



2009  
ANNUAL REPORT

**ADVOCATE.**  
**EDUCATE.**  
**COLLABORATE.**

# FAC Executive Committee



President  
Commissioner  
Rodney Long  
Alachua County



President-Elect  
Commissioner  
Ilene Lieberman  
Broward County



1st Vice President  
Commissioner  
Doug Smith  
Martin County



2nd Vice President  
Commissioner  
Bill Williams  
Gulf County



Immediate Past President  
Commissioner  
Susan Latvala  
Pinellas County

# President's Message

*Since 2007, counties have been going through a tumultuous time. From property tax reform to the deep economic recession, counties have been forced to reexamine their entire budgets and cut things that at one time were thought untouchable.*

*I have found that it is during these times that I have leaned on FAC more than ever. FAC has been steadfast in their commitment to stopping preemptions and unfunded mandates. They have been committed to finding new ways to serve counties. FAC invested in the creation of an extensive economic stimulus resource center and hired a consultant to ensure counties were up to speed on economic recovery information.*

*In addition to all that FAC is doing there is a lot that they aren't doing to make things easier on local governments. FAC has held their dues for the past three years – with no increase – a savings of more than 12 percent to each county. Conference and education program fees have also remained stagnant and locations have been centralized to help save dollars and ensure your continued participation. FAC has also invested in new technologies for webinars to hold more educational meetings without the travel costs.*

*As each of you debated each line item this last year, like me, you realized counties cannot afford to lose FAC. FAC brings us all together and ensures that our efforts at the Capitol are united, strategic and in the end, effective. They ensure that what we do together is more than we could ever do alone. FAC's influence in Tallahassee isn't always on the front page because FAC's power is not in what passes but in the hundreds of bills that do not pass every year. Bills that preempt local authority, pass down unfunded mandates and shift state costs to counties.*

*For the past 13 months I have had the privilege to serve as the FAC president and in that time I am proud of what my – and your – association is doing for all of Florida's 67 counties. Like each of us they are doing more with less, and like each of us, they are doing it with perseverance and a smile knowing that in the end it is not 'government' that wins but our communities and each citizen in the state of Florida.*



*As always I am  
Willing to serve,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney J. Long". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Commissioner Rodney J. Long  
Alachua County Commission  
FAC President



# Florida Association of Counties



All About Florida

For 80 years, the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) has represented the diverse interests of Florida's counties emphasizing the importance of protecting home rule – the concept that communities and their local leaders should make the decisions that impact their community.

FAC is the only association representing Florida's counties – bringing together the collective experience and knowledge of 377 county commissioners and supported by thousands of county professional staff. FAC provides the cohesive platform that enables county officials and staff to speak with a unified voice on behalf of all Floridians. Through FAC, counties are better able to serve not only their communities but the entire state of Florida.

Throughout the state, Florida's counties perform vital public services such as public safety, fire and emergency medical services, jails, parks, libraries, healthcare, growth management, economic development, and roads to name a few.



*This photo was taken after the two men had driven a herd of cattle from Old Town, forded the Suwannee River, and brought the herd close to Gainesville for grazing. This shot is taken about one block west of the courthouse.*

## Mission:

The Florida Association of Counties helps counties effectively serve and represent Floridians by strengthening and preserving county home rule through advocacy, education and collaboration.

This year FAC adopted a five year strategic plan that took us back to our roots formed 80 years ago and renewed our primary commitment to strengthen and preserve home rule through advocacy, education and collaboration.

**Advocacy.** Florida's counties – your county – is represented in Tallahassee by the strong commitment and dedicated team at the Florida Association of Counties. FAC's success in Tallahassee can be found in the hundreds of preemptions and unfunded mandates that are not passed each year.

# ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. COLLABORATE.

**Educate.** 302 county commissioners have become either a Certified County Commissioner or an Advanced County Commissioner. Are you? These programs

help commissioners better understand their role and responsibilities while enhancing their skills to become more effective leaders.

