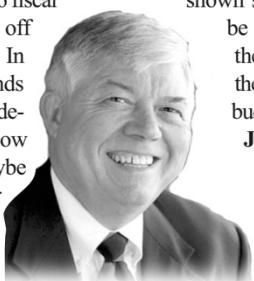


Notes from the Senate

Weekly report from Senator Jack Hill

First Month of Fiscal Year Looks Good

Sometimes July, the first month of the 2016 fiscal year, can start off with a whimper. In some years refunds might have been delayed for cash flow purposes or maybe it's the summer doldrums, but we never seem to have high expectations for July's revenues. That is why 6.1 percent growth is a pleasant surprise for the month. Another reason is the changes brought about by HB 170, the transportation bill. Starting this month, that one percent sales tax on fuel that had been going into the treasury will be redirected to the DOT under the new all excise tax on fuel. Hard to tell for sure if this month will have any effects or not since sales tax reports run a month behind. But you should see an increase in motor fuel taxes both from the slight increase in net excise tax and the addition of the sales tax that has previously gone to the treasury. That's about \$150 million for the year.



Jack Hill
Guest Columnist

The new fees now shown separately, like hotel/motel fees and highway impact fees will be shown separately and will be appropriated when the legislature passes the amended FY 2016 budget.

July Income Taxes Strong

The individual income taxes category, representing personal and small business income tax withholdings was very strong in July raising \$838.5 million or an increase of 9 percent. Individual income tax collections were up for the month 7.7 percent as well as individual income tax return payments, up \$4.2 million. Refunds were up 5.6 percent, or \$3.5 million. Corporate income taxes were negative at -16.2 percent but only -\$4.3 million in actual dollars. Corporate taxes tend to balance out on a quarterly basis. Corporate payments were down \$4.6 million and refunds were up \$5.1 million.

Sales Taxes Strong at 4.5 Percent

It's not clear if the one percent motor fuel tax previously

going to the treasury is being shown yet because the net sales tax growth of 4.5 percent is very positive for the month, totaling \$472.0 million, growing \$20.4 million.

Motor Fuel Now All Excise Taxes

Apparently the new motor fuel tax collection of all-excise tax has taken effect since that is all that is being reported under the motor fuel category for July. The total, \$90 million, approximates what the category took in May at \$89 million and June at \$86.7 million. That amount could increase at least \$30 million per month.

"Sin Taxes" Both Up For the Month

Tobacco taxes were up 10 percent in July as was alcoholic beverages at 5.8 percent.

New Fees Start to Show up on Report

The new category "Motor Vehicle Revenues" began in July and included some old existing fees and some of the new fees under HB 170. "Highway Impact Fees" showed \$629,000 for the month. The existing tag/title fee was slightly negative at -2.1 percent, but the title ad valorem tax was up \$8.9 mil-

lion, or 13.4 percent, for a total for the month of \$105.7 million, an increase of \$8.9 million, or 9.3 percent.

The new "Hotel/Motel" fee took in only \$16,000 for July.

Growth Stays Steady

July's revenue total of \$1.57 billion gained some \$90.9 million for the 6.1 percent growth rate, a strong start to the fiscal year. Additionally after one month, state revenues are \$12 million ahead of budget for the first month. The 12-month trailing average continues strong at 6.4 percent. Other states still trail Georgia after July - Texas, 2.3 percent, Alabama, 4.3 percent and Louisiana, one percent of those currently reporting. We will publish other states' reports as they come in.

It will be interesting to see the effects of HB 170 on the General Treasury as well as the increases that transportation should expect to realize.

Legislation and final action may be accessed online at: www.legis.ga.gov and the State Budget can be accessed online at the senate budget and evaluation website: www.senate.ga.gov/sbeo/en-US/Home.aspx.

The Way It Was

From the Enterprise Files



100 YEARS AGO

Yesterday Tattnall Campmeeting commenced out at the old famous stumping ground of the Methodists. The Tattnall Camp Ground has been the scene of many enthusiastic and beneficial meetings since it was established many years ago.

