State of South Carolina
Office of the Comptroller General

1200 Senate Street
305 Wade Hampton Office Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Telephone: (803) 734-2121
Fax: (803) 734-1765
E-Mail: cgoffice@cg.sc.gov

RICHARD ECKSTROM, CPA
COMPTROLLER GENERAL

WILLIAM E. GUNN
CHIEF OF STAFF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eckstrom Adds 'Outside the Box' Information to SC Fiscal Transparency Website

Columbia, S.C. – In an effort to continue enhancing government transparency in South Carolina, state Controller Richard Eckstrom's office has added new public interest information to the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website. This additional information goes beyond the website's existing disclosures, which focus primarily on expenditures by state agencies.

Included among this new information is a summary of how proceeds generated by the S.C. Education Lottery have been distributed; a website that tracks the individual support of federal program spending by each member of Congress; and links to information on entities that use lobbyists to influence state legislation and campaign contributions made to political office-seekers.

All of this information is accessible through a new portal on the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website called "Looking Outside the Box" (http://bit.ly/2sjyfpY).

"What we're trying to do with this new feature is go beyond my office's traditional record keeping duties in order to alert citizens to a broader array of information about government finances," Eckstrom says. "There's a lot of material out there that's not processed through the statewide accounting system my office operates. Because that information impacts people's lives, we've gone to other sources to obtain it and then make it available on a single convenient website."

Eckstrom encourages members of the public and the media to make use of the Transparency Website and provide him feedback on how the site could be improved.

An easy way to provide feedback is a "citizen input" link (http://bit.ly/2sxXXJz) on the "Contact Information" page (http://bit.ly/2sHigVs) found on the comptroller general's website (http://bit.ly/2sxBfRK).

Eckstrom spearheaded creation of the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website in early 2008. It was one of the first financial transparency sites in the country.

Since then he has continued to work with his staff to hone the site to expand its offerings and keep pace with emerging best practices in government financial transparency. "This is a never-ending challenge, because the public's expectations and the possibilities of technology are always increasing," he says.

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

In addition to advising other government entities on ways to provide better financial transparency, Eckstrom's office is responsible for monitoring expenditures by state agencies as a safeguard against them overspending their budgets, and it processes payments of vendor invoices on their behalf. His office also processes the statewide semi-monthly payroll.

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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