County***
- 2. *Step up our Economic Development efforts***
- 3. *Taxes are Taxes – better inter-government relations between the City/County/State/Federal/Schools/Police or Sheriff***

### ***Improve the general perception of the County.***

I have come to understand the nature of county government much better and I know that it is an unfortunate reality that our *successes are very private* and our *failures are very public*. – I'm proud to be part of Leon County and am constantly amazed at the level of service and professionalism. Since most of our failures have played out in the press, I want to make certain that we also highlight some of our successes!

1. Since Commissioner Dailey and I were sworn in 3 years ago this month we've averaged more than a one million dollar per month decrease in the year-to-year budget;
2. Leon County take-home vehicles have been reduced from 49 to 1;
3. We have the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest budget per capita in state ;
4. We have the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest employees per capita;
5. We eliminated the business license tax;
6. We held the line on taxes this year – even though we saw a one billion dollar decrease in property value, eliminated twenty million dollars in our year-to-year budget and eliminated 33 positions.

### ***Step up our Economic Development efforts.***

1. With the Federal Economic Stimulus dollars, this region has received \$1.1 billion dollars in funding to date, directly contributing to about 16,000 jobs;

2. County/City Construction Projects have been released and expedited to bid and development to help stimulate the economy, including the joint dispatch center, libraries and the infrastructure projects funded through Blueprint 2000, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)
3. Tourist Development Council enhancements including the hiring of a new director and development of a vision that will enhance tourism in our County, providing direct assistance to our businesses.
4. Creating jobs must be priority number one going forward. When the stimulus funds run out - and they will - the backlash we will face with the loss of all those jobs will be a real issue for this "company town" creating an absolute crisis in the next few years.

***Taxes are Taxes – It doesn't matter whether they are City/County/State/Federal/Schools/Police or Sheriff –***

We need to do a better job of working together. The issue is not winning or losing. We should be looking at the overall impact to the community on the following:

1. Planning and GIS –
2. Fire / EMS – Joint Dispatch
3. Growth Management / Parks and Recreation / Animal Control
4. Regional cooperation in seeking stimulus funds
5. Formalize the usage of our parks between Schools and Parks and Recreation
6. Charter review

While all of the Commission and staff will work even harder this year, I believe that we must make a stronger effort to receive citizen input. We want you to hold us accountable and question us and ask for common sense answers – not some "policy"! We're here to serve!

I wake up most mornings thinking I'm the luckiest guy in the world as I have been given the chance to serve the community that I love so much! I am optimistic about the year ahead and I thank you for your confidence in me. I hope you'll let me know about any upcoming meetings of your Neighborhood Boards or Associations as I would welcome the opportunity to join you in your meetings to better understand your concerns and receive your recommendations. As always, thank you for your continuing support and I'm honored to serve as your District IV Commissioner. I welcome your suggestions on how we can improve and hope you'll call on me if you have any questions or concerns – [deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov](mailto:deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov) or 606-5364.

Respectfully,



***Bryan Desloge***

Leon County Commissioner, District IV