When the new County of Evans was established the old camp ground came all round being taken in, and as it is it is just beyond the South-western boundary line, and no doubt the meeting will draw as many people from Evans as it does from Tattnall.

The people of Evans have not been separated from the mother county long enough to discard all of her traditions and interests and the people of this county have made preparations to attend the campmeeting in Tattnall.

50 YEARS AGO

Touch-tone telephone service, where buttons replace the customary dial, has been inaugurated in Valdosta for the first time in Georgia.

W.S. Snell, local manager for Southern Bell, said that the new type phones will become available in other telephone exchanges throughout the state on a gradual basis as central offices are modified for the new service. No date has been set for Claxton as yet, he added.

Rock Eagle State Park near Eatonton was the noisiest place in Georgia recently, as nearly 900 high school cheerleaders and advisors representing 89 high schools in Georgia, gathered July 23 and 24 for the State YMCA Cheerleaders' Clinic.

Local cheerleaders representing Claxton High School were: Louise Daniel, Ruthie Hearn, Sally Wiley, Vicki Smith, Nancy Beasley, Sally Waters, Iris Whitten, Jan Chester and Ellen Edwards.

40 YEARS AGO

Young fishermen David Perkins and brother Larry, caught a fine string of bass and bream in an Evans County pond last Wednesday while vacationing with their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. S.E. Perkins of Hagan. The two youth are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Perkins of Nashville, Tenn.

Claxton High School Athletic Director and head basketball coach Durell Lynn has been named Coach of the Year in Region 2A by fellow coaches in recognition of his outstanding basketball record during the 1974-75 season. Under Lynn's direction, the CHS Tigers tallied 22 wins and only six losses to win the Class A Region championship in region 4-A. The Tigers averaged 67 points per game, while holding their opponent's scoring to a 56-point average.

Mindy Gwinnette Williams celebrated her first birthday August 14 at the home of her Grandma and Grandpa Clifton in Claxton.

30 YEARS AGO

Christopher Todd celebrated his third birthday July 4. He celebrated with a party at his home with family and friends. His parents are Ronnie and Peggy Todd.

Officials of Sherman Utility Structures, Inc. joined local government and industry representatives in turning the first spade of dirt last Tuesday at the future site of the firm's \$2.6 million plant in the Evans County Industrial Park. The production facility will be used for the manufacture of prestressed concrete poles for electrical distribution systems and lighting.

Candace Patricia Cooley celebrated her first birthday Sunday, July 7, with her parents, maternal grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles.

• LeeAnna Tatum

never doubted Charles' love for her and neither had Michael.

For me, it was beautiful to see the legacy of love that young Charles had left behind. Here we are, 70 years after his tragic death aboard the USS Eversole, and his heartfelt words are still touching hearts, healing wounds and bringing laughter. Would

that each of us could leave such a gift behind.

I was relieved to know that I had not been the one to break the news to Michael of family drama between his mother and grandmother. He has a wonderful sense of humor and assured me that it had not been news to him to read that his grandmother was a bit of a pot-stirrer

back in the day.

The happy event was covered by the local TV news station out of Columbia, S.C. and has since gone viral on the Internet. It's been picked up by such well-known sites as www.usatoday.com and www.dailymail.co.uk, it was even featured as an exclusive story on People

Magazine's website. Just Google "son gets father's purple heart after 70 years" and you can watch as Michael reads the last words his father wrote to his family (have a hanky on standby).

But don't forget, you read about it right here in The Claxton Enterprise first!

• Tom Crawford

Continued from Page 4
could be cited from Georgia's political history, but a typical incident was the recent decision to approve a Medicaid rate increase that will be worth nearly \$27 million to the state's nursing home industry.

One of the major beneficiaries of that money will be a company, PruittHealth, that runs several nursing homes in Georgia.