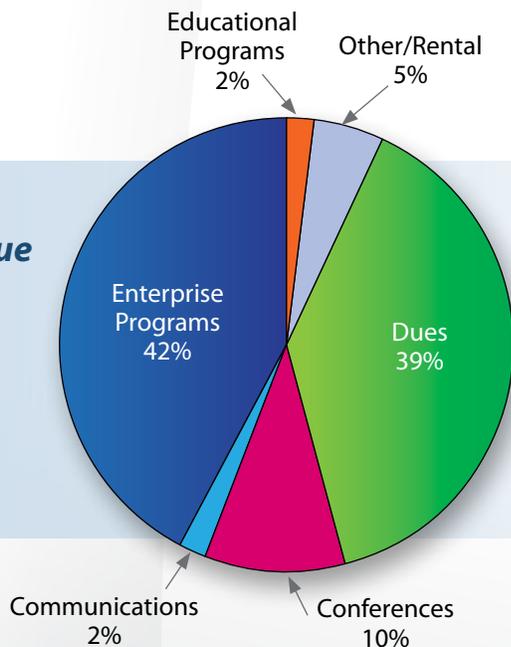
**Collaborate.** Don't go at it alone. FAC not only brings together the collective knowledge and expertise of Florida's counties but also unites like minded groups across the state to advance your legislative priorities and to protect home rule.

Over the next five years FAC is focusing on seven major areas of improvement:

- quality leadership
- strong advocacy
- targeted communications
- comprehensive education
- exceptional service & outreach
- financial stability and
- innovative management

# Annual Overview Page

## FY2009 Actual Revenue



Anna R. Doughty, CPA  
Director of Finance  
& Administration

## What Happened

**New technologies:** Implemented a new database management software and website.

**Savings:** Eliminated a 12 percent increase in health benefits for staff through restructuring.

**Long range planning:** Despite the economic downturn, FAC continued to save in reserve funds to improve our long term financial stability.

## What Will Happen

**Reduce:** FAC will continue to reduce its budget to conserve during these difficult economic times.

**Statewide importance:** Issues such as TABOR that are of a critical concern to counties will have the dollars available to invest in any necessary campaigns.

**Continued investment:** FAC will continue to invest responsibly in the tools needed to ensure an increased level of service to our members.

## What Didn't Happen

**Raised dues:** For the 3rd year in a row, the FAC Board reduced annual dues by waiving the required 4 percent dues increase to counties – saving counties more than 12 percent.

# Conferences



Letreze Gooding  
Director of  
Member Services

*"I have been involved with FAC for 15 months and continue to appreciate the people and value of the services and information provided to me. I have recently completed the CCC program and found it to be a wise investment of my time. Simply put - FAC is helping me become a better public servant."*

Gene Morgan  
Gadsden County  
Commissioner



2009 ACC Graduates

## What Happened

**4 conferences:** FAC successfully hosted four conferences with great participation from our membership.

**Expert speakers:** Programs included incredible speakers brought in from around the country to educate and motivate attendees.

**Increased education:** CCC classes are now being offered in conjunction with the FAC conferences to allow commissioners to complete their certification more quickly while saving on travel costs.



## What Will Happen

**One day registration:** To increase options for counties, FAC will begin offering one day registrations for our Annual Conference. So if you can't make it to the whole event, no worries, come just for the day.

**Webinars:** FAC is adding to the meetings you can attend by hosting webinars and regional workshops on various topics related to county governments. Through webinars, commissioners can save the cost of travel while still getting the information critical to their county.

**Videos:** FAC is working this year to place videos of some conference events on our website at a minimal cost for our members – further increasing opportunities for members to get important information and save limited dollars.

## What Didn't Happen

**Increased Costs:** The costs to attend FAC conferences has not increased for three years! FAC is committed to keeping your costs low while providing more ways to participate in our events.



2009 CCC Graduates

## What Happened

**Strategic plan:** Completed the 2009-2014 FAC Strategic Plan focusing on home rule and increasing programs while improving efficiencies.

**80 percent:** Participation from newly elected commissioners in the new commissioner workshop with high ongoing participation in subsequent programs.

**12, 238, 18, 64:** Graduated 12 Certified County Commissioners giving FAC 238 alumni of the program. Eighteen (18) Advanced County Commissioners graduated giving FAC 64 alumni. Congratulations to all of the commissioners who have graduated from these prestigious programs!

