

TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WFGX-TV
Location: Fort Walton Beach, FL
Quarter ending: June 30, 2007

ISSUE/description: 5. FLORIDA PROPERTY TAX CUTS. Property taxes are skyrocketing in Florida, and the governor, legislature and local governments are looking for ways to give relief to property owners while maintaining government services.

How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Straughn & Company	04/08/07	11:30AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	*

* Today's program featured a profile of newly elected Senator Don Gaetz of Niceville, the former Okaloosa School Superintendent, and an interview with him about the major issues facing the state. Gaetz discussed the need for a restructuring of the property tax rates to protect Florida property owners.

2. Channel 3 News at 10PM	05/30/07	10:34PM/2 minutes	News	**
---------------------------	----------	-------------------	------	----

** Dan Thomas reported on the three different plans being considered by the state legislature for lowering property taxes. All dramatically increase the Homestead Exemptions, but with differing methods.

3. Channel 3 News at 10PM	06/04/07	10:06PM/3 minutes	News	***
---------------------------	----------	-------------------	------	-----

*** Florida's House and Senate leaders are laying out a framework for lowering tax bills. There are three basic parts: the Homestead Exemption would change from \$25,000 to a percentage of the home's taxable value; cities and counties would be forced to roll back taxes on all properties; and future taxes could grow no larger than the average personal income. But some local officials say property taxes are their territory and the legislature should stay out of it.

4. In Focus	06/10/07	11:30AM/30 minutes	Public Affairs	****
-------------	----------	--------------------	----------------	------

**** This week's guests were Escambia County Commissioner Mike Whitehead, and Florida State Senator Don Gaetz. A special session of the legislature begins June 12th, and lawmakers will consider a number of ways to reduce the skyrocketing property taxes on Floridians, including: increasing the homestead exemption on primary homes by a sliding scale percentage (the more a home is worth, the lower the overall percentage roll-back); rolling back property tax rates to 2006 levels; cutting local government budgets by 5-15 percent, depending on how well the local government has stifled spending growth in the past; capping the annual amount a property can increase in value; and limiting the increase a local government can spend. The current plan in Tallahassee would also let homeowners opt out of the new plan, if the older Save Our Homes caps suits them better (approximately 3% cap in increase on a home's value each year). Local governments could avoid the spending caps by a vote of the people, or a super-majority vote of the government body. Senator Gaetz favors the plan entirely. He has long supported local control over such issues, instead of Tallahassee control, but in this case he feels local governments have failed the people, and it's time for state lawmakers to intervene. Commissioner Whitehead agrees with most or all of the changes to the taxing structure and system, but strongly opposes state lawmakers telling him how and how much to cap spending and taxing. He maintains his commission has cut spending and taxing responsibly, and no one in Tallahassee has a better idea of the local money flow than his commission. Both have been invited back to discuss what comes out of the special session.

ISSUE/description: 5. FLORIDA PROPERTY TAX CUTS. Property taxes are skyrocketing in Florida, and the governor, legislature and local governments are looking for ways to give relief to property owners while maintaining government services.

How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
5. Channel 3 News at 10PM (simulcast from WEAR-TV)	06/21/07	10:01PM/3 minutes	News	*****

***** Today Governor Charlie Crist signed into law the largest tax cut in Florida history. Crist said this is the people’s tax cut, and the people will have the power to further drop their property taxes next January. He also promised it would be the spark to ignite the state’s economy. More than \$15 billion in local property taxes will be slashed over the next five years. We reported on what those savings would mean for the average local homeowner, owners of second homes, and businesses.

6. Channel 3 News at 10PM (simulcast from WEAR-TV)	06/28/07	10:00PM/2 minutes	News	*****
-------------------------------------------------------	----------	-------------------	------	-------

***** Tonight we reported on the other side of Property Tax Reform ... the cuts in the budgets of local governments. Escambia County is now forced to cut its budget by \$20 million, about 7%, and so far the county commission has found ways to cut about half that amount. The Parks and Recreation Department will reduce its services, including maintenance of 19 athletic fields in the county. The Road Department will cut about \$300,000 overtime dollars from its maintenance crews. The Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, and Clerk of Courts are also being asked to cut expenses. In Santa Rosa County, the Sheriff has been told he must operate his department next year on the same budget he has for this year...he had planned for a 10% budget increase. To absorb increased costs for everything from fuel to jail food, he may be forced to reduce the number of Resource Officers in schools, and cut hours at some district substations.