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Eckstrom Unveils SC Transparency Website Improvements

Columbia, S.C. – In a realm of open government that's always evolving, state Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom's Office has added several features to the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website his agency operates.

The additions include a page to help users navigate a wealth of information available on state contracts through the Budget and Control Board's Procurement Services Division, which oversees this vast and vital state function.

Another new component – in the form of two searchable, downloadable Excel reports – provides user-friendly information in an area where South Carolina lacks greater transparency – state economic development spending. The two reports list state grants for economic development and projects approved for state job development tax credits.

Eckstrom's office compiled the reports using the latest information publicly available.

For a complete rundown of the Transparency Website upgrades click here.

"As we explain on the site regarding these improvements, our commitment to providing meaningful government transparency is always evolving and requiring constant effort to keep up with the latest developments," Eckstrom says. "Indeed, today's best practices in transparency are far more demanding than when we launched the site in March 2008."

Eckstrom encourages visitors to the site, be they citizens monitoring spending by their city and county councils or reporters conducting research projects, to provide feedback about their experiences using the site and suggestions on how it could be improved.

An easy way to do so is through a convenient Citizen Input form accessible through the Contact Information page of the office's website.

"We will continue to improve the Transparency Website and look for ways to make government in South Carolina more transparent at all levels," Eckstrom says. "It's a challenge that never ends."

Unlike transparency websites in many states, the S.C. Comptroller's Office has not expended any additional taxpayer dollars to provide and maintain this site, relying instead on existing, in-house staff time and resources.

In addition to advising government units on ways to become financially transparent, Eckstrom's office monitors the spending and pays invoices on behalf of state agencies. The agency also processes bimonthly payrolls for nearly 45,000 state employees, issuing them W-2s each year to file their tax returns.

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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