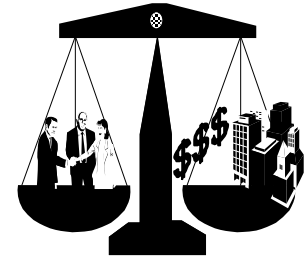


Citizens for Common Sense



Oct, 2009

Seeking government that is responsible and responsive to taxpayers in St. Joseph County, IN

Celebrate Option Tax Day: Pledge to Vote Them Out!

Effective October 1, the County Option Tax being taken out of your paychecks JUST DOUBLED. If you were one of the many citizens fighting this tax, you told your county elected officials that their own data showed they could balance their budget **WITHOUT** this tax increase. They had on-hand Rainy Day and CREDIT funds. Plus, Citizens for Common Sense showed at least two potential areas of savings adding up to millions,

But no, the tax was rammed through first by South Bend's Common Council (who, except for David Varner and Henry Davis, Jr., showed no regard for the pleas of county residents and who bought the Mayor's threats that police and fire would be cut even though Federal money for police showed up mere days later), and then by the County Council (whose Council members claimed they needed to represent city residents even though state law says they were supposed to be representing only county residents for this vote). **SO WHAT DO WE DO?**

MAKE SURE THESE COUNCILMEN DO NOT GET RE-ELECTED (*details inside!*)

Inside this issue:

Essays by local citizens:

- *Excerpts from "Post Mortem"*
by Stephen Leykauf
- *Spending Disasters*
by Greg Burkowski
- *Serving Up Pork*
by Tom Zmyslo, Sr.
- *Votes Bought and Paid For*
by Kelly Havens
- *Transpo Plans Don't Add Up*
by Charles Spiher
- *Where the Action Is*
by Barry Baumbaugh, Pres.

Tax Backlash RALLY

Thurs, Oct. 1, 2009 at 5:30pm

***County-City Building
South Bend, IN***

***This is the day our County Option Tax
DOUBLES
and this is the day we vow to
VOTE THEM OUT!***

Speakers! Leaflets! Bring Signs!

Excerpts from Post Mortem

by Stephen Leykauf

We can learn about the character of the South Bend Common Council, St. Joseph County Council, Mayor and Democrat Party Chair from a dissection of the recent local income tax hike. The antics of these bureaucrats to take millions of dollars from our economy during a recession speak volumes.

Wasn't this the same St. Joseph County Council that earlier this year expressed concern over guaranteeing a **living wage** for union workers during a hearing on the tax abatement ordinance? Now, a few months later, where is their concern for a **living income** for all income earners?

Strategies used to subjugate local taxpayers under an increased tax burden included:

Move Rapidly. Bureaucrats borrowed this strategy from [Art of the Scam](#). They gave the community less than three weeks to debate the merits of executing higher taxation in a dire economy. Moving rapidly is an almost-universal strategy employed by scammers

Incite Fear. Representations of large pending layoffs lacked any measure of subtlety. Local politicians understood only too well that fear helps rush citizens to make decisions void of wisdom and reason. And they pulled out all of the stops. Law enforcement, fire fighters, park employees, and educators were paraded in mock testimony in front of a council whose decisions had been formed days before the public hearings.

Project Blame. Local bureaucrats knew that projecting scorn on a scapegoat that was not present to defend itself would deflect focus away from an unpopular issue. That scapegoat would be the State of Indiana. But one remaining building block of strategy would be needed to "sell" citizens on jacking up their taxes:

Distort the Truth.

1. Local Democrats repeatedly bemoaned the loss of property taxes because of the State's caps. They lacked the integrity to call property taxes what they are: the biggest opportunity for taxpayer abuse through unequal tax caps, appraisal inconsistencies, and more. Local bureaucrats **did not want you to know** that our local property taxes have increased 450% from 1980 to 2005. Instead of praising the State for coming to the rescue of abused taxpayers, they chose to demonize the caps.

2. The South Bend Common Council's printed resolution for Bill 09-49, imposing a "property tax relief" local option income tax stated, "Nonetheless, the effect of this ordinance is beneficial to all St. Joseph County citizens who will have overall reduced property taxes." LOIT increases were not only not beneficial to all County citizens, they were harmful to most citizens.

