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Knockin' 'bout Notasulga
Frank Dillman

Governor Robert Bentley — playing to legislative resistance — laid out his plan to get his new taxes with special sessions (at a huge cost to the taxpayers) until he gets what he wants. His wants resulted in a new tax-exempt organization — the governor is the honorary chairman — to push for more taxes. Notice the irony there, a tax-exempt organization pushing for more taxes.

Do not blink your eyes because the federal government also wants more money.

Not to be upstaged, our county government too is on the hunt for more of our money. I suspect their primary target for the bulk of the up to \$1 million per year, as reported by The Tuskegee News, is from motorists and truckers buying fuel traveling through the county.

How will the new 5-cent fuel tax affect our neighbors struggling from check to check when deciding upon a visit to the doctor, pharmacy or supermarket?

How will the desired new rental tax affect our neighbors in need of a rollaway bed for guests, a rental car for a few days or a yard tool to spiffy up their yard before the weed ordinance man comes around?

To top it off, the county wants to tax those of us who are fortunate to get a job in Macon County. How will that create jobs for the county's unemployed?

The county is struggling and has been for decades. More taxes are not the answer. Long-range thought, planning and governmental sacrifice is the only way to get to the root problems.

The county collected \$130,232.54 in two months last year off the 2011 county business license tax, yet it needs more money.

The county population has decreased 27 percent since 1980, when the U.S. Census Bureau counted 27,000 residents. The 2013 estimate was 20,000 in the county.

Between 2009 and 2013, 27.3 percent of our neighbors lived in poverty, nearly eight points higher than the state average.

During January of this year 6,700 of our neighbors received public or non-public food assistance.

One hundred percent of our schoolchildren are eligible for governmental meals.

In summary, people who are able to leave Macon County are doing so. One-quarter of those unable to leave live in poverty, many depend on others for food and the county wants more money?

Regrettably, it is too common for many elected public servants to take more from the public — regardless of their struggles and hardships — rather than make tough choices in spending. Resisting the governor's demands for more tax revenue, State Sen. Phil Williams (R, Gadsden) wrote on Al.com, raising taxes is the "easy way out," and it only puts a "fresh coat of paint" on

the problem.

A few suggestions to the county commission in their fiscal dilemma,

- Seat an ad hoc commission of county residents with financial, economic and public administration degrees or backgrounds to audit the county and make suggestions in cost containment and if applicable sources for more revenue.
- Macon Countians should vote on and own the results of the three tax requests.
- Consider hiring a county manager to handle the county day-to-day operations, similar to the relationships the school superintendent and the City of Tuskegee manager have with their governing bodies.

The county commission is doing right by shining sunshine on their request for more taxes. The commission will explain and present their case to the residents of District 4, which includes Notasulga and Franklin, in our recreation center on Wednesday, April 7, at 6 p.m. at 1200 County Road 27, just off Highway 199.