

DEAR EDITOR:

I am writing this letter in response to a recent letter about our county's debt. It suggested that Putnam County would not be in debt if elected officials had the taxpayers' interest in mind. I want to inform the writer and all citizens in Putnam County that our county is no longer in debt. The jail bond's final payment was due in 2021. It has been refinanced to be paid off in 2016 with all the necessary payments transferred out of the general fund and into a special fund that can only be used for jail payments. Since the money is set aside, I consider the jail paid in full. The landfill closure debt bonds scheduled to be paid off in 2031 was also paid in full.

Paying these debts early required a sacrifice by all of us in the county. All the elected officials took a 15 percent budget cut which was very difficult, but they buckled down and worked harder with less money. I personally thank all of them for our county being out of debt. The cooperation was commendable.

The commissioners also had to raise the sales tax 25 cents on every \$100 spent on taxable items for the purpose of paying the long term county debt. This was a good investment since it saved around \$1,500,000 in future interest payments for our county. In 2013, it may be possible to lower the sales tax. It actually is too early to responsibly promise a reduction in taxes since the state is reducing local government funds, sending more mandates to the counties and future health care cost is an unknown at this time. That possibility will be evaluated in 2013.

Another little fact I haven't noticed in any of the letters to the editor is that Putnam County's 2012 budget is less than in the year 2005. I credit all elected Putnam County officials for these achievements.

Vincent T. Schroeder

Putnam County Commissioner