3. The biggest misrepresentation of the truth, has been the framing of City and County intervention as "property tax relief". Local Democrat bureaucrats **do not want you to know** that the real reason for digging their hands deeper into your pocketbooks is government spending. The big emphasis was on "the shortfall" without considering the possibility of reducing spending. Citizens who have attended public meetings and hearings over recent months have heard a long list of irresponsible spending. This is a grab for your money to bail out careless government spending, masquerading under the guise of property tax relief.

4. At the South Bend Common Council July 13 public hearing, Mayor Luecke disputed that South Bend's population continues its long decline. Here are South Bend population figures according to wikipedia.com and roadsidethoughts.com/in/south-bend.htm:

1960	132,445
1970	125,850
1980	109,727
1990	105,511
2005	104,743
2007	104,069

South Bend's Mayor **does not want you to know** that the City is dying, and wants to use your money to engage in incompetent stewardship of public funds.

5. South Bend Councilman Timothy Rouse told those in July 13 attendance "This City is carrying the County. Many of you have been riding on the back of the City." The opposite is arguably more true! St. Joe County has been -- and will continue to be -- required to subsidize South Bend government mismanagement. Six members of the South Bend Common Council **do not want you to know** that the City is on life support, and the County is supplying that support.

6. Eleven of the eighteen South Bend and St Joseph County council members **do not want you to know** that they believe they can make better use of your money than you can. They think it is more important for the City to fund losing projects than it is for you to pay your home mortgage or put food on your table. That is why they voted for higher taxes during a period of economic distress. They borrowed from Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm's playbook. She vaulted her state to the nation's highest unemployment by hitting industry with a tax when they were down, forcing widespread business failure and massive job loss. The eleven council members **did not want you to know** that they believe putting more Michiana citizens on unemployment is an acceptable cost to enable confiscating your money to throw at a dying city.

7. St. Joseph County Council President Rafael Morton was interviewed on a July 14 radio program. The interviewer asked him why outlying communities such as Osceola and others should pay for South Bend's inability to pay their bills. Morton said that he would venture to guess that people from those areas have occasion to visit the larger metro areas, and as such, they should support the infrastructure, because after all, "We are just one large community." Oh really? Morton **does not want you to know** that we have three separate policing agencies, several separate fire agencies, and several town-governing bodies that are also distinct and separate, yet the deck had been stacked such that all five of the County councilmen who voted in favor of increasing local income taxes live in South Bend and therefore have a "Conflict of Interest" whenever voting on matters materially benefiting the City, and that over 250,000 countywide residents – over 60% of them disenfranchised from voting for or against South Bend officials – are being forced to subsidize South Bend.

All citizens need to ask themselves, "Why did local Democrat officials feel led to skew the truth in selling the need for a tax increase now? Are they habitual liars, or was this a one-time effort to misrepresent the facts? Our Democrat officials -- can we really trust them?"

"If it quacks like a duck, and waddles like a duck, it's probably a duck."

How can the public reasonably expect any progress in mitigating the rampant crime ravaging South Bend, when the behavior of a majority of our public officials has approached criminal level? Our local politicians demonstrate repeatedly that they have no concept of the meaning of "Conflict of Interest". Two of the Councilmen voting on a Public Safety Tax were firefighters, and another was a police officer. How is this NOT a conflict of interest? One of our State representatives also works as an administrator at Ivy Tech which receives state funding. The Democrat Party Chairman is also an executive at a local engineering company who receives the bulk of the City's and County's contracts

"Follow the money."

If the St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce would take business metrics more seriously, they would see that crime represents the third largest business segment in St. Joseph County, trailing only Education and Medical. South Bend has a \$25 million budget for law enforcement. Add to that large sum, the amount the County spends for law enforcement, the Juvenile Justice Center complex, the new County jail and the courts.

The truth is that both the City and key Democrats benefit from maintaining a high level of crime in South Bend so they can keep building new criminal justice buildings and staffing them with more and more patronage jobs.. This begs the question, "What possible motivation could those governing South Bend have in working to reduce crime?" Does everyone understand that the over \$25 million the City spends every year goes merely to manage and maintain local crime? Ask any City or County official about what is being done to **reduce** crime and you will get a deer-in-the-headlights look.

