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Wildwood Tax Flyer Shows Lowest Rate in Region

The City of Wildwood has issued its annual tax flyer, showing the city again ranks lowest in both ad valorem and total tax rates among municipalities in Sumter and surrounding counties.

The 2.8287 rate adopted as part of the budget that took effect Oct. 1 represents the sixth consecutive annual millage rate decrease, attributed to recent growth and development.

Residents pay the city \$2.8287 for each \$1,000 of assessed property value. That amount is collected by Sumter County's tax collector as part of the property owner's consolidated annual tax bill, which also includes taxes for Sumter County, the school board, the water management district, and any other applicable districts. The county distributes the respective share to each taxing authority for use in their annual budgets.

"We work hard to achieve the perfect balance of what we provide residents in exchange for what they contribute, recognizing that many families are still struggling to make ends meet," said Mayor Ed Wolf. "Each vote we cast as commissioners is based on a decision of what we believe will best serve our community both now and in the future."

Compared to neighboring cities, Wildwood's ad valorem rate is more than half a mil (0.5675) below the second lowest, adopted by Lady Lake, and more than a full mil (1.0847) lower than that of Fruitland Park. Combined county, school, and water management taxes for Wildwood residents are nearly three-quarters of a mil (0.7439) lower than for citizens residing in Lake County.

Wildwood spends 35 percent of its tax revenue on public safety, with another 26 percent going to transportation infrastructure. The remaining 39 percent is divided between general government services, culture and recreation, economic development, and debt service.

The amount allocated to debt service, currently 3 percent, has decreased 1 percent each year since 2021.

"We devote a significant amount of time and attention to the budgeting process," said City Manager Jason McHugh. "It is a balancing act that requires us to continually evaluate community needs and projected growth. Because the growth we are experiencing is unprecedented, we use our best judgement, continually monitor, and adjust as necessary. As a public servant, it is rewarding to know your actions are creating positive results."

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