



# Walton County Tax Collector

## A Report to Our Citizens

### Fiscal Year 2010

#### Table of Contents

About the Tax Collector's Office . . . 2

Advancements in 2010 . . . . . 3 - 4

Collections & Distributions for 2010 . . . . . 5

Outlook for 2011 . . . 6

#### Mission

"To collect and distribute taxes, licenses and fees in a prompt, accurate and professional manner while demonstrating our "Commitment to Service", and offering a positive work environment for our employees."

#### Vision

The Walton County Tax Collector's Office will become a national leader among public service organizations recognized for our inspired and talented employees, excellence in customer service, financial accountability, relentless pursuit of continuous improvement, and operational effectiveness in performing our responsibilities in a manner that earns the faith, trust, and confidence of the public.

## From The Desk of the Tax Collector



Thank you for the opportunity to continue in service as your tax collector. My employees and I are committed to work hard to provide exceptional customer service and to continually work to implement practices and initiatives to more efficiently operate the office and serve you. The 2010 Annual Report details the accomplishments of the office over the last year.

By law, this office operates on the income derived from fees and commissions we earn for each of the services rendered. These fees and commissions are determined by the Florida

Legislature in accordance with the Florida Statutes. As tax collector for Walton County, I will continue to pursue opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which we conduct business. By doing so, I am able to fully fund essential operations and end the year with unexpended income in the amount of \$1,329,977.01 which we distribute to the taxing authorities we serve in proportion to their share of the total funds collected.

We welcome your feedback and suggestion to improve our services, and encourage you to contact us at (850) 892-8121 or through our "Contact Us Page" on our Web site at [www.waltontaxcollector.com](http://www.waltontaxcollector.com).

It is with great pleasure that I serve the citizens of Walton County.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rhonda Skipper".

**Rhonda Skipper, Walton County Tax Collector**

#### 2010 Employees of the Quarter



Ashleigh Simmons  
January - March



Toma Rushing  
April - June



Traci McVay  
July - September



Toma Rushing  
October - December

**"Commitment to Service"**

# About the Tax Collector's Office

## What do we do?

- Collects property taxes for every local government agency and taxing authority that has the power to levy taxes.
- Acts as Walton County's agent for the issuance of Dog On the Beach and Beach Driving permits.
- Serves as the State of Florida's agent for The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, The Department of Environmental Protection, The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission and The Department of Revenue.

## How are we set up?

The Office of the Tax Collector is an independent and separate government entity. The Tax Collector can and does operate independently of the Walton County Board of County Commissioners and the other Constitutional Offices. The Tax Collector's budget is approved by the Florida Department of Revenue.

## How do we operate?

The Tax Collector's Office employs 27 full-time employees, including the Tax Collector. Our main office is located in the Walton County Courthouse in DeFuniak Springs. An office is also located in the Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach to more conveniently serve residents in the south end of the county.

## How do we make it easier for customers to access our services?

In addition to transacting business with us in person through our two conveniently located customer service centers, customers are encouraged to make their payments by mail or by e-commerce through the Web site at [www.waltontaxcollector.com](http://www.waltontaxcollector.com).



## Waltontaxcollector.com

A vast amount of information related to the services the Tax Collector's Office provides are available online.

Additionally, many forms are available for download and transactions can be completed online.

We strive to provide our customers with as much information as possible online to allow customers the convenience of accessing the information at their discretion.

## Online Transactions

Last year 5,245 online transactions were completed.

# How We Have Advanced In 2010

*Continuous improvement has been a guiding principle at the Walton County Tax Collector's Office since 2005. In 2010, however, we ramped up our efforts and began our "Journey to Excellence". The title of our five-year strategic plan is more than just a name, it is a culture and mindset we're fostering in our office. We've identified our four strategic priorities as: Service Excellence, Successful and Engaged Workforce, Financial Accountability and Stewardship, and Operational Excellence and Continuous Improvement.*



## **Service Excellence**

Service is always a priority at the Walton County Tax Collector's Office. We want to provide our customers with the most efficient and friendly service. One way we look to improve the service we provide is by looking for opportunities to streamline the services and reduce wait time for our customers.