So there you have it. The following eleven South Bend and St. Joseph County Democrat officials are in favor of driving increasing numbers of local residents into poverty in order to please Chairman Butch Morgan and Mayor Luecke, while the City maintains a thriving crime wave:

South Bend Council

**Derek Dieter
Ann Puzzello
Oliver Davis
Timothy Rouse
Al Kirsits
Karen White**

St. Joseph County Council

**Rafael Morton
Heath Weaver
Michael Kruk
Randall Przybysz
Mark Catanzarite**

South Bend and St. Joseph County taxpayers have been unwitting targets of a misinformation campaign. It's time to get out and vote against the officials who were so eager to confiscate the community's resources.

Elections 2010

City and County Council members are up for re-election as follows:

2010 Randy Przybysz -- County Council, Dist. A – *voted FOR the tax*
Corey Noland -- County Council, Dist. B – *new, no comment on No vote*
Dale DeVon -- County Council, Dist. C – *voted AGAINST the tax*
Mark Catanzarite -- County Council, Dist. G – *voted FOR the tax*
Heath Weaver – County Council, Dist. H – *voted FOR the tax*

2011 Mayor Luecke and all members of the South Bend Common Council

Current Spending Policies Leading to Disaster

by Greg Burkowski

This summer the South Bend Common Council and the St. Joseph County Council enacted an additional .95% income tax on all residents of St. Joseph County. There have been statements made by the Mayor that have led me to believe that Mayor Luecke pleaded for these taxes in bad faith. I am convinced that the city administration has not done everything it can to reduce the cost of government. The County Council also deserves thanks for our current poor financial situation. Between the City and the County the prospects for our future are bleak.

First, if the City of South Bend was so cash strapped that new taxes were essential, why does the City continue to offer its employees a 90/10 health insurance plan at a low premium when the private sector has made 80/20 or even 70/30 plans the norm because of costs? Why is the City contributing \$500 per employee (over \$600,000 total) to a cafeteria plan for planned medical expenses when most private sector companies don't make any?

Why has the Mayor announced a new position of Energy Secretary whose duties would be to secure grants for energy savings and explore new ways to save money on energy? Why aren't these tasks already being performed in house by someone already on the payroll?

Why is the City trying to push through a 5-acre building on a 20-acre site in the new Ignition Park for Transpo when they could more easily add on to their existing structure at their present location and downsize their buses to better reflect the amount of people riding the bus? I am sure some sort of deal could be reached to purchase the vacant property next door cheaper than building a complete new facility, and that would be preferable to having two vacant properties in that neighborhood.

I know the income to the city is low and expenses are high. The expenses part is what I take issue with. It is not a secret that the population of the city has declined steadily since its peak of 132,445 in 1960. And that is in spite of the city annexing more area since that time. It's also no secret that the size of city government (number of employees) has increased even though the population and tax base has been decreasing steadily. Since 1990, the city budget has increased at a rate of nearly three times the rate of inflation.

It is also no secret that the city has been buying real estate like it was playing Monopoly. South Bend has bought four tax-paying businesses that were a nuisance for an amount in excess of \$1 million and then demolished them. Those properties remain undeveloped and do not contribute to the tax base. The City also purchased the former Gates/Sears property for over \$1 million to develop for the baseball stadium and paid an additional \$400K to demolish. But nothing is being done with it yet, so it is not contributing to the tax base.

Then after years of this spending spree the Mayor had the nerve to say that he needed more income or he'd be forced to make draconian cuts to public safety? I would like to point out that police and fire are the very services that the city is required by law to provide to its residents.

When the last mayoral campaign was in full swing, the Mayor pledged that he would cut loose some of the TIF funds to cover budget shortfalls in the General Fund if necessary. The fact that 40% of the city is in a TIF district tells me that South Bend isn't far from being the dying town that nobody wants to live in. And sadly, much of the TIF districts are residential districts. No other towns that were used in the media's comparison had nearly as much of their corporate boundaries on a percentage basis in TIF's. Perhaps it is time to scale back TIF's until such time as it is more affordable. But I have yet to hear any offers of this sort come out of the Mayor. If he has one ounce of integrity he would keep his promise even if it means eliminating the TIF's altogether for a few years.