**Regional education:** FAC brought education opportunities to your area by utilizing the technology available at many of the UF/IFAS Extension offices around the state.

## What Will Happen

**County government guidebook:** FAC along with the Florida Institute of Government at FSU is creating a comprehensive handbook for Florida's county officials that will be available in November 2010 and will also be used in the curriculum for FAC's Certified County Commissioner program.

**New formats:** FAC is utilizing new delivery formats such as regional workshops, webinars and consolidated meetings to encourage increased participation while saving limited travel dollars.

**Increased participation due to stronger curriculum:** FAC is working to increase participation not only through new technologies but also by creating a stronger and more standardized curriculum to reach a broader range of members.

*"As every one of us know, being a new Commissioner can be an overwhelming experience. FAC has been extremely helpful to me through its CCC program. Classes have made the learning curve less steep by educating me on what is expected of me as a leader."*

Marsha Drew  
Levy County  
Commissioner

## What Didn't Happen

**Increased cost:** This is the third year, fees to attend education seminars remained the same along with new reduced cost options offered to encourage continued participation.

**Decrease in quality:** Rather than education programs suffering due to economic cutbacks they have been expanded and made more accessible to members, knowing that it is in the tough times that help is needed more than ever.

# Enterprise Division



John R. Ricco  
Director of  
Enterprise Programs



## What Happened

**Day to day:** The Florida Trust launched a new Money Market Fund which exceeded ½ billion in deposits in its first 90 days.

**Big savings:** The first counties to participate in the Energy and Telecom Audit Program saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in utility and phone expenses. What are you waiting for?

**You're covered!** In 2009, FAC added property and workers' compensation insurance coverage through a partnership with the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust. That coupled with our longstanding partnership with FACT to provide auto and liability insurance means FAC's got you covered.

**\$\$\$:** In spite of the economic times, FAC met 100% of its goals for the Corporate Partners Program and 97 percent of its sponsorship budget goal. Thank you to our partners and sponsors!

## What Will Happen

**Debt recovery program:** FAC is working to offer a new debt collection program to help counties collect outstanding invoices. The new program will offer higher returns at a lower cost.

**Advertising:** New advertising opportunities are being created every day for vendors through webinars, videos, and various publications.

**More, more, more:** FAC is working constantly to offer more valuable programs to its members...is your county adding more FAC Enterprise Programs and taking advantage of big savings?



## What Happened

**Training:** FAC provided ethics and federal Honest Services Act training among the county attorneys and commissioners. Created a permanent and comprehensive presence of quality ethics materials on the FAC website.

**Advocacy:** Joined with the Florida League of Cities in the United States Supreme Court to persuade the high court to uphold Florida's beach renourishment activities and in the Florida Supreme Court

to convince the court that tougher judicial standards should not apply to certain conditions governments can place on the issuance of development orders.

**Home rule wins:** FAC filed a brief that assisted the Supreme Court of Florida in Escambia County v. Strand to uphold the home rule ability of counties to pledge tax increment for debt, without statutory authority and without a referendum.



Ginger Delegal  
General Counsel

## What Will Happen

**New policies:** FAC is implementing new Conflict of Interest and Whistleblower policies to ensure that FAC is leading by example in ethics and integrity.

**The #1 source:** FAC has a wealth of information available to our counties and partners and will be implementing a document management system ensuring these documents are available to our members for years to come.

**Staying in the courts:** With controversial impact fee and muzzle laws passed in 2009, FAC will continue to fight for home rule and counties in the court system.

## What Didn't Happen

**Regional conflict counsels:** FAC along with 26 counties won their challenge against the state that attempted to shift the burden of funding conflict counsels to counties. Counties won in trial court and the appeal to 1st District Court of Appeal!

**1.35% gone:** FAC was a part of the successful fight that saw the Florida Supreme Court strike the proposed 1.35% Tax Cap Plan from the 2010 ballot.

