

1940

*A Statement*  
*to the*  
**TAX PAYERS**  
*of*  
**COLLIER COUNTY**  
**FLORIDA**

Board of County Commissioners

Today tax bills for the tax year 1940 are being mailed to you, and the thought has occurred to us that you would like to have an accounting from us, YOUR employees, as regards our Stewardship.

We think we have done a creditable job for you, but, as you are the judges, we want you to study our report and advise us how we may continue to merit your approval.

Contained herein is a detailed statement of the affairs of COLLIER COUNTY since its establishment in 1923. In view of the ever-mounting taxation throughout the State and Nation there are several points meriting your special consideration.

Please note:

- a. In 1923, when the County was first established, total taxes levied were \$125,296.43, and the total outstanding indebtedness—all inherited from Lee County from which Collier was formed—was \$347,357.45.
- b. In 1923, the only railroad mileage in Collier County was approximately 7 of the Atlantic Coast Line branch extending to Immokalee; there was not a single mile of hard surfaced road; there were approximately 20 miles of trail extending from Bonita Springs to Naples and beyond; there was not a single modern school—Small one or two-room shacks serving as schools at Naples, Caxambas, Marco, Chokoloskee, Everglades and Immokalee; there was not a single mile of telephone or telegraph line; there were less than 1600 people in the entire County.
- c. A development plan was inaugurated in 1923, to carry out which plan bonds and other forms of indebtedness were emitted.
- d. By 1929, population had increased to about 2800; tax levy had increased to \$405,225.99 (approximately  $3\frac{1}{4}$  times as great as in 1923); outstanding indebtedness had increased to \$1,577,826.93 (approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  times as great as in 1923); railroad mileage had increased to 88 with both the Seaboard and the Atlantic Coast Line extending down the West coast to Naples and Collier City, and the Coast Line's main line bisecting the County from the Hendry County line to Everglades; the Tamiami Trail had been completed largely at County expense, the Immokalee-Everglades highway had been completed wholly at County expense, and a fairly good road had been completed from Belle Meade to Caxambas, besides other roads to Corkscrew, Lake Trafford and other parts of the County; the development of a modern school system was well under way with creditable school buildings at Naples, Collier City, Chokoloskee, Everglades, Immokalee and Corkscrew; modern telephone exchanges had been established at Naples and Everglades, and long distance telephone and telegraph service were available at practically all important settlements in the County.
- e. In 1929 all members of your present Board, with the exception of two, took their seats and initiated an intense study of the County's financial affairs with a view of decreasing taxation and facing the Nation-wide depression.
- f. As a result of the study and action taken by your Board and the Board of Public Instruction, in 1940, the tax levy had dropped to \$58,845.15 (47% of the 1923 figure, and only 14.5% of the maximum figure for 1929); outstanding indebtedness had been re-

duced to \$539,515.15 (less than twice the 1923 figure and only 34% of the maximum figure for 1929); the road system had been constantly improved; the Tamiami Trail completed; a splendid highway extended to isolated Collier City, a costly ferry at Marco was eliminated, the Immokalee road was about 50% hard surfaced, and a considerable mileage of good farm roads had been constructed; the school system had been developed to the point where two schools are accredited and the others classed as "Standard" by the State Board of Education, a beautiful building had replaced the antiquated structure at Naples, the schools at Immokalee, Everglades and Chokoloskee had been vastly improved, new schools established at Belle Meade and Fakahatchee, and schools for colored established at Naples, Everglades and Immokalee; the population had risen to 5,082—a threefold increase in 17 years.

- g. As of October 26, 1940, all current bills were paid in full, neither interest nor principal on outstanding indebtedness was in default, all County officials, teachers, bus drivers, etc. received their salaries promptly and in full. On that date the County Board had cash in bank \$73,551.10, and the School Board \$2,112.15.
- h. One astounding record to be noted—one we believe has no duplicate—is that the *total* of all delinquent taxes for *all* years since the formation of the County in 1923 amounts to only \$6,729.06. Of this amount, having accumulated for a number of years, there is due by the Naples, Seaboard & Gulf Railroad \$5,142.57, by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad \$1,498.35, and by *all other taxpayers* \$88.14.

