

Report: Vanderburgh is state's largest donor county

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INDIANAPOLIS — Those who complain that state government doesn't pay enough attention to Evansville might have a legitimate gripe.

According to a report released today by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute, Vanderburgh County is Indiana's largest donor county. In the last fiscal year, the county contributed \$218.6 million more to the state in taxes than it received in funding.

That's \$1,251.08 per Vanderburgh County resident.

Marion County, Indiana's largest, ranked seventh, while several of its surrounding counties ranked in the top 10 as well.

Meanwhile, rural Cass County was the biggest recipient, receiving \$1,944 more per capita than it pays into state coffers. Southwestern Indiana's Perry County ranked eighth.

"It is clear Indiana's large metropolitan areas are a key driver of tax revenue statewide," said John Ketzenberger, president of the IFPI, which conducted the study in conjunction with Ball State University's Miller College for Business.

Michael Hicks, the director of the university's Center for Business and Economic Research, said that one key reason Vanderburgh County topped the list was sales tax revenue.

Since it's an urban county surrounded by rural ones, he said, Hoosiers travel from counties such as Warrick and Gibson counties to spend money in Evansville. Therefore, the state takes in an inordinately high amount of sales tax dollars from Vanderburgh County.

Dagney Faulk, the director of research at Ball State's Center for Business and Economic Research, noted that while the sales tax numbers partially account for Vanderburgh County's high placement, even without them, the county would still rank near the top.

"Relatively few metro counties are subsidizing the rest of the state," she said.

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