*"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with FAC for the last three years. They know the nuances of legislation and legislators, provide critical information and assist you in your lobbying efforts. One key facet of FAC is the networking at the meetings which allows one to hear the rural, mid-size and large county perspectives on issues facing the state. The ability to come together as a team with folks from a wide spectrum of backgrounds sends a powerful message to State leadership. I can't say enough about FAC and the impact it has had on counties ability to articulate the needs of local government to state and national leadership."*

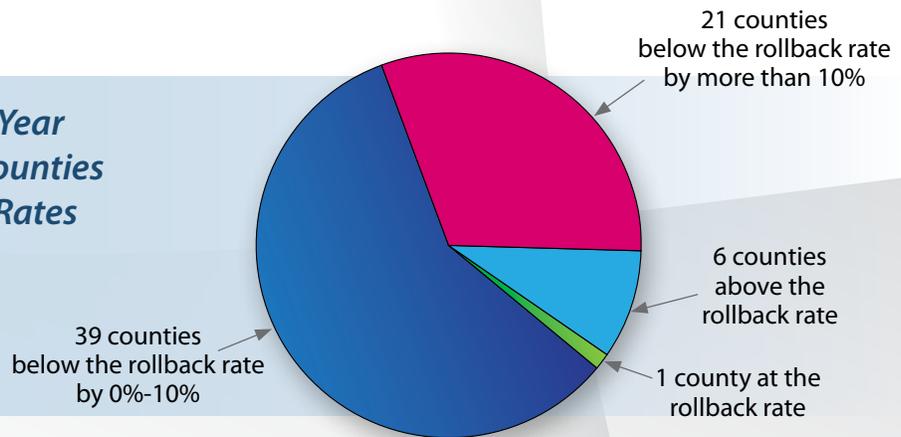
Doug Conkey, Clay County Commissioner

# Legislative Division



John Wayne Smith  
Legislative Director

## 2009 Tax Year Florida Counties Rollback Rates



## What Happened

**Cigarette surtax:** A FAC Priority was passed last year to help minimize cuts to health care services.

**Full funding:** For Amendment 1 offset to small counties.

**Interest protection:** In a hard fought battle, FAC ensured that interest earned from BOCC investments are returned to the BOCC.

**Court fees:** With the FAC passed court fees, counties can now raise fees an additional amount to cover the cost of court related infrastructures.

### Transportation priorities passed:

- Expansion of the Charter County Transit Surtax to all Charter Counties (13 additional counties eligible to levy).
- Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP)
  - > Program saved by eliminating mandatory sunset provision.
  - > Expanded number of counties eligible by eliminating millage requirement.
- Established a notification process in law, allowing local governments to describe the local impact of projects delayed or eliminated from FDOT's work program.

### Growth management (SB 360)

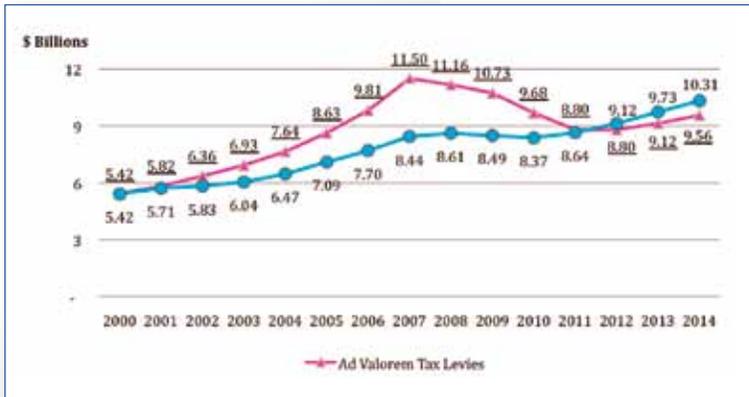
- Helped get home rule language added to growth management bill, preserving local transportation concurrency.
- Ensured the transportation concurrency exception areas (TCEAs) were significantly reduced – from county-wide to limited urban service areas.

## What Will Happen

**FAC priorities:** FAC will fight hard to implement the six member priorities passed this year:

- Regional Transportation Funding
- Home rule in Growth Management
- Defeat TABOR
- Predictable DJJ cost share
- Defeat Medicaid cost increase
- Reinstate CHD rate control exemption

**Federal strike team:** FAC has committed to staying engaged and active in Federal issues facing local county governments.