This past year, one way we have been able to assist with customer wait time is by evaluating our tax bill validation process. Customer wait time was lengthy for customers in need of a validated tax receipt due to the difficult printing process. An employee team evaluated the process, researched other printing options and recommended adding a new validator/ receipt printer to each work station to increase efficiency.

The printers were installed prior to tax season and increased the satisfactory level of staff and decreased the wait time for customers.

Another improvement made this year to provide customers with greater convenience was the addition of the online application and renewal option for Dog On the Beach permits.

This online option simplifies the process and makes it much more convenient for our customers to obtain Dog On the Beach permits.

Thirdly, we enhanced our customer communications by implementing electronic information notifications to customers who sign-up to receive them. We typically send notifications quarterly to provide important and useful information to our customers. Customers can sign-up for information related to specific topics of interest.

## **Successful and Engaged Workforce**

Our office understands the satisfaction level of our employees carries over into their interactions with our customers. We strive to create an environment where employees are happy to come to work and enjoy a family-like atmosphere.

We know engaged employees are happy employees and we have nurtured a culture of employee involvement in all aspects of our office through our Process Improvement Teams (PIT). The PITs allow employees to be involved in developing solutions to problems, evaluating work processes, and looking for new opportunities and technologies to benefit our customers and our office operations.

Another important element to demonstrating how much we value our employees is by investing in them. This year we have made it a priority to sit down with each employee to discover what their individual career goals are and develop a plan of action to help them achieve those goals. The Individual Career Development Plans allow the organization to identify resources and tools to help our employees be successful.



# How We Have Advanced In 2010

## Financial Accountability and Stewardship

Financial accountability and stewardship have always been a top priority for our office. We take great pride in running our office as if it were a private business, completing a cost-benefit analysis before significant purchases are made to ensure a return on investment will be realized in less than three years.

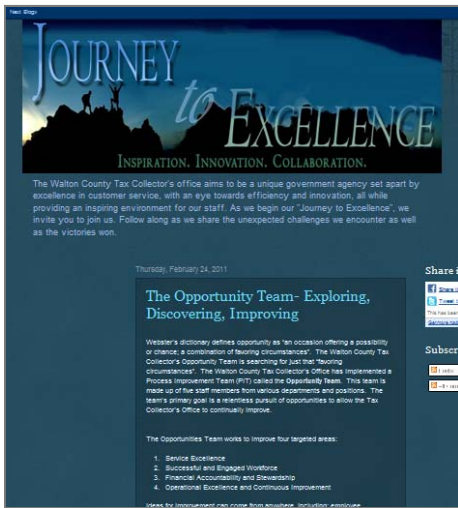
Additionally, our office is audited each year by the County's contracted auditor. We are pleased to again report there were no audit findings for our office.

## Operational Excellence and Continuous Improvement

As mentioned earlier, improving operational efficiency and persistently looking for opportunities to make our office and service delivery better is our operational mantra.

We encourage customer and employee feedback and thoroughly research ideas presented to enhance operations and improve the customer service experience we provide to our citizens.

Part of our "Journey to Excellence" is sharing our continuous improvement with the public. We've developed a blog where we share various articles and information about our journey of continuous improvement. Subscribe to our blog and join us on our journey, [waltoncountytaxcollector.blogspot.com](http://waltoncountytaxcollector.blogspot.com).



## Follow Us On Facebook & Twitter

Become a fan and get the latest news and information.

Connect from our homepage at <http://www.waltontaxcollector.com>.



## Employee Recognitions



Traci McVay was honored by her co-workers as the Employee of the Year 2010.

Traci is the Assistant Supervisor in our Santa Rosa Beach Office.

