

OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

Hide-and-seek game played on taxpayers needs to end

How is it that I can find out at 4 a.m. from my bank's Web how some of my money performs, yet I can't find during business hours how even the smallest fraction of my money — taxes extracted from my wallet by government — is spent?

Maybe politicians realize that if Internet-savvy Kentuckians found out how most of their hard-earned money gets squandered by bureaucrats, they might react as if discovering someone used their ATM pass word to clean out their bank accounts.

The only thing that would make that scenario worse is not knowing you got second until the bounced checks and overdraft charges piled up to the point the cops are knocking on your door.

The same holds true with government spending. The only thing worse for taxpayers than knowing how Frankfort squanders the dollars on polar-bear exhibits and farmers' markets is for them not to know and thus be able to take corrective action.

Gov. Steve Beshear campaigned on the promise of making government more transparent and accountable. He even established a group to study the issue. A recent press release from the Finance and Administration Cabinet stated that the task force would offer recommendations to the governor by Nov. 1 on the creation and implementation of a state plan for campaign purposes.

Conservative Confirmed from Page 2 state plan for campaign purposes. He flew from London, Ky. to Louisville for a Hillary Clinton fund-raising event.

I'm also still fuming about Kentucky Education Commissioner Eric Druud's \$30,000 luxury car purchase with state money. The former Republican state lawmaker requested that the state purchase him a 2008 Chrysler 300 with tons of cushy extras.

His justification for the \$10,000 add-on was that he needed a GPS navigation system so he wouldn't get lost when cross-countrying the state.

There was no excuse for this expenditure when he could have simply purchased the base model of the car and then bought an after market GPS for a couple of hundred bucks. He has since promised to write a personal check to pay the state back for the extras, but has remained arrogant and defensive to his actions.

At a time when Kentuckians are looking for a fairer tax code, stronger economic growth and smarter, more efficient government, these repeated displays of fiscal recklessness are disturbing. It is important to note that Governor Beshear's approval rating was recently at 69 percent. Which leads us to ask, in this tour about getting feedback from constituents for building up the Governor's image?

Instead of seeing Kentucky's cabinet officials out on the shake-and-bowdy circuit, I would much rather drive by the capitol in the evening and see their office lights still on as they burn the midnight oil to create more efficiency in government. We can save the towns halls for later when we've got an electric car big enough to haul them all around in.

Leland Conway is Executive Editor of www.conservativeedge.com and host of "The Politics of Lexington" on 630WLAP. You can reach him for comment at Leland@wlap.com.

a good idea after this fall's election, why isn't it a good idea now? That way, taxpayers could see how their money gets spent and impact accountability via the voting booth.

With a cadre of support among fellow lawmakers, Druud's bill creating a Website for taxpayers to track government spending would have passed. Instead, it went nowhere — the same direction the governor's group seems headed.

About half of all states now have Websites through which the public can track government spending each day. Some, such as Georgia, accomplished this legislatively. Others, like South Carolina, achieved it through a governor's executive order.

If Trey Grayson, secretary of state, can issue an order resulting in an online searchable database of his office's expenditures — while properly addressing legitimate privacy concerns — why can't Gov. Beshear get this state's checkbook online, too?

Thepeople have a right to know about payments, audits and inspections. Such as the Bluegrass Institute, Kentucky's free-market think tank. You can reach him at jwaters@bipps.org.

— Jim Waters is the director of policy and communications for the Bluegrass Institute, Kentucky's free-market think tank. You can reach him at jwaters@bipps.org.

information likely would lead to smaller, less costly, and who knows, maybe even better government. (which may be an oxymoron).

If the governor didn't want to resort to issuing an executive order, he could have pulled his office's bully pulpit out of storage to support Druud's bill and make a passionate case for a government that truly is of, by and for the people.

True to his sound of doggily pushing for federal policy, Druud's bill again during the 2009 session.

Good luck, Jim. You have a group of legislative bosses that resist backroom deals and secretive budget meetings with armed guards, and an administration that drags its feet while claiming to support government reform.

Financing backing for a more transparent government in that environment will be like trying to convince Britney Spears to join a convent.

— Jim Waters is the director of policy and communications for the Bluegrass Institute, Kentucky's free-market think tank. You can reach him at jwaters@bipps.org.