## County Ad Valorem Tax Comparison

By county fiscal year  
(FY2000-FY2014)

## What Didn't Happen

**TABOR:** Defeated the TABOR bill through collaboration and partnership.

**Trash tax:** Stopped a bill that would have imposed significant new fees and cost shifts on local governments disposal services.

**250:** Defeated 250 bills or issues that would have preempted local government, shifted state costs to counties and general unfunded mandates.

## Other issues

Too often the importance of county government and local services are inconsequential in Tallahassee - with legislators too quick to preempt county authority and shift state costs down to local taxpayers.

**250** Preemptions/unfunded mandates bills/issues defeated by FAC.

**32** Bills/issues passed supported by FAC.

**23 of 29** Number of priority bills and/or issues FAC was successful in passing or defeating.

*"The Florida Association of Counties is one of the best partners and resources that local governments have in working with the Florida Legislature and state agencies. FAC is a valuable tool that unites Florida's counties in the common cause of representing its citizens as it advocates on our behalf. FAC is also a great communicator, not just as it represents its members before Senate and House decision makers, but also amongst its members providing valuable information, technical advice, and ideas being used by its members to achieve success as local governments. From my personal experience with the Florida Association of Counties over the past ten years as an elected County Commissioner in the State of Florida, I have been fortunate to be associated with the quality and leadership that FAC delivers to the counties that it serves."*

Doug Smith, Chairman  
Martin County Board of County Commissioners  
FAC First Vice President

# Communications



Cragin Mostellar  
Communications Director



*"The daily news clippings provide me with great information not only as to what is happening around the state but how other counties may be solving similar problems that I am facing as a commissioner. The resources that FAC has readily available are invaluable and I encourage every commissioner to look to FAC first to see what help they can provide."*

Fred Hawkins, Jr.  
Chairman Osceola  
County Commission

## What Happened

**Property tax reform:** Released the 1st ever property tax report highlighting cuts made by counties and exemplifying the hard choices counties are forced to make across the state.

**New website:** Launched a completely redesigned and updated website for FAC members to better find the complete resources available to them.

**Launch of Twitter:** Launched and grew a successful social networking strategy with 700 followers on Twitter and Facebook. Join Twitter and follow @flcounties to get the latest updates from Tallahassee.

## What Will Happen

**Better publications:** FAC is constantly looking for new and better ways to communicate with our members. Your time is short but the need for the right information at the right time is vast – FAC will work to better fulfill those needs.

**TABOR campaign:** The TABOR fight will not die for many years yet and FAC will be there every step of the way to provide you, legislators and citizens the tools needed to understand this complicated issue.

**Speakers:** FAC is a member organization and it is time to better share the priorities and goals developed by the collective knowledge of commissioner's from Florida's counties.

# Membership Outreach



Commissioner Frank Halas and Councilwoman Joie Alexander participate in a conference demonstration



Latoya Washington  
Membership and  
Marketing Coordinator

## What Happened

**FAC Ambassador Program:** FAC launched a new Ambassador Program that paired newly elected officials with veteran commissioners. This November our new commissioners will be ready to share their experiences. Every commissioner should sign up to be an Ambassador.

**AAFT:** FAC conducted another successful All About Florida Tour holding events in six regional stops that had attendees from surrounding counties. Look for the annual AAFT coming to a county near you this summer.

**Coming to you!** Counties have cut travel budgets and FAC is committed to visiting our members throughout the year. FAC will continue to visit member counties promoting the cost saving programs available to counties; informing them of the educational opportunities available to them; and obtaining valued member feedback as to how FAC can better serve them.

*"Without the legal, technical, and legislative guidance of the very qualified staff at the Florida Association of Counties, rural counties such as ours would be operating at a real slow pace as though we were still living in the frontier days of Florida's glorious past. We appreciate all of the services that you all provide."*

Gene Hall  
Jefferson County  
Commissioner

## What Will Happen

**Tell us what you think!** FAC is committed to serving its members. FAC will conduct member satisfaction surveys to help determine how to better serve our counties.