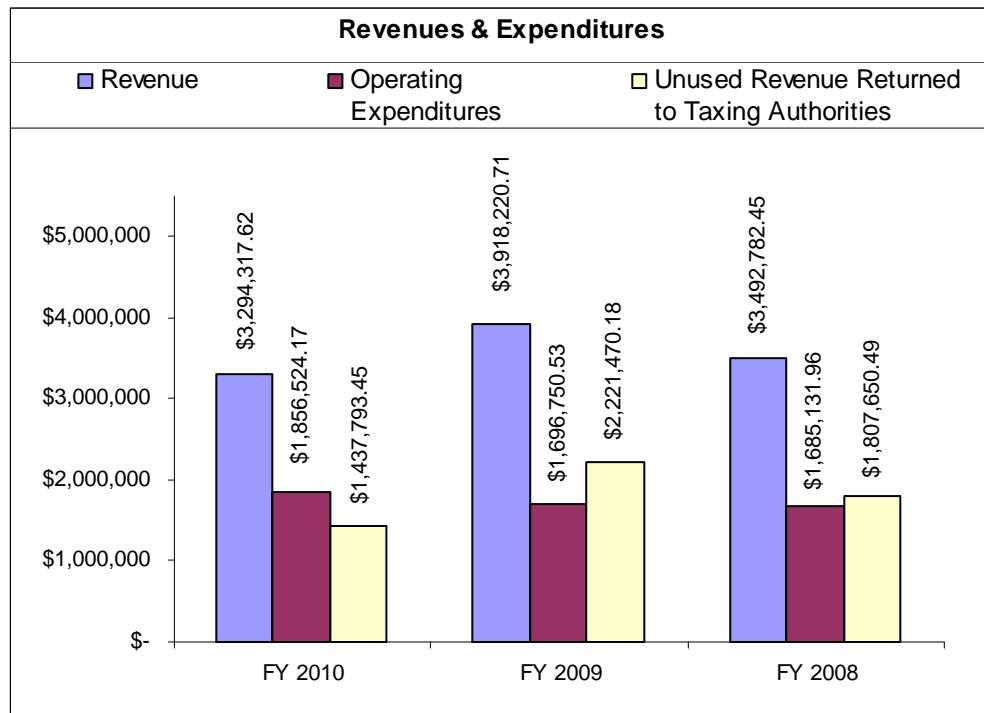
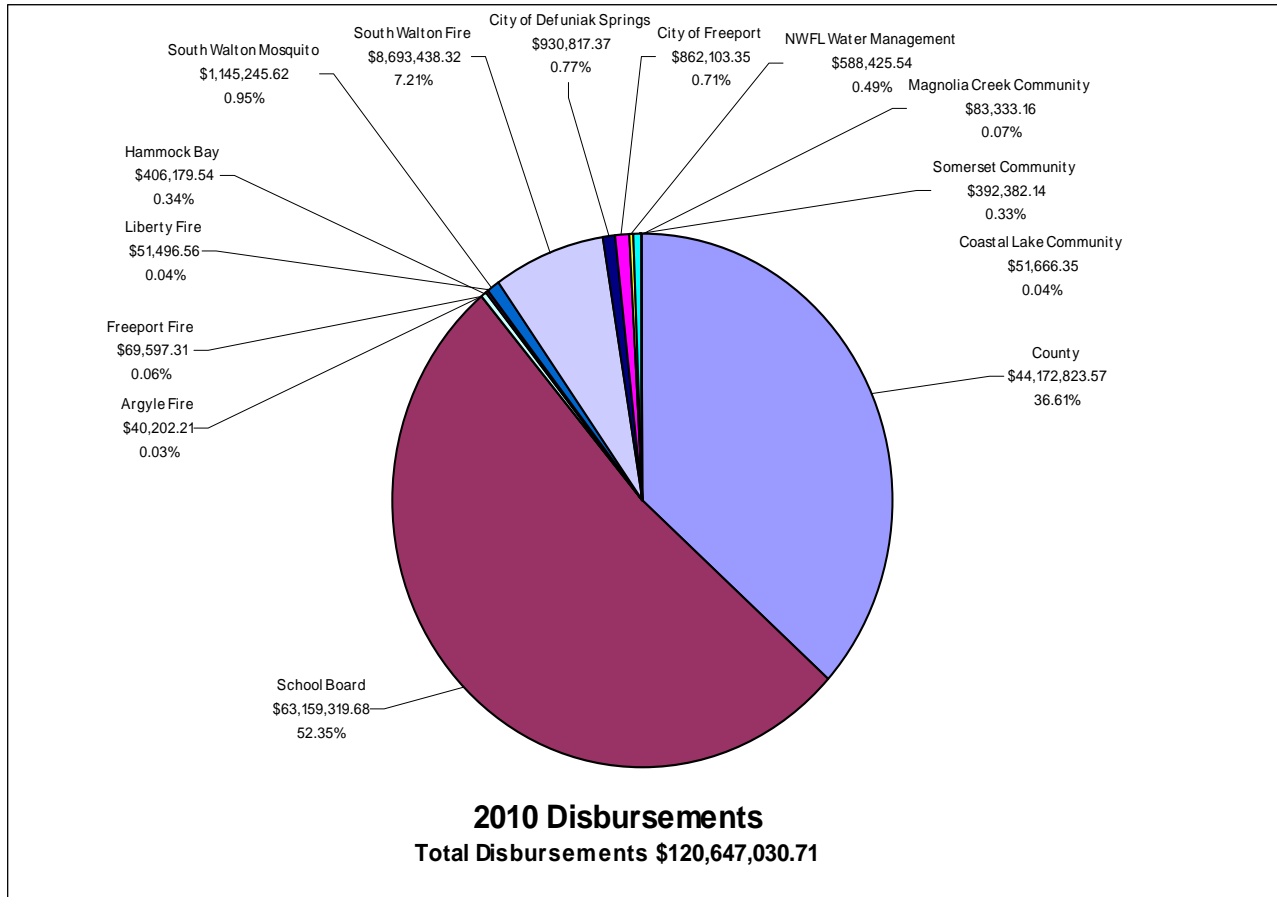


