

# CAPITOL UPDATE

WEEK 5 | MARCH 30 – APRIL 3, 2009

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>ECONOMIZING LEGAL ADVERTISING AND NOTICES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LEGISLATURE ADDRESSES “DOUBLE DIPPING”</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OF NOTE...</b>	<b>2</b>



## COMMITTEES FORM BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Florida House and Senate appropriations committees met to craft their individual spending recommendations that would be unified into omnibus budget and implementing bills. Both chambers call for increased fees and other revenue sources such as increased license tag fees, along with federal stimulus money, to plug an anticipated \$6 billion deficit.

SB's 7072 and 7074 are the Senate's budget and implementation bills. It features a six percent pay cut for legislators,

and a one percent pay cut for all state employees earning over \$100,000. In addition, the Senate proposes a \$1 tax on tobacco products, including cigarettes and cigars, as endorsed unanimously by the Senate Finance and Tax Committee.

The House proposals are divided in two parts to reflect that chamber's council structure. CEED 09-01 and CEED 09-02 reflect spending recommendations in the areas of education and economic development,

while CGHC 09-01 and CGHC 09-02 offer budgets for general government and health care. There is a difference of approximately \$600 million between the House and Senate proposals.

Both chambers are scheduled to take up their respective budget and implementing bills at the final Council level before moving to the floor for a full vote and preparation for budget conference.

## LEGISLATURE PROPOSED LOCAL SERVICE FEES

In an effort to cultivate new revenue streams, the state has proposed two new fees on mandated local government duties.

SB 1786 establishes a fee for transmitting comprehensive plan amendments sent to the Department of Community Affairs. As amended in committee, the bill exacts a \$200 fee for every comprehensive plan amendment, except those statutorily required by the state.

It allows the proponent of the plan amendment to pay that cost incurred by the local government. The state estimates this fee will generate \$2.4 million annually.

The House Natural Resources Appropriations Committee suggested proposed committee bill NRAC 09-02 that would charge owners of solid waste disposal facilities a fee of \$1.25 per ton for the, "...privilege of engaging

in business." Most of these facilities are owned by local governments, and solid waste disposal is a state mandated responsibility. The state anticipates collecting approximately \$25 million annually.

These new fees on mandated duties will continue to be debated as the budget is constructed and negotiated.

## DID YOU KNOW...

- **Florida became the 27th state in the Union on March 3, 1845, and William D. Moseley was elected the state's first governor**

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To learn more about a particular bill, the budget, or members of the Florida Legislature, visit *Online Sunshine* at: [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us)

**OF NOTE...**

The 60 day Legislative Session hit its mid-point this week with an emphasis on developing the budget. The House and Senate are only scheduled to meet Monday through Wednesday in recognition of the religious holiday.

**ECONOMIZING LEGAL ADVERTISING AND NOTICES**

Senator Ronda Storms (R – Hillsborough Co.) offered SB 2292 to reduce the cost of state-mandated advertisements and notices by local government by allowing them to be published on the government entity’s official website so long as a public library within the boundaries of the jurisdiction offers free internet access during regular business hours, and that residents are notified once per year via of their option to register with the local government to receive these notices and advertisements via e-mail or first-class mail. Current law requires these announcements to appear in qualifying newspapers at an annual cost of over \$500,000 to Hillsborough County.

Senator Storms agreed to have the issue studied by professional staff over the summer to determine the impact of her legislation for possible reconsideration next year.

**LEGISLATURE ADDRESSES “DOUBLE DIPPING”**

The term “double dipper” has been applied to individuals who are members of the Florida Retirements System (FRS) and enrolled in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) who retire and then return to the same position at the same or greater salary after the thirty day waiting period, thereby collecting their pension and earning their salary at the same time.

Senator Mike Fasano (R – Pasco Co.) presented SB 1182 to the Community Affairs Committee that allows a person who retires after January 1, 2010, to be re-hired, but prohibits them from receiving both a salary and retirement benefits at the same time or reenrolling in FRS.

The bill has two more committee stops, and similar legislation is moving through the House.