

Thomas F. McKay, Commissioner President Candidate, Declares Accurate Forum Information

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Thomas F. McKay, Candidate for County Commissioner President, joined the additional nine candidates for County Commissioner in a public forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters Oct. 25 at Leonardtown High School. During the forum his opponent, Jack Russell, repeated his incorrect claim that spending during the McKay term (2002-2006) increased 42% while spending during the Russell term increased 14%.

Mr. McKay stated, "Mr. Russell remains either woefully uninformed or willfully deceptive when it comes to government spending and taxes. However, when you use tax dollars to purchase a \$5 million property valued at just \$3 million, it is probably a good idea to hope that the public will be confused by the numbers".

At Monday night's forum Mr. Russell erroneously included \$20 million that was set aside to reduce the county's debt and \$1.5 million that was set aside for a rainy day fund during the McKay term in his 42% number. These funds were not expenditures, but rather saved the county taxpayers nearly \$35 million in interest and principal payments.

Mr. Russell also fails to tell the citizens that his Board created a separate spending unit, called "the Solid Waste Fund", which spends more than \$4 million each year, including a new tax they created to help fund the spending. When you include only those dollars actually spent on reoccurring expenditures, Russell's four year expenditures were \$766,151,681 compared to McKay's which were \$591,378,553. The facts are, Russell increased spending by 29.55% and increased property taxes by 55% during his four year term.

"Mr. Russell can continue to manipulate the numbers but the residents of St. Mary's County are certainly capable of looking at the true numbers and making up their own minds," stated McKay.

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