

Cagle...from Page 1A

state, we've got to cut some regulations.

"Which means I'm going to put economic development

liaisons in every single agency in order to streamline permitting processes in an effort to get businesses up and running and people employed.

"I also believe that we've got to make sure that we have a \$100 million tax cut in the first 100 days, which is going to help every single Georgia taxpayer."

What that tax cut means for Georgia families is, for a

family of four, the first \$12,000 of that family's income is going to be tax exempt.

"It's the right thing to do, it's going to put money in people's pockets," said Cagle. "And it's going to help ease the burden that people are facing today, particularly on health insurance."

The third ingredient, as Cagle put it, has to do with beefing up Georgia's

infrastructure.

"Building out rural broadband across the state is very critical and very important to me, because the (information) superhighway is the way we access the worldwide marketplace," said Cagle. "Today, we're no longer bound by bricks and mortar in our ability to penetrate the marketplace."

"We can do that anywhere, right here in Blairsville, if we have reliable access to internet. So, we're going to be working to make sure that rural broadband is available and accessible to all, along with building out the road infrastructure that we're going to need."

"I tell people we've got to be willing to go under, we've got to be willing to go over, and we've got to be willing to go around."

Cagle, a former state senator and three-term lieutenant governor, has also committed to adding 500,000 jobs to the Georgia workforce in his first four years as governor, some of which

will be accomplished through expanded education initiatives aimed at employability, such as his College and Career Academy Network.

And as in past elections, Cagle has vowed not to play dirty in order to win the gubernatorial race next year.

"Oftentimes you see these nasty, dirty campaigns that want to tear somebody else down in order to make themselves look good," said Cagle. "And I just think that that's a flawed strategy."

"You want to run on a vision for what you want to accomplish for the state, and that's exactly why I offer myself for this position. I don't need a job - I'm running because I want to make a difference, I want to make an impact in the lives of Georgia citizens."

According to District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, who accompanied Cagle on much of his tour last week, the lieutenant governor will do a series of similar tours until he has visited all the counties in Georgia.



Nita Cagle and Casey Cagle with Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Auditors...from Page 1A

position, and how the net position reflects the overall

financial standing of the county.

"In the bound audit report, there are two statements in the entire report that bring all activities of the entire government together into one," said Pilgrim. "Those two statements are the statement of net position and the statement of activity. The statement of Net position is similar to a balance sheet for a business enterprise."

"These two statements are going to bring all of the activities, whether it be the general fund, all the different special revenue funds, capital projects and even enterprise funds, like the golf course and recreation, together."

According to Pilgrim, the county's net position can be broken down into three categories: Net Investment in Capital Assets, Restricted Net Position and Unrestricted Net Position. Taken together, the three categories help the county to see where it stacks up year over year in its net position.

Net investment in capital assets takes into account all buildings and land owned by the county, net of depreciation and any debt related to those assets. For 2016, the county's net investment in capital assets was \$38,149,388.

Restricted net position, which is the county's equity essentially, is monies that are restricted by enabling legislation or an outside party on how that money, or equity, can be spent. For 2016, the county's restricted net position was \$5,195,938.

The unrestricted net position, the third factor in total net position, was sitting at \$6,374,100 for 2016, and was the remaining balance of equity not tied up in legislation or any other position.

Taken together, the three numbers give a total net position for the county of \$49,719,426, which is up \$534,225 from the county's 2015 net position.

"That was a slightly smaller increase than in prior years due to there being a small decrease in property taxes, increase in sales taxes and then some increases on judicial and public works expenses," said Pilgrim. "That's the county as a whole, as far as net position is concerned."

Also highlighted in the report was an increase in revenue to the General Fund over 2015 by \$52,701, which is roughly a .3 percent increase from fiscal year 2015. From that, local options sales tax increased \$140,270, insurance premium taxes increased \$69,438 and building permit revenues were up \$56,000.

Expenditures also increased 10.4 percent from 2015, or \$1,323,575 for fiscal year 2016.

"Some of the things that led to that increase were that general administration increased to \$366,000," said Pilgrim. "That was largely due to an increase about a \$160,000 in contract services and a \$218,000 increase in capital assets, or capital outlay, which were due to purchasing property and building."

The Unassigned Fund Balance for fiscal year 2016

was \$5,331,469, or roughly 37.9 percent of expenditures, yet another indication that the county's finances are in good order.

"We look at that number often as kind of a reserve," said Pilgrim. "So, if you were to take that 37.9 percent of expenditures, of 2016 expenditures, that would be about four and a half months. So, if there were no revenues coming in, the county could operate about four and a half months with no further revenue."

"Keep in mind, that's very similar to 2015 fiscal's unassigned fund balance, which was \$5,036,128, so the unassigned fund balance did increase almost \$300,000."

In total, the General Fund balance for fiscal year 2016 increased from 2015, from \$5.8 million to just over \$6 million, lending to the reassurance that the county's finances are in top shape.

Pilgrim added that, as far as the audit was concerned, he found no problems while performing the audit nor did he find any complications or points of concern regarding the county's finances.

"We had no difficulties found in performing the audit," said Pilgrim. "I can actually say it was far from that. We had great cooperation from all offices and all elected officials in the county."

"Everyone was very cooperative in helping us perform the audit, provided us the information that we needed and was pleasant in doing so."

Allegheny Lodge #114 annual Fall Barbecue

"For all you that like it "Hawgy-Style", Allegheny Masonic Lodge #114 in Blairsville is having their annual Fall BBQ on Friday, September 29th and Saturday, September 30th. We are cooking and selling whole butts only for \$35. We are taking pre-orders for 96 butts only, so place your order today. Contact Ivy Smith at 478-731-6050 or William White at 478-997-1011 to order your butt. Pick up will be at our Lodge just off the downtown square (behind Cabin Coffee) from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on the day you designate. We will also deliver to you within the city limits if you need us to. This supports a great organization, our Children's Masonic Home of GA, 4-H, Boy Scouts and all our local charities! "Get your butts ordered today!"

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