We hope you will read the foregoing carefully and that you will study the table of data given here with a view of informing us whether or not you think we have done a good job for you, and in what manner we can improve the work to be done for you in the future. Please do not think that the results achieved have been effected without incurring the ill will and displeasure of some of our politicians, who would have us build hard surfaced roads to every friend's farm, or to provide monuments in brick and stone for public buildings and schools. Unfortunately that is a fact and, if we are to continue our effort to prevent your being "bled white", as we fear is the unhappy state of taxpayers in many political subdivisions, we will need your continued help and backing.

Lest anyone might think that the rather remarkable showing achieved has been accomplished at the expense of the non-tax-paying electorate, we hope that each of you may visit your County, inspect the roads, public buildings, schools and the facilities offered for the carrying out of County business and the education and social betterment and welfare of the inhabitants of the County. While you will find no architectural triumphs in our public buildings and schools, such as have been erected by most Counties (in neighboring Counties courthouses average in cost about \$200,000 and school buildings in proportion), our public buildings are neat, clean and attractive—the most expensive being the school in Naples, erected at a cost of approximately \$35,000—, fitted up in the modern style prescribed by State and School Authorities, and staffed by excellent teachers who have enabled their schools to be accredited in the highest degree prescribed by the State School Authorities.

Tax Year	Population	Total Assessed Valuation	State and County Millage	Avg. Millage Special School Districts	Total Amount Taxes Levied	Total Payments Through Oct. 1, 1940	% of Taxes Paid	Delinquent Taxes Oct. 1, 1940	Amt. County Outstanding Indebtedness	Amount School Outstanding Indebtedness	Total Outstanding Indebtedness
1923	1,682	\$1,653,360	63 1-2	4	\$125,296.43	\$125,296.43	100.00%	\$ 0.00	\$ 347,357.45	\$ 0.00	\$347,357.45
1924		1,766,440	63 3-4	7	136,717.67	136,717.67	100.00%	0.00	670,596.50	9,087.78	679,684.28
1925	2,277	2,306,841	63 1-2	7 1-3	172,964.07	172,964.07	100.00%	0.00	643,835.55	10,950.35	654,785.90
1926		2,734,546	58 1-2	7 1-3	199,869.77	199,869.77	100.00%	0.00	807,074.60	21,008.49	828,083.09
1927		2,880,434	66	8 3-5	235,337.57	235,337.57	100.00%	0.00	1,493,313.65	36,061.09	1,529,374.74
1928		3,538,166	89	8 3-5	362,243.08	362,243.08	100.00%	0.00	1,429,552.70	53,512.19	1,483,064.89
1929		3,614,406	100 1-2	8 2-5	405,225.99	405,225.99	100.00%	0.00	1,500,791.75	77,035.18	1,577,826.93
1930	2,883	3,703,667	97 1-4	8 2-5	403,418.83	401,664.35	99.56%	1,754.48	1,425,030.80	63,259.71	1,488,290.51
1931		3,637,205	45 7-8	8 2-5	198,958.68	198,145.88	99.59%	812.80	1,339,269.85	55,894.42	1,395,164.27
1932		1,668,380	63 3-8	8 2-5	122,297.24	122,097.72	99.84%	199.52	1,248,508.90	49,894.42	1,298,403.32
1933		1,855,104	61 5-8	8 2-5	127,070.66	125,897.01	99.08%	1,173.65	1,099,747.95	24,662.67	1,124,410.62
1934		1,854,630	87 1-8	10	174,160.39	173,217.00	99.16%	1,468.66	994,987.00	17,362.67	1,012,349.67
1935	4,792	1,585,937	33 1-2	3	57,869.73	57,567.42	99.48%	302.31	834,226.05	10,074.29	844,300.34
1936		1,799,438	27 1-2	10	61,268.67	61,039.12	99.62%	229.55	776,465.10	10,074.29	786,539.39
1937		1,816,871	18 5-8	10	45,760.68	45,593.13	99.64%	167.55	722,704.15	5,882.19	728,586.34
1938		1,899,897	17 5-8	10	46,318.45	46,110.20	99.57%	208.25	671,943.20	3,139.15	675,082.35
1939		1,880,766	20 7-8	10	51,981.11	51,568.82	99.21%	412.29	619,182.25	3,139.15	622,321.40
1940	5,082	1,886,170	23 7-8	10	58,845.15	* 25,655.43			536,376.00	3,139.15	539,515.15
Total delinquent taxes as of October 1, 1940											6,729.06

