



St. Lucie County

Legislative Update

Inside this issue:

SLC in Tallahassee	1
\$250 million	2
Redistricting	2
Budget	2

Our Mission....

To provide service, infrastructure and leadership necessary to advance a safe and sustainable community, maintain a high quality of life, and protect the natural environment for all our citizens.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY IN TALLAHASSEE

This past week the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners along with the Stuart/Martin, Indian River and St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce traveled to Tallahassee to help lobby for our State Legislative Program. The issues ranged from the Treasure Coast International Airport expansion to Tourism Development Tax.

The Board was able to enlist the help of Senators Joe Negron and Jack Latvala with their priorities pertaining to the Department of Juvenile Justice cost share and inmate medical costs, last year the County spent an estimated \$4.4 million in offsite medical care for inmates.

Highlights of the day included a breakfast with Commissioner Adam Putnam as well as a one on one meeting regarding the Treasure Coast Food Bank Initiative and continued funding for the University of Florida IFAS invasive plant research in Fort Pierce. The day was ended on a high note with a roundtable with Secretary Jim Boxold of the Florida Department of Transportation regarding transportation issues.

The Board will continue to monitor the Legislative Session as our delegation continues to work diligently on our behalf. Thank you to everyone who helped make this a successful week in Tallahassee.

St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners

Kim Johnson, Chair
District 5

Chris Dzadovsky,
Vice-Chair
District 1

Frannie Hutchinson
District 4

Paula A. Lewis
District 3

Tod Mowery
District 2

Howard Tipton
County Administrator



Click the links below



Watch Session Live:**Connect with
St. Lucie County!****Mark Satterlee**

Deputy County Administrator

Bob Adolphe

Deputy County Administrator

Nicole Fogarty

Legislative Affairs Manager

Mailing Address
2300 Virginia Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982

PHONE
(772) 462-1100

TDD
(772) 462-1428

FAX
(772) 462-2131

e-mail
fogartyn@stlucieco.org

website
www.stlucieco.gov

**SENATE PREPARED TO SPEND \$250 MILLION ON INCENTIVES**

The Senate is prepared to allocate \$250 million to a new economic incentive program proposed by Gov. Rick Scott, but a presentation state economists gave to a panel of lawmakers Thursday led to skepticism about the structure of the program.

House and Senate leaders this week gave "allocations" to their budget subcommittee chairs, when Senate President Andy Gardiner and budget chief Sen. Tom Lee, R-Orlando, said they were prepared to fully fund the governor's request.

But the state's chief economist Amy Baker told lawmakers during a workshop on the state's economic development programs earlier that day that the incentive plan would be unlikely to recoup its costs as proposed by Scott.

Her presentation said that by using a pay-as-you-go model the return on investment to the state would exceed its cost and the economy would produce over 900 more jobs.

That's because putting the funds in a reserve and paying them out as companies fulfill economic incentive deals, as the governor proposes, made the "initial expenditure unproductive."

"The analysis presented in committee today assumes companies will come to Florida with a pay-as-you-go model; they won't," Jackie Schutz, Gov. Scott's communications director, responded in a statement. "Businesses do not work on bureaucratic timelines and need certainty from the state, which pay-as-you go fails to do."

LEGAL BATTLE ON SENATE DISTRICTS COMING TO AN END

A contentious battle over Florida state senate districts is coming to an end.

The Florida Senate is not going to appeal a redistricting ruling handed down in December. Circuit Judge George Reynolds in that decision signed off on a map drawn by a coalition of voting rights groups.

This decision means that that Republicans could lose control of the state Senate. That's because the map chosen by Reynolds is split nearly evenly between GOP and Democratic-leaning districts and will likely create four South Florida seats that could be won by Hispanic candidates.

Senate President Andy Gardiner decided to accept the ruling after discussing the ruling with attorneys and Sen. Bill Galvano. Galvano said he concluded that it would not be "prudent" to pursue an appeal.

Voting rights groups back in 2012 sued over the existing Senate districts.

FLORIDA LEGISLATORS HAVE LESS MONEY TO SPEND

Florida legislators are going to have less money to spend in the coming year than they were planning on.

State economists met Tuesday to draw up new forecasts to predict how much the state will collect in taxes. The forecasts will be used by state legislators to draw up this year's budget. Economists predict the state's main budget account will only grow 2.1 percent during the fiscal year that ends in June. Those forecasts estimate growth of 4.4 percent in the 2016-17 fiscal year. These forecasts mean the state has about \$400 million less to spend. Back in September, economists predicted an overall budget surplus of \$635 million if legislators also increased spending on schools and health care.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott wants to cut taxes by \$1 billion.

"Governor Scott remains confident in his \$1 billion tax cut package because while updated REC numbers show that national economic factors have led to a projected forecast of a minor reduction of \$388.5 million, recent estimates also show that if the Legislature chooses to adopt the Seminole Compact the Governor signed, it would bring in \$2.3 billion over eight years," said Jackie Shutz, Scott's communications director, in a statement.