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**COUNTY CLERK LAUNCHES NEW TOOL TO SHED
LIGHT ON MACOUPIN COUNTY BUDGET**

MacoupinBudget.com is new web visualization tool to see exactly how your tax dollars are being spent

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Carlinville - Macoupin County taxpayers have a new tool to track how their tax dollars are being spent. At this month's County Board meeting, Macoupin County Clerk Pete Duncan announced the launch of the Macoupin Budget web visualization tool.

The website, MacoupinBudget.com, provides unprecedented access to Macoupin County government budget and expense information. The easy to use tool utilizes interactive charts and graphs to give visitors details on each department's budget, how much money they spent, and what they spent it on for two decades worth of data. This will allow all taxpayers to see trends and themes in spending and keep an eye what their government is doing for them.

"This new tool will open the door to county government financial decision making to every taxpayer," Duncan said. "Making it simpler for everyone to understand Macoupin's budget will not only ensure better, smarter government in tough economic times, but increase openness and transparency in an innovative way. MacoupinBudget.com gives taxpayers the power to shine the light on how tax dollars are being spent."

Previously available financial documents, such as the county's checkbook summaries that Duncan put online in 2012, along with brand new reports, such as yearly expense reports, are also being housed on the site's information page. "By putting all the County's financial data that is online in one destination, we're trying to make it as simple as possible for anyone interested to work through the budget process in the county," Duncan said.

The new web visualization tool was a collaboration between County Clerk Duncan plus his staff and DataMade, an Illinois based company dedicated to civic technology and open government. DataMade had previously used the code to create MacoupinBudget.com for web tools in Washington State, St Louis County and Cook County, though Macoupin's is the first tool to break down expenses to show specific expenditure line items from instead of just showing the total spent by each department.

County Clerk Duncan has been a strong advocate of increased transparency, accountability and efficiency in government. Since taking office, one of Duncan's accomplishments has opened up over four decades

worth of County Board minutes, resolutions and ordinances by placing them on two websites, MacoupinMinutes.com and MacoupinCode.com. His efforts led Macoupin to be named in the top ten of transparent county governments by the Illinois Policy Institute in 2012. MacoupinBudget.com only helps to show that Macoupin County is leading the way in open and transparent government.

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