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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Spending Records Available Online to Nearly Two-Thirds of SC Residents

Columbia, S.C. – With Fairfield County government recently implementing online spending transparency, nearly two-thirds of South Carolina residents have ready access to expenditure data from their home counties, according to an analysis by S.C. Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom's Office.

Fairfield County Administrator Milton Pope said, "We are pleased to offer the County's public finance documents on-line for easy citizen retrieval and link to the SC Comptroller's Office to join other agencies in their support and promotion of transparency."

Fifteen of South Carolina's 46 counties voluntarily post their check registers on their websites, including many of the state's most densely populated counties, namely Charleston, Greenville, Horry, Richland and Spartanburg counties.

More than 2.8 million people live in the 15 counties combined – roughly 61.2 percent of the state's 4.62 million population in 2010, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures. (For more on these numbers, please see the table below.)

Fairfield County is the most recent county to begin posting online its monthly vendor payment files (http://www.fairfieldsc.com/secondary.aspx?pageID=361).

Eckstrom's office maintains a consolidated transparency website that includes spending data voluntarily provided by local governments in the Palmetto State. This S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website is located at: http://www.cg.sc.gov/fiscaltransparency/Pages/default.aspx.

In addition to including 15 counties, the section of the website providing the monthly spending detail of local governments also includes 20 municipalities and every school district in the state.

Eckstrom's office has worked with the South Carolina Association of Counties and the Municipal Association of South Carolina to increase access to local government transparency for South Carolinians.

"I encourage all levels of government to provide this information," Eckstrom says. "Besides its obvious benefits to taxpayers and other interested parties like the media, transparent government spending is becoming the expected standard rather than the leading-edge initiative it was just a few years ago."

When Eckstrom launched the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website for state agencies in March 2008, few states provided spending information online. Today, virtually all states do.

Eckstrom says his office is available to help local governments wanting to provide Internet-based spending transparency with technical assistance or website capacity. "We can provide free guidance for any county or municipality wanting to provide spending transparency on its own website, or we can make available a complimentary separate page on ours for that purpose," he says.

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. It 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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County	Transparency?	2010 Population	2010 Population
Abbeville County			25,417
Aiken County	Yes	160,099	160,099
Allendale County			10,419
Anderson County	Yes	187,126	187,126
Bamberg County			15,987
Barnwell County			22,621
Beaufort County	Yes	162,233	162,233
Berkeley County	Yes	177,843	177,843
Calhoun County			15,175
Charleston County	Yes	350,209	350,209
Cherokee County			55,342
Chester County			33,140
Chesterfield County			46,734
Clarendon County	Yes	34,971	34,971
Colleton County			38,892
Darlington County			68,681
Dillon County			32,062
Dorchester County	Yes	136,555	136,555
Edgefield County	Yes	26,985	26,985
Fairfield County	Yes	23,956	23,956
Florence County			136,885
Georgetown County			60,158
Greenville County	Yes	451,225	451,225
Greenwood County			69,661
Hampton County			21,090
Horry County	Yes	269,291	269,291
Jasper County			24,777
Kershaw County	Yes	61,697	61,697
Lancaster County			76,652
Laurens County			66,537
Lee County			19,220
Lexington County			262,391
McCormick County			10,233
Marion County			33,062
Marlboro County			28,933
Newberry County			37,508
Oconee County			74,273
Orangeburg County			92,501
Pickens County	Yes	119,224	119,224
Richland County	Yes	384,504	384,504
Saluda County			19,875
Spartanburg County	Yes	284,307	284,307
Sumter County			107,456

Union County			28,961
Williamsburg County			34,423
York County			226,073
Totals	**15 of 46** **32.6 Percent**	**2,830,225** **61.189 Percent**	**4,625,364**

Click here for source (2010 census)