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State Entities Spent $81.1 Million on Travel in 2016

Columbia, S.C. – State entities spent a total of $81.1 million on travel during the fiscal year that ended June 30, S.C. Controller Richard Eckstrom announced in issuing the 2016 State Travel Report. This year's travel spending increased $5.6 million (a 7.4 percent increase) over the $75.5 million that state entities spent in 2015, while the state's general fund revenues increased by only 4.5 percent from last year.

Compiling and reporting statewide travel expenditures is part of Eckstrom's commitment to increasing government's financial transparency in South Carolina.

The Travel Report details all travel-related expenditures, including amounts paid for conference registration fees, by all agencies that received money in the state's 2016 budget. It separately identifies in-state travel and out-of-state travel for each agency. It also ranks all agencies in descending order based on their total travel spending, and it identifies and ranks the top 25 travel spenders in each agency.

According to Eckstrom, "Producing this report is one way to shine light on a governmental activity that ought to be frequently examined to ensure that travel is necessary, reasonable, and serves a legitimate public purpose. Government serves the best interests of taxpayers by limiting travel to only the essentials. All agencies need to consider the actual benefit they receive when spending public money on travel and then weigh that benefit against the cost."

The 2016 State Travel Report can be downloaded from the Comptroller General's Office website at: http://www.cg.sc.gov/publicationsandreports/Pages/travelreports.aspx. Travel reports dating back to fiscal 2004 are available at that link.

For more on how state and local entities spend taxpayer money, visit the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website, which Eckstrom's office launched in 2008: http://www.cg.sc.gov/fiscaltransparency/Pages/default.aspx.

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