

ARIZONA FEDERATION OF TAXPAYERS

a state chapter of

AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY

NEWS RELEASE

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Champion Tax Cutter to Keynote Taxpayer Awards Luncheon

Former NM Gov. Gary Johnson a “Shining Example” of Fiscal Conservatism

PHOENIX—The Arizona Federation of Taxpayers, a state chapter of Americans for Prosperity (AFT-AFP), announced today that former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson will be the keynote speaker at the group’s annual “Friend of the Taxpayer” Awards Luncheon, which will take place Saturday, December 15, at the Scottsdale Plaza Resort.

In his eight years as governor, Johnson cut state taxes on income, gasoline, and capital gains. He also vetoed 750 pieces of legislation, thereby restraining the rate of budget growth in New Mexico. Further, Johnson’s fiscal restraint allowed Gov. Bill Richardson in 2003 to enact \$36 billion in income and capital gains tax cuts. “Gary Johnson’s achievements are a shining example of how pro-growth, fiscally conservative policies lead to greater prosperity,” said AFT-AFP chairman Chad Kirkpatrick.

AFT-AFP executive director Tom Jenney contrasted Johnson’s fiscal performance with that of Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano. From 1994 to 2002, Johnson held the line against a big-spending Legislature, and prevented the New Mexico state government from taking a larger slice of the state’s economic pie, as measured by personal income. Under Gov. Napolitano, Arizona state government’s portion of the state economy has grown by 27 percent, threatening the state with huge budget deficits and making it more difficult to cut taxes. “Johnson’s record outshines that of Napolitano, who has not only failed to stop runaway government spending, but has been one of the worst offenders,” Jenney said. “Johnson can help remind Arizonans what a fiscally conservative governor looks like.”

AFT-AFP predicts an excellent turnout for the luncheon, which will be timed with the release of this year’s “Friend of the Taxpayer” Legislative Scorecard. The group has also received a good deal of attention recently with the release of its new report card on local tax and budget policy. “The Local Government Scorecard has really stirred people up,” said Kirkpatrick. “They can see that someone is finally holding city and county politicians accountable for their taxing and spending habits.”

Last year, over 200 taxpayer activists came from around the state to the AFT awards luncheon, at which *Wall Street Journal* writer Steve Moore spoke. This year, the group aims to get 400 people to attend. “This will be the grassroots event of the year,” said Kirkpatrick.

For a printable mail-in ticket purchasing form, or for information on becoming a Benefactor or a Sponsor of the luncheon, contact AFT-AFP executive director Tom Jenney at vc@aztaxpayers.org.

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