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**MACOUPIN COUNTY RECEIVES TOP HONORS FROM
GOVERNMENT WATCHDOG GROUP FOR
TRANSPARENCY OF ITS WEBSITE**

County ranks second among counties outside of Chicago metro area and sixth overall statewide in Illinois Policy Institute's transparency study

County News: December 1, 2012

Carlinville - The Illinois Policy Institute, a government watchdog group, has been researching county and municipal websites in Illinois for the last several months in hopes of promoting more transparency in government. In addition to websites for many municipalities and school districts, all 102 Illinois Counties were studied by the Institute. As noted on its website, the Illinois Policy Institute said they were in the process of "conducting Local Government Transparency audits of hundreds, and soon thousands, of Illinois' over 6,000 government taxing bodies and working with government administrators to make Illinois more transparent."

With results now in from transparency audits of all 102 Illinois counties, County Clerk Pete Duncan has announced that Macoupin County ranks 6th overall statewide for having the most open and transparent website, and 2nd overall for counties outside the Chicago metropolitan area.

The Illinois Policy Institute created what they call a "Ten Point Transparency Checklist" in their efforts to assess transparency scores for taxing bodies across the state. Their assessments of government websites reviewed whether or not audits, employee salary information, FOIA, public official contacts, or county expenditure ("checkbook") information was readily and publicly available.

County Clerk Pete Duncan said his office and the office of the County Board have worked hard to ensure county residents have a clear look into the window of county government. "People today expect to have the ability to know what's going on with government and want all the information possible at the click of their fingertips," said Duncan. "From my standpoint, receiving a high rank from the Institute is only the first point. Moving forward, I have every intention to continue improving upon our ranking."

Macoupin County was classified as a "Western County" by the Institute and received a 76.4 grade on a 1 to 100 scale, earning the County the highest grade in the region by more than 20 points over Peoria County. The Illinois Policy Institute's full report for all Illinois counties is available at <http://www.illinoispolicy.org/content/?section=503>.

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