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Pinch of This and a Dash of That

Montana Extension Nutrition Education Program, Website: http://recipfinder.nal.usda.gov. Zucchini Bread 3 eggs, 1 cup sugar, 1/2 cup vegetable oil, 2 cups grated zucchini, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1 and 1/2 cups all purpose flour, 1 and 1/2 cups whole wheat flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 2 teaspoons baking soda, 2 teaspoons cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon baking powder, 1/2 cup raisins, 1) Lightly grease and flour a 9x5 loaf pan. 2) In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs lightly. Add sugar, oil, zucchini, and vanilla and beat. 3) In a separate bowl, measure dry ingredients and stir to combine. Add

nuts and raisins, if desired. 4) Add dry ingredients to the egg mixture. Stir just until all ingredients are moistened. 5) Spoon into loaf pan. 6) Bake at 325 degrees for 50 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting a toothpick in the center. It should come out dry. 7) Allow loaf to cool 5 to 10 minutes before turning out onto a cooling rack. 8) Serve warm or allow to cool before slicing. Nutritional information: Serving size: 1 slice—16 slices in a loaf. Calories: 190; Total fat: 6 grams; Saturated fat: 0.5 grams; Total carbohydrate: 35 grams; Dietary fiber: 2 grams; Protein: 4 grams. Source: Adapted from: Favorite Recipes for Family Meals, Washington State University Extension. http://recipfinder.nal.usda.gov

2 medium (2 and 1/4 cups chopped) zucchini, 4 medium (1 and 1/4 cups grated) carrots, 2 cups chopped broccoli, 12 ounces cheddar cheese, low fat, 1/2 teaspoon oregano, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder, 1/2 teaspoon onion powder, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, 12-16 inch mini-pizzas, 1) Wash vegetables. 2) Remove the broccoli from stems, cut the flowers into small florets and put into mixing bowl. 3) Slice the zucchini into thin slices. Cut each slice into quarters and put into bowl. 4) Grate the cheese and put into a separate bowl. 5) Measure oregano, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and mix together. 6) Heat oil in a skillet. Put the spices in the

Pepper to taste. 3) tablespoons grated parmesan cheese. 4) Wash and slice vegetables. Place zucchini, onion, water, margarine, and pepper in a frying pan. Cover and cook over medium heat for one minute. 5) Remove cover and cook until crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. 6) Sprinkle with cheese; toss lightly. 7) Serve at once. Nutritional information: Serving size: 1/2 cup; Calories: 40; Total fat: 2.5 grams; Saturated fat: 0.5 grams; Total carbohydrate: 4 grams; Dietary fiber: 1 gram; Protein: 2 grams. Source: Adapted from: Eating Right to Beat Nutrition Education Program Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service. http://recipfinder.nal.usda.gov

Basic Quiche 1 (9-inch) baked pie shell, 1 cup chopped vegetables, cooked and drained (broccoli, zucchini, or mushrooms), 1/2 cup shredded cheese, 3 beaten eggs, 1 cup skim milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder. 1) Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. 2) Shred the cheese with a grater. Put it in a small bowl for now. 3) Chop the vegetables until you have 1 cup of chopped vegetables. 4) Cook the vegetables until they are cooked, but still crisp. 5) Put the cooked vegetables and shredded cheese into pie shell. 6) Mix the eggs, milk, salt, pepper, and garlic powder in a bowl. 7) Pour the egg mix over the cheese and vegetables. 8) Bake for 30-40 minutes, or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. 9) Let the quiche cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Veggie Stuffed Pita 2 medium (2 and 1/4 cups chopped) zucchini, 4 medium (1 and 1/4 cups grated) carrots, 2 cups chopped broccoli, 12 ounces cheddar cheese, low fat, 1/2 teaspoon oregano, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder, 1/2 teaspoon onion powder, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, 12-16 inch mini-pizzas, 1) Wash vegetables. 2) Remove the broccoli from stems, cut the flowers into small florets and put into mixing bowl. 3) Slice the zucchini into thin slices. Cut each slice into quarters and put into bowl. 4) Grate the cheese and put into a separate bowl. 5) Measure oregano, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and mix together. 6) Heat oil in a skillet. Put the spices in the

Zucchini Au Gratin 4 cups thinly sliced zucchini, 1 cup sliced onion, 2 tablespoons water, 1 tablespoon margarine

Pepper to taste. 3) tablespoons grated parmesan cheese. 4) Wash and slice vegetables. Place zucchini, onion, water, margarine, and pepper in a frying pan. Cover and cook over medium heat for one minute. 5) Remove cover and cook until crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. 6) Sprinkle with cheese; toss lightly. 7) Serve at once. Nutritional information: Serving size: 1/2 cup; Calories: 40; Total fat: 2.5 grams; Saturated fat: 0.5 grams; Total carbohydrate: 4 grams; Dietary fiber: 1 gram; Protein: 2 grams. Source: Adapted from: Eating Right to Beat Nutrition Education Program Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service. http://recipfinder.nal.usda.gov

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