

## Talbot County Taxpayers Association (TCTA), An Invitation:

Well, its that time of year again, our annual meeting is just a few weeks away. It is difficult to comprehend just how quickly 2008 is passing before us and just how soon 2009 will be upon us. On behalf of TCTA's ever increasing membership, I invite you to join our Association if you haven't already. TCTA was founded in 1972 in the belief that active citizen participation and interest in everyday workings of our local governments is essential. The more members in the Association, the stronger we become and the louder our voice. Good government does not just happen – it is the result of an on-going cooperative effort among elected officials, staff employees, and concerned citizens.

TCTA advocates strongly the following policies: a) pay-as-you-go; b) have users pay for services, to the extent practical and affordable; and, c) relying on income tax rather than property taxes and real estate fees as the principle local revenue source. Our rationale is based in part on our belief that income tax is far better related to an “ability to pay”. TCTA works closely with the Maryland Taxpayers Association to reverse politically driven, runaway State spending. We strive to ensure the return of any State surpluses to the taxpayers who paid it, to repeal the State inheritance tax; and, to improve Maryland's unenviable position as one of six States in the nation with the highest State and local income tax rates.

The principal objective of TCTA is to achieve the most effective use of every tax dollar. We analyze Talbot County agency budgets and budgets of our incorporated towns as well as reviewing the justifications presented – both past and present – to ensure significant spending increases and proposed debt obligations are consistent with the desires and priorities of our taxpaying citizens. We make determinations about whether spending increases are due to workload expansion, impacts on budgets due to inflation; and, whether increased spending is due to a desire on the part of our elected officials to pursue either personal agendas and/or to increase staff - to perform what we consider to be unwarranted staff activities.

Only TCTA stands between your wallet and the tax collectors. During its long existence, TCTA spearheaded the 1978 property tax limit (known as the Talbot County Tax Cap) the result has saved taxpayers millions of dollars. Today, we are in the midst to challenging the Town of Easton's anticipated long-term borrowing for several projects desired by town government but whose details have had very little public exposure, certainly not the sort of detail one would expect in order to impose a \$10,000,000.00 long-tem debt on Easton's taxpayers.

During the past year, your Association established a Website for the purposes of providing Members with easy access to information regarding Association activities; establishing a Forum for interaction between Members and with their Board; and, most importantly, to provide a direct communications link with our constituency – the Taxpayers of Talbot County.

The site includes a “Tax Topics Forum”; copies of communications from the Association to local media and the County and Town Councils; a listing of dates important to Association members; and a procedure for providing membership information to non-members as well as a response to their inquiries. The Board plans to add Meeting minutes in the near future.

If they have not done so already, all Members are invited to “try it out” at

[www.tctaonline.org](http://www.tctaonline.org)

Comments and suggestions, about the site, from Members are encouraged and appreciated.

TCTA is a non-profit, non-partisan association whose mission is to develop recommendations for the County Council and municipal governments on current and proposed tax policies and allocations. TCTA presents these recommendations to the public, the Talbot County Council, and the Councils or Commissions of our incorporated towns. These recommendations reveal government spending or allocations considered by TCTA as ill advised and/or inappropriate or excessive. Our objective is to foster taxpayer awareness and informed action through study, research and public dialogue.

Supporting your Association is critical if we are to be a real voice in the process of exposing government waste, fraud, and abuse. For only \$5 dues each year, you can be assured your voice will be heard. Please fill out the enclosed form and mail it with your generous check. Thank you,

Owen Wormser  
President  
Talbot County Taxpayers Association