**What are your benefits?:** FAC has developed a member benefits statement that detail specific savings by participating in FAC sponsored Enterprise Programs.

**FAC webinars:** FAC Webinars are being developed and expanded to encourage participation from counties whose travel budgets make attending out of county events difficult. Webinars are being held on many subjects from oil drilling to TABOR and all of the major issues facing counties. Let us know what you'd like to learn more about!

# Letter from the Executive Director



This year marks a significant year in FAC's history – for 80 years – we have been advocating for home rule in our counties. And looking back throughout FAC's history one thing is clear – our battles have not changed.

Eighty years ago the Florida Legislature was trying to require counties to put fences along all of their main roads to prevent cattle from crossing streets and blocking the flow of traffic. Over the years, our fight has remained constant: stopping mandates, getting the state to pay their fair share and fighting for reasonable property tax reform.

It can be disheartening looking back over 80 years of history seeing the continual struggle of counties to preserve the right to serve their citizens and develop the community and quality of life being asked of them. But what I find inspiring looking back is the team work that it has taken to fend off preemption after preemption and unfunded mandate after unfunded mandate. Florida's counties have remained firm in their desire to protect themselves, knowing that it is united where we hold the largest impact, knowing that it is working together as a team that has protected counties over the last 80 years and knowing FAC will continue to protect them for the next 80 years.

In 1967 the state of Florida realized the difficulty that comes with running county government and recognized the need to empower counties to take care of their own local issues and provide services directly to their citizens. FAC fought for the 1968 constitutional amendment to provide home rule to county governments.

It has been 42 years since our home rule amendment and it is time for another paradigm shift that impacts and increases home rule with the same effect of the 1968 Constitutional Amendment. We must look ahead and decide what the future of counties and the future of Florida looks like.

The success of your organization depends on the support and encouragement of you, our members. Just as we joined together to fight for revisions to Article V in the late 90's we must band together now to improve our association, our communities and our state.

FAC has drafted a strategic plan that is committed to advancing our home rule and empowering counties. But as an organization now is the time to think bigger...we must move from this constant tug of war to a partnership with clearly defined roles committed to improving the state of Florida for our communities and the citizens we all represent.

From our founding in 1929, to the 1968 Constitutional Amendment, to the Article V fight to today we have shown that time and time again it is the strength of our union that makes us successful.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Holley  
*Executive Director*



# 2009-2010 FAC Staff

## 2010 FAC Staff

### Executive

Christopher L. Holley – *Executive Director*

Heather DiGiacomo – *Executive Assistant*

### Legislative

John W. Smith – *Legislative Director*

Eric Poole – *Assistant Legislative Director*

Davin Suggs – *Senior Legislative Advocate*

Diana Ferguson – *Legislative Staff Attorney*

Heather Wildermuth – *Senior Legislative Advocate*

Sarah Carroll – *Legislative Advocate*

Valerie Rogers – *Senior Legislative Executive Assistant*

Tracy Kusmierz – *Legislative Executive Assistant*

### Enterprise Programs

John Ricco – *Director of Enterprise Programs*

Elizabeth Newberry – *Financial Services Coordinator*

Stephanie Smith – *Corporate Relations Coordinator*

Latoya Washington – *Membership and Marketing Coordinator*

Becky Berentsen – *Executive Assistant*

### Finance & Administration

Anna R. Doughty, CPA – *Director of Finance & Administration*

Teresa Martin – *Office Manager*

Bobby Swandol – *Information Technology Manager*

Connie Osborn – *Fiscal Coordinator*

Sue Hopkins – *Accounting Assistant*

Michelle Drawdy – *Database Administrative Assistant*

Barbara Bundy – *Receptionist*

### General Counsel

Virginia "Ginger" Delegal – *General Counsel*

Gail Ricks – *Senior Executive Assistant*

### Educational Programs

Letreze Gooding – *Director of Member Services*

Kelli Williams – *Meeting Planner*

### Communications

Cragin Mosteller – *Communications Director*



P.O. Box 549  
Tallahassee, FL 32302  
Phone: 850.922.4300  
Twitter: @flcounties  
[www.fl-counties.com](http://www.fl-counties.com)

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