At the earlier option tax hearing in December, the Mayor also said that he would lobby the state legislature for ways to generate revenue that wouldn't directly tax residents, such as increased Hotel/Motel Taxes or an event tax on big events such as Notre Dame games. This summer when the tax was finally enacted, both Councils tried to lay the blame for the option taxes on the State for never giving them the alternative of enacting those other taxes. However, I researched the intervening session of the legislature, and nothing was ever even introduced. Either Pat Bauer, David Niezgodski, et al, turned a deaf ear to the plight of their constituents, or the Mayor never asked.

These are but a few of the reasons that I believe that the mayor and 6 members of the Common Council enacted this tax in bad faith. The problems in South Bend are not the result of insufficient revenue, but the misappropriation of the existing revenues. If the current trend continues, we shall see conditions in the South Bend metro area deteriorate to the point that they are worse than Detroit's.

And to our County officials, I would like to say thank you for once again putting your hands a little deeper into my wallet and helping yourself. You are probably right that I would spend it on something stupid like food or shelter.

I would also like to give you my thanks that our income tax rates are lowering the value of my home (except for assessed value purposes for property taxes, of course).

I am also thankful for your new abatement ordinance that will ensure that no gainful employment for the masses will ever locate in St. Joseph County. It is very stimulating to the economy when I have to rebuild or replace my daily transportation vehicle every 4 or 5 years because I can't find gainful employment in St. Joseph County.

I am thankful for the Wheel Tax enacted 4 years ago for road construction and maintenance when it is becoming increasingly clear that some of that money is going for purposes other than those for which it was intended. That one made sure that we all drive older vehicles that are not as fuel efficient and pollute more because we can no longer afford to license a newer vehicle. And have I thanked you for doing less snow removal in the winter months that the Wheel Tax was supposed to help cover?

Tangentially, have I thanked you for the unlimited and unchecked spending by the Airport Authority? It's nice to know that we now have an airport with runways long enough for B-52's to use and no airlines interested in serving a smaller market like South Bend. And of course, I thank you for the unchecked spending by the Library Board. Due to the lack of supervision and fiscal discipline, they have overspent to the point of needing to cut hours and expenses. But if hours are cut too much, will patrons continue to use the facilities? And if patronage declines, can we really justify any more spending and expansion?

Lastly, I thank you for a county government and budget that has grown at a rate of triple that of inflation in a stagnant population growth cycle. This has as much impact as any other factor upon the low standard of living in the metro area.

If it sounds as if I'm a little upset with your recent actions and policies, it's because I am. I am angry that St. Joseph County compares unfavorably to counties of comparable size and ethnic composition. When you compare St. Joseph County to Allen, Elkhart, Vanderburgh, and Clark counties in Indiana and Kent County in Michigan, we have a larger percentile of population living below the poverty level, lower median income, lower property values, and lower per capita income than those counties. These bad comparisons are all reflected in how the counties are governed and the policies and laws that are enacted by the governments of the respective counties.

I witness no leadership on our County Council to begin preparing for the future. That future is going to be even leaner than now and the majority of you are only concerned with doing just enough to remain in favor with the party chairman and party faithful rather what is for the common long term good of the County. That may keep you in office a little longer, but not too far into the future at the current pace, you'll have very little left to govern.

To the people of South Bend and St. Joseph County, don't you think we have given these elected officials long enough? It is my sincerest hope that we finally take notice of this misappropriation of funds and hold our elected officials accountable -- or find others who will do the job.

Serving Up Pork

by Thomas Zmyslo, Sr.

(reprinted from the Tribune with permission of author)

To use stimulus money for Portage Prairie for a fourth interchange in a three-mile strip of bypass for a private developer is surely a pork-barrel project. I do not think that our president had this in mind when he said he wanted a stimulus package to create jobs and rebuild America.

I am sure that St. Joseph County and the city of South Bend could use this \$20 million in better ways. It could be used to rebuild infrastructure such as roads, bridges, curbs, sidewalks, sewers, water lines, electric grid, and to produce solar and wind power.