Becky Nall and Kara Stallings both received their Department of Revenue Certification designating them as Certified Collector Assistants.



Beloved co-worker and employee, Christel Maples, retired in July with 15 years of service with the Walton County Tax Collector's Office.

# Collections & Distributions



## Accountability

Each year our office is audited by the County's contracted auditor. We are pleased to share the 2010 audit once again reported no findings.

## 2010 Expenditures

Expenditures for 2010 shows an increase in expenditures. The increase is due to us reflecting our own health insurance costs which were previously reported by the BCC. Excluding the insurance costs of \$200,000, our office reduced expenditures from the previous year by \$40,000.

# Outlook for 2011

A large focus for our office during this year will be preparing to take on drivers license services in late spring 2012.

The 2009 Florida Legislature elected to transition Drivers License services from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to Tax Collectors by 2015.

To prepare to take on this new service, our office is looking at every aspect of the office to ensure the smoothest transition of services as possible. Among the areas under review are:

- Staffing level
- Equipment needs
- Lobby accommodations
- Staff training
- Fiscal impact
- Customer service impact

As always, our goal is to provide excellent customer service and to make your visit to our office a positive one.

We're excited about providing these new services to our customers and are especially pleased we'll be able to provide drivers license services to residents in the south end of the county who are currently driving to Okaloosa or Bay counties to take care of drivers license needs.

As we prepare to take on these new services, we will be working hard to educate our residents on the Real ID laws adopted by the State of Florida in 2010. These federal laws require residents to provide detailed documentation for their drivers license renewals, new issue drivers license, and Florida ID cards.

A Web site is available to assist residents in understanding the new requirements for obtaining or renewing a drivers license. For more information related to these new services, please visit <http://gathergoget.com>.



## In The Community



In September, the Walton County Tax Collector's Office Employee Club sponsored a Womanless Beauty Pageant. Approximately \$1,800 was raised for the DeFuniak Springs Teen Center.



The Employee Club hosted the 2nd Annual St. Jude Gospel Sing and Silent Auction in November. The event raised \$1,897.49 for St. Jude Children's Hospital. (Above) WCTC employee, Brian McBroom, presents Jan Adams with a portrait of her grandson, Westin, who lost his battle to childhood cancer in 2010. Westin received amazing care from the staff at St. Jude.

