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PRESS RELEASE

Low Income Senior Exemption On County Commission Agenda

Jefferson County, February 16, 2011: The Jefferson County Commission is having preliminary discussions regarding Senior Citizen Exemption for Persons Age 65 and Over. This is an additional homestead exemption of up to \$50,000 over and above the standard Homestead Exemption of \$50,000. Counties and Municipalities throughout the state have the option of implementing the additional exemption by passing a local ordinance. This would allow certain low-income seniors an additional exemption on their County taxes.

"A local resident sent an email to all County Commission members asking why some of the neighboring counties had adopted the additional exemption and Jefferson County had not." Stated Angela Gray, Property Appraiser. "We get this question a lot from new residents who have enjoyed the benefit elsewhere and we explain that it is something the local Commission must adopt. This particular homeowner stepped into action and contacted her local leadership and because of her action, it is something that is being considered."

Currently 59 of the 67 counties in Florida have adopted a local ordinance with exemptions ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Most Municipalities in these counties also participate in the process, which the City of Monticello has the option to do as well. "I have prepared projections for the County and the City, which I will gladly present for their consideration." Stated Gray. The County Commission has placed this item on their agenda for this Thursday, February 17th.

If passed, it will likely take affect for the 2012 Tax Year. Qualifications are that the owner must have a current Homestead Exemption; one owner must be 65 years or older as of January 1st; total household adjusted gross income must not exceed the amount established each year based on the Consumer Price Index (2010 was \$26,203); and applied for by March 1st.