The Nimtz Parkway interchange was put in for Blackthorn Industrial Park years ago and has very little use. The Blackthorn development has not turned out to be a very good economic development project, and Portage Prairie, with the economy the way it is, could also be doomed.

The residents of St. Joe County should ask our congressional representatives to stop the use of stimulus money or any grants to fund the Adams Road interchange. The decision on this funding could come as early as this fall. I ask all elected officials to stop spending tax dollars on unneeded pork.

Votes Bought and Paid For

by Kelly Havens

One of the most severe violations of the public trust is succumbing to paid influence by special interests. Clearly, it is the right of any group to advocate for its point of view. It is also the right of any group, within campaign limits, to contribute to the election of candidates. What gets tricky is when an elected official is receiving a salary from a special interest or their campaign funding comes exclusively from a special interest. Legalities blur. Conflict of interest becomes an issue for public review.

During the recent option tax votes, there were two firefighters and a police officer sitting on the Councils voting whether or not to enact a tax for Public Safety. All three claimed they had no conflict of interest because they had disclosed their employment. How does disclosing a potential conflict somehow eliminate the conflict?

Similarly, during the County's vote on the tax abatement ordinance, which required union-scale wages for any business seeking a 10-year abatement to build in this county, there were Council members whose campaign contributions came 90% from the construction unions. How is this right? And do we really want to keep these people on these councils?

Transpo Plans Don't Add Up

by Charles Spiher

(reprinted from the Tribune with permission of author)

Three things boys learn before age 9: You can't put a pig on a diet. You can't teach a fish to whistle. You can't teach math to a skunk.

The South Bend Transportation Corporation plans to buy, from the city of South Bend, 21.6 acres in Ignition Park (once known as the Studebaker Corridor) for \$648,000. This translates to \$30,000 per acre, a princely sum indeed, for property which no one has expressed interest in for four decades. That, however, is only an appetizer.

Transpo then plans to build a 165,000-square-foot facility at a cost estimate of \$17 million to maintain and house its fleet of 65 buses that serve 200 miles of public transportation routes. That translates to \$94,180 per mile of route and does not include the following:

- * The purchase price of the buses.
- * Maintenance of the fleet.
- * Diesel fuel to make them run.
- * Bus driver salaries and benefits.

The politically appointed nine-member board has provided the main course above. The public may wish to ask these rhetorical questions:

* Unless you exist in an odor-free vacuum, aren't we in the midst of the most drastic economic malaise since the Great Depression?

* Is ridership in the Transpo system growing at an exponential rate, creating so a great a need to expand that it requires nearly the same expenditure to build a facility, a sum equal to the proposed deficit of an ailing city now on life support?

* Any reason why Transpo cannot secure additional space adjacent to the west of the existing facility where 12 acres lie vacant since abandonment by Sollitt Construction eight years ago, at a fractional cost to our community?

* Is there a difference between this board's action, i.e., the inability to distinguish between a want and a need, and the global financial abyss we have created? When do we stop spending what we don't have, for things we don't need?

One cannot make this up. This is not the Home Shopping Network. Read any legitimate newspaper or turn your TV to any station, aside from paid programming, to discover there is no light at the end of the tunnel. If you can hear the sound of the toilet flushing in a city with a declining population, a shrinking tax base and no plan for the future, why would you invest \$17 million to erect a building that serves less than 3 percent of the residents? When the costs of the building and operation of the buses are added together, it might be less costly to provide each rider with a free car!

Be aware that I am a strong advocate for public transportation. I take the bus. I recognize it serves the lower economic strata and must be preserved. But why do we insist on last century's model; enormous diesel-sucking buses traversing the city, always near empty, perpetuated by a fat-cat political board bent on yesterday's failed policy?

This isn't about a sappy cliché, thinking outside the box, or even inside the box. Look, there isn't a box. It's about thinking. Before I'm told that funding will come from a combination of federal funds, state funds, wheel taxes, excise taxes, Major Moves, bond issues, yada yada, and it isn't really going to cost us anything, let me remind you: it is all public, not private, money. Our money. You, the reader, and I are paying for this pipe dream, an unnecessary fantasy. Why allow this malignancy to grow?

