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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Eckstrom Unveils SC Transparency Website Changes

Columbia, S.C. – In his ongoing effort to make government more open and accountable, state Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom's Office has added helpful features to the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website, which is accessible at www.cg.sc.gov.

The additions include more convenient search features within the state spending database. One new feature allows users to search and view all payments to any vendor across the entire state. Previously such a search could be performed only agency by agency rather than in a single statewide search of all agencies at once.

Another new feature allows users to examine each agency's annual spending by major categories such as personal services, contracted services, office supplies, travel, and many others.

A third new feature is a summary page to explain and simplify comprehensive information on state contracts provided online by the Budget and Control Board's Procurement Services Division. The new summary page is a road map and provides concise explanations to help users navigate existing online reports on state contracts that can seem unclear to occasional users.

Click here for a complete rundown of our Transparency Website enhancements.

"We'll never stand still in our efforts to make government more transparent," Eckstrom says. "Our approaches are always evolving. We'll constantly work to keep pace with requests and with developing technology. Today's best practices in transparency are far more advanced than when we rolled out the first site in 2008."

Eckstrom encourages site visitors to provide feedback and make suggestions on how the site could be improved. Typical site visitors include citizens monitoring spending by their city and county councils and reporters and students conducting research.

A convenient way for providing feedback is through a Citizen Input feature accessible through the contact information link at the top of the comptroller general's website.

"We'll continue to improve the Transparency Website and always seek 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 received no additional funding to provide and maintain this site, choosing instead to draw on its existing staff and resources.

In addition to advising 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 bimonthly payrolls for 45,000 state employees and issues them W-2s for filing 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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