NOTE: \* Although 1940 taxes are not due until November 1, 1940, about 44% have already been paid.

Let there be some assumption by some taxpayers that some district of the County has been favored to the detriment of others, we state a number of comparisons which are believed to be typical and which should satisfy any reasonable person. It is not possible in

a report such as this to cite any particular taxpayer but, if anyone desires specific information concerning his taxes, it will be a pleasure to us to afford explicit and detailed information.

The following general statements are given as being of possible interest and value.

County	Assessed Valuation	1 9 2 4 Total Millage	Total Taxes	Assessed Valuation	1 9 3 9 Total Millage	Total Taxes
Lee	\$7,476,509	70 7/8	\$525,750.36	\$3,175,488	48 3/4	\$281,561.02
Hendry	\$1,756,820	42 1/4	\$103,913.41	\$ 714,853	78 1/8	\$ 63,298.56
Collier	\$1,766,440	63 3/4	\$136,717.67	\$1,880,766	20 7/8	\$ 51,981.11

Community	1 9 2 3 Area, Acres	Assessed Valuation	1 9 2 9 Area, Acres	Assessed Valuation	1 9 4 0 Area, Acres	Assessed Valuation
Everglades	320	\$ 7,870	760	\$ 39,020	760	\$ 95,195
Naples		\$111,130	5,180	\$255,430	6,778	\$348,865
Marco Island		\$ 31,850		\$ 70,330		\$ 53,155
Chokoloskee		\$ 1,370		\$ 3,690		\$ 6,790
Copeland						\$ 5,210
Ochopee & Birdon						\$ 11,450
Immokalee						\$ 42,765
T. 51 R. 29 (Timbered Tship)		\$ 54,400		\$273,460		\$105,400
T. 53 R. 32 (Untim. Tship)		\$ 17,500		\$ 28,080		\$ 36,800
A hotel at Naples						\$ 10,000
at Everglades						\$ 3,250
at Collier City						\$ 1,700
A golf Course at Naples					120	\$ 2,400
at Everglades					60	\$ 5,650
Western Union Inter-County				\$ 8,460		\$ 4,182
				\$ 1,000		\$ 2,520
A Power Plant at Naples				\$ 500		\$ 2,600
at Everglades				\$ 500		\$ 4,000

Railroad *	1 9 2 3 Mileage	Assessed Valuation	1 9 2 9 Mileage	Assessed Valuation	1 9 4 0 Mileage	Assessed Valuation
A. C. L. Trackage	7.0	\$27,000	76.26	\$230,175	76.26	\$ 55,546
Rolling Stock, etc.		\$ 1,000		\$155,750		\$ 44,414
S. A. L. Rolling Stock, etc.				\$ 23,446		\$ 7,743
N. S. & G. Trackage			12.05	\$ 35,025	12.05	\$ 7,036

\*Note: All assessments on railroads are fixed in Tallahassee and County officials have no jurisdiction thereover.

With your continued help and backing, we shall make good our County's motto:  
"Collier County Cares for Her Own".

Very Respectfully,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,  
COLLIER COUNTY

D. Graham Copeland, Chairman.