Listen, we can adapt to an efficient dial-a-ride system utilizing 18-passenger vans equipped with on-board computers and GPS. The technology is here. Now. Today. If we follow the strategy of forward-thinking cities, cities who have not allowed themselves to atrophy into a monolithic fog bent on further decay.

Time for the critics to take aim. However, prior to killing the messenger, consider the basic arithmetic: an unneeded building covering three-plus acres surrounded by 18 acres of paving and landscaping. This is equal to 13 football fields. Deep in the end zone, fourth down, your financial future in peril, would you Hail Mary or punt?

Rethinking Redistricting

Secretary of State Todd Rokita has spoken out, calling for a reform in the way we will redistrict our state after the 2010 census. Too many times in the past, districts have been gerrymandered by partisans looking to lock in candidates from their party. Secretary Rokita's approach would prohibit this, **but it is up to US to make it happen!** Check out:

www.rethinkingredistricting.com

And when it's time for St. Joe County to redo its County Council Districts, we need to be especially vigilant. This is supposed to be conducted by VOTER REGISTRATION (not some single party official). How about public meetings along the way? Full transparency! It's a year off, but plans need to be made now. Stay tuned and keep watch!

CONTACT INFO

Joe Donnelly	U.S. Rep.	574-288-2780	http://donnelly.house.gov/contact
Evan Bayh	U.S. Senator	574-236-8302	http://bayh.senate.gov/contact
Richard Lugar	U.S. Senator	317-226-5555	http://lugar.senate.gov/contact

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY COUNCIL

(Send one e-mail to all nine at cocouncil@co.st-joseph.in.us)

Randall Przybysz 1318 Canterbury Dr. S.B., IN 46628 282-1000	Corey Noland 19024 Glendale Ave.. S.B., IN 46637 273-0603	Dale DeVon 7415 Toscana Ct. Granger, IN 46530 271-0686
Rafael Morton 325 N Studebaker S.B., IN 46628 232-7190	Michael Kruk 449 S. Phillipa St. S.B., IN 46619 288-7504	Dennis Schafer 65300 Maple Rd. Lakeville, IN 46536 784-8285 (local call)
Mark Catanzarite 2022 Oak Park Dr. S.B., IN 46617 232-9112	Heath Weaver 1701 E. Wayne St. S.B., IN 46615 233-9323	Mark Root 10737 Chelsea Dr. Osceola, IN 46561 674-9125

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County Commissioners Andy Kostielney, Dave Thomas, and Bob Kovach

227 W. Jefferson South Bend, IN 46601	235-9534 pag@co.st-joseph.in.us
--	--

SOUTH BEND COMMON COUNCIL

Derek Dieter 4903 Starboard Dr. S.B., IN 46628 243-5657 ddieter@southbendin.gov	Henry Davis, Jr. 5117 Idlewood Dr. S.B., IN 46619 235-5983 hdavis@southbendin.gov	Thomas LaFountain 1224 Longfellow S.B., IN 46615 289-9862 tlafount@southbendin.gov
Ann Puzzello 1247 East LaSalle S.B., IN 46617 234-1834 apuzzello@southbendin.gov	David Varner 1306 Clayton Dr. S.B., IN 46614 291-1798 dvarner@southbendin.gov	Oliver Davis 1801 S. Nash St. S.B., IN 46613 288-4523 odavis@southbendin.gov
Timothy Rouse 605 N. Cherry Tree Ln. S.B., IN 46617 233-4049 trouse@southbendin.gov	Al "Buddy" Kirsits 722 Marquette Ave. S.B., IN 46617 287-6529 akirsits@southbendin.gov	Karen White 1912 Malvern Way S.B., IN 46614 289-5765 kwhite@southbendin.gov

SOUTH BEND MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor Stephen Luecke

227 W. Jefferson, Suite 1400 South Bend, IN 46601	235-9261 custserv@southbendin.gov
--	--

SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE

Voice of the People / South Bend Tribune / 225 W. Colfax Ave. / S.B., IN 46626 / vop@sbtinfo.com

Citizens for Common Sense, Inc. / PO Box 226 / Granger, IN 46530 / Kelly Havens – Sec'y-Treas. / 272-7606 / www.citizensforcommonsense.info

Where the Action Is

by Barry Baumbaugh, *President of Citizens for Common Sense, Inc*

Fellow local government watchdogs, in the last few months much has happened locally and it reminds us to remain vigilant. But while Common Sense has largely focused on county issues, we must look outward as well.

