

Sinking in Washington's Deep, Green Fiscal Hole

Know this is the third annual green issue of *BizVoice*®, but I'm going to leave the stories, profiles and analysis to our talented staff, guest authors and, most importantly, the Indiana organizations and individuals working to enhance our environmental performance.



I'm going to share some numbers with you that focus on the other "green" – the dollars and cents (or should that be sense) required to allow those same companies and entrepreneurs to thrive. At the end of this column, you might just draw the conclusion that common sense is missing in action.

Back to the green and a few facts.

- According to the most recent statistics available, the average U.S. private sector salary is just over \$40,000. That comes as companies are eliminating expenses, cutting salaries, trimming benefits and even unfortunately laying off employees just to stay in business.
- The average federal government salary is more than \$71,000. During this recent recession, the percentage of workers earning at least \$100,000 has increased from 14% to 19% of all federal civil servants.
- You might want to brace yourself for this one. In late 2008, one person at the U.S. Department of Transportation had a salary in excess of \$170,000. According to *USA Today*, a lift on a pay cap led to a salary explosion and now 1,690 agency employees top that \$170,000 mark.

Partisan politics, out-of-control spending leading to skyrocketing budget deficits and plenty of other factors are key contributors to the public's mushrooming lack of confidence in Washington. There are many more numbers to back that up (trillions has become commonplace in the deficit discussions), but space runs short in this forum. But the simple figures illustrated above leave one at a loss for answers.

Tom Brokaw has been a network anchor, national correspondent and true voice for the American people over the last 45 years. He also happens to be our keynote speaker for the Indiana Chamber's 21st Annual Awards Dinner on November 9 and subject of a feature article in the next *BizVoice*®. In a recent interview, he told editor Tom Schuman there is a "national anxiety" and people "just don't believe what they're hearing" from the nation's capital. Is there any doubt why?

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Brinegar

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Page 39 photos courtesy of Sara Snow

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BizVOICE®

Publisher

Kevin Brinegar
kbrinegar@indianachamber.com

Editor

Tom Schuman
(317) 264-3792
tschuman@indianachamber.com

Art Director

Tony Spataro
tspataro@indianachamber.com

Managing Editor

Rebecca Patrick
rpatrick@indianachamber.com

Writers/Editors

Candace Gwaltney
cgwaltney@indianachamber.com

Matt L. Ottinger

mottinger@indianachamber.com

Symone C. Skrzycki

sskrzycki@indianachamber.com

Advertising

Jim Wagner
(317) 264-6876
jwagner@indianachamber.com

Contributors

Rich Barker
Bill Barnard
Frank R. DiSilvestro
Kim Galeaz
Jeremy M. Hatfield
Tim Jensen
Jim Thompson

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**Indiana Chamber of Commerce
Chair**

Steve Ferguson
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Indiana Chamber of Commerce
115 W. Washington, Suite 850S
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: (317) 264-3110, Fax: (317) 264-6855
Internet address: www.indianachamber.com
E-mail: bizvoice@indianachamber.com

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