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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reports Showing State's Highest-Paid Vendors Added to Transparency Website

Columbia, S.C. – If you are curious about which companies receive the most business from South Carolina state government, Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom's Fiscal Transparency Website now provides the answer in a new user-friendly format. The Transparency Website is accessible at www.cg.sc.gov.

Eckstrom's office recently added searchable, downloadable Microsoft Excel reports to the site showing annual payment totals to all vendors that received $1,000 or more in a year. The reports – for fiscal years 2014, 2013 and 2012 – are available at: http://www.cg.sc.gov/fiscaltransparency/Pages/hightestpaidvendors.aspx.

From large health care providers and road construction contractors to small mom-and-pop shops, the reports provide a quick and easy way to see which firms receive the most tax dollars through their business dealings with state government.

"These reports give South Carolina taxpayers, reporters and everyone else valuable information about the state's business relationships," Eckstrom says. "The payment totals can be used to make comparisons and conduct research, providing greater transparency in this important area of public spending."

In another improvement to the Transparency Website, Eckstrom's office also recently added a link to flight logs and manifests maintained by the S.C. Aeronautics Commission. The logs and manifests provide the names of passengers and their justification for flying on state-owned airplanes.

"We'll continue working to make government more transparent," Eckstrom says. "Our approaches are always evolving. We'll constantly attempt to keep pace with requests and with developing technology. Today's best practices in transparency are far more advanced than when we first introduced the site in 2008."

Eckstrom encourages site visitors to provide feedback and make suggestions on how to improve the site. Typical visitors include citizens monitoring spending by their city and county councils and local school districts, and reporters and students conducting research.

A convenient way to provide feedback is through a Citizen Input feature available through the Contact Information link at the top of the comptroller general's website.

Unlike transparency websites in many states, the S.C. Comptroller's Office receives no additional funding to provide and maintain this site, choosing instead to use existing staff and resources.

In addition to advising other government units on ways to improve financial transparency, Eckstrom's office monitors spending by state agencies as a safeguard against them overspending their budgets, and his office processes vendor invoices on their behalf. It also processes payrolls for state employees.

Eckstrom is the first certified public accountant to serve as South Carolina's comptroller general.

For more information please contact Eric Ward, public information director, at 803-734-2538; 803-206-6293 or eward@cg.sc.gov.

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