First, let me thank all of you who recently joined us. It takes more and more of us, as the government expands, to watch what is going on and share the information. And I thank all who spoke at the option tax hearings. It takes courage to publically speak your mind, especially when the council is questioning you. But our work is not over...

Now that the tax has doubled, local spending is back in full swing. After telling us how broke they would be, even if the tax passed, the mayor is *adding* police and an "energy czar." Never mind that this czar and his assistants will likely cost more than will ever be saved in energy. This is politics as usual, and can only be changed at the polls.

But we must also look beyond our county. Why? Because the federal government uses its power to push issues that we ultimately pay for locally. South Bend's new energy czar is a classic example. The feds put up \$250,000 to pay for the first three years; after that the cost falls on the city. Other examples are projects built using "matching" funds. If the local government coughs up 20%, the feds will hand them 80%. It's not "free" money; it all comes out of our pockets! The stimulus package is full of such pork, ever expanding the local political machine.

For this reason we can no longer treat local, state, and national issues as if they were not interconnected. The good news is that many have already figured this out, hence the Tea-Party movement. Across the nation millions of Americans have had enough. Fox News is soaring in the ratings. The health bill is in the dumpster. People are seeing that the federal government has become as intrusive as our local one.

In my twenty-plus years of being active in local issues, I have never been so optimistic about our chances of success in the upcoming elections. We can put politicians in office who are not only aware of our constitution, but may actually have read it! You may wonder with all the taxing and spending, how I can be so optimistic. The answer is simple: people are watching. You, the people, have decided it is more important to get out and speak up than to sit at home and watch TV.

Just a few weeks ago on September 12, 75 to 100 of you came to downtown South Bend at kick off time for our own 9/12 Tea-Party protest. My heart swelled with pride in all of you as I watched this peaceful crowd let everyone nearby know it is time to end the over-reaching arm of government and get back to the words our founders signed onto 222 years ago. It is time we take our country back from the nanny state we have created, and for all of us to get -- and STAY -- involved.

Folks, now is the time to renew our commitment to putting good people in office. This isn't about one party over another. Both parties have let us down. This is about looking carefully at each candidate, and voting accordingly. And it is time to go to all these "town hall" meetings, and ask the tough questions.

I am psyched about the way so many are getting involved, I now have hope that our children can be left with a country not only as good as ours, but better. We can take them with us to rallies and get them involved early so they won't face the same problems we face. We can explain to them how government works. (They don't always this in school!). We can do this, people, as long as we keep up the pace. I look forward to seeing all of you at upcoming events, some of which you will hear about in this newsletter. **WE ARE WINNING.** Keep up the good work!



Vote Nov. 3 to Block New Transit Tax!

A special election will be held in our county on Nov. 3 because State Rep, Pat Bauer thought we and three other counties ought to form a new regional transport district to fund things like South Shore rail expansions and city bus systems (except Transpo). Lake and Porter counties are taking the state to court over it. St. Joe County estimates a cost of \$30,000-\$40,000 for this vote in an off year.

People, do we want another tax? This District would be set up explicitly to impose another .25% option income tax on the residents of St. Joe County. Shouldn't South Shore expansions be funded by its commuters? And why should we pay for bus systems in Lake and Porter counties? Rumor has it that even the local Democratic leadership did not like this election until Pat Bauer "explained it" to them.

If you don't like this idea, you need to grab your friends, neighbors, and relatives who live in St. Joe County and show up at the polls on **November 3!**

The one item on the ballot will be this question:

"Shall there be created the Northern Indiana Regional Transportation District under IC 8-24 to provide a regional rail system serving Lake, Porter, LaPorte and St. Joseph counties, and regional bus public transport system serving Lake and Porter counties, with St. Joseph County becoming a member of the district." Yes No

And: Watch for announcements on WHERE to vote! To save money (on an election that should not be happening), we will only be using some 20 polling places. **Find your one-time pooled polling place and make sure you can get there and vote!**