Pruitt family members and business units contributed large amounts of money to

Gov. Nathan Deal's re-election campaign last year, according to reports filed with the State Ethics Commission. Deal appointed CEO Neil Pruitt, Jr. to the Board of Regents, where he is currently the chairman.

When the nursing home rate increase came before the state Board of Community Health last year, two board members raised questions about it and sidelined a vote on adopting the proposal. Not long after the rate hike had

been stalled, Deal replaced those board members by appointing two new people to the community health board.

Several months later, the nursing home rate increase came up again before a reconstituted community health board that included the new members appointed by the governor. This time, the increase was quickly approved and no board member was foolish enough to raise any questions about it.

Whether you think Trump

is the greatest thing since sliced bread or a pompous windbag, he has performed a valuable service for the voters in his campaign.

He has told them the truth about how money influences politics. He really does deserve a salute for that.

(Tom Crawford is editor of The Georgia Report, an internet news service at gareport.com that reports on state government and politics. He can be reached at tcrawford@gareport.com.)

• Frank NeSmith

Continued from Page 4

Before prosecution, the federal prosecutor offered suspension of any jail time, and Idaho promised not to pursue state prosecution if the poacher would roll over on his clients. So much for honor among thieves: He gave significant evidence on eight nonresident customers. Between them they had illegally taken six large sheep and four trophy bull elk.

In that second level of the case the residences of all eight violators were searched. Every illegal game head and all firearms that had been used were confiscated. Federal judges handed down total fines of \$57,000. The firearms were

forfeited and each received a two-year suspended jail sentence. Their hunting licenses were also revoked nationwide for 10 years.

The poacher amassed a \$10,000 fine, a 10 year nationwide hunting license revocation and 10 years in jail. That sentence was suspended under the following conditions: for 10 years he was prohibited to be present during or to engage in any hunting activity anywhere; to never be in any hunting location; not possess any type of hunting equipment or ever be in the company of anyone hunting.

The judge ordered that the slightest violation of any of those restrictions would result in immediate confine-

ment in a federal prison. Our officers never saw or heard anything about him violating that agreement.

The confiscated animal heads from that operation were turned over to Idaho. We used them in future undercover operations and as exhibits for various public presentations. They were never put in our annual

wildlife parts auction because those violators would have quickly bought them.

Afterwards we offered the informant \$2,000, but he refused it. We believed he must have been a close relative of the poacher.

That poacher, as many are inclined to do, thought he was invincible. But, in the end he was taught otherwise.

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• Ronda Rich

Continued from Page 5
band who was rolling his eyes and shaking his head.

"What?" I asked, unperturbed, as I stopped to look at lip glosses.

"Was that all necessary?" he asked, leaning against the glass counter as I dabbed a pretty pink on my hand.

"Yes."

"Why?"
"Because, first, I like to talk. Second, I am a storyteller so I need to collect stories. This is how you learn about people. Their stories, their journeys. It's all so fascinating."

He shrugged. "Well, it must work. You certainly have a lot of stories to tell and they're all pretty good."
A grin spread from ear-to-ear. "Stick with me and I'll teach you all I know about being nosey."

Several weeks later, I went over to the backside of the Rondarosa to meet someone who was going to do some work.

"I'll run over there and open the gate," I said.

Two hours later, a worried

Tink showed up to check on me and discovered the two of us sitting in the shade, talking. He walked toward us, an anxious look shading his face.

"Is everything all right?" His brow was furrowed.

I laughed and made the introduction. "Yes, it is. I'm just listening to some great stories."

And, terrific stories they were. That night, I told a couple of them during dinner with Tink and my friend, Debbie. They laughed at one and were awed by the other.

I was triumphant. "See?" I said to Tink. "I was working. Gathering some story gems."

He just shook his head. What was there to say?

Southerners know that all good stories have an end, and most of them have a good ending of some sort. So, with that in mind, here's how the first story ends: the hat matched the dress perfectly.

Ronda Rich is the best-selling author of There's A Better Way A-Comin'. Visit www.rondarich.com to sign up for her free weekly newsletter.

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