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PRESS RELEASE
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County Sees Sales Tax Growth in Year of State Decline

**SPLOST COLLECTIONS TOP 1998 PROJECTION; \$38.5
MILLION COLLECTED FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

With the final payment on Spalding County's recently completed 1997-2002 special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST), the County met a goal set in 1998. At that time, Finance Director Jinna Garrison predicted collections would total \$38,480,000. December 2001's SPLOST collections, the last installment of the five-year program, placed total receipts at \$38,565,000.

"Anytime business or government can look out four years and make a projection of this accuracy, it reflects positively on the team members involved," said County Manager William P. Wilson, Jr. "We made a commitment that we would collect \$38.5 million and we met that commitment."

Wilson added that he was pleased with figures showing that sales-tax collections in Spalding County grew by 3.77 percent during 2001. He noted that Spalding County's collections were especially strong, given that statewide tax collections have sagged during the recent recession.

While forecasters initially projected collections as high as \$43 million, county officials have relied on Finance Director Garrison's projection since 1998. The recently completed 1997-2002 SPLOST provided capital funds for numerous projects countywide, including road paving, recycling centers, and recreation projects. The SPLOST also provided funds for the construction of the Green Valley Industrial Park, home to Caterpillar among other industries. Tenants of that industrial park employ hundreds of county residents.

SPLOST is a time-limited special-purpose tax designed to provide funds for capital projects during a specific period of time. Limited to no more than five years, SPLOST must be renewed by the voters before it can be used to support additional projects.

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