

# Guest opinion: Let Congress know we must have fiscal restraint plus reform

Written by **Tammy Hall**

**Special to news-press.com**

9:13 PM, Apr. 22, 2011|

As we approached the impending shutdown of the federal government, a critical last-minute \$38.5 billion dollar budget cut deal was struck by Congress and the president to keep the government open for another week. But what we really got were cuts that only reduce federal outlays by \$352 million dollars below 2010 spending rates.

Our legislators need to stop playing games with our hard-earned money and begin to pass resolutions that tackle the debt in a meaningful way. Every level of government must re-examine programs, put in place balanced budget safeguards and be transparent with our citizens. Lee County government is no different. Four years ago we put in place an aggressive debt reduction program that took advantage of favorable interest rates to restructure long-term debt, spent down reserves to maintain tax decreases, and incorporated reductions in all areas including important community programming and services. All of these measures allowed Lee County to retain a strong bond rating and high praise and confidence from financial institutions.

As we move forward with our nation's debt discussion, I invite you to participate with our legislative leaders and let them know that "business as usual" is not acceptable. We expect a balanced budget amendment. We want new safeguards against raising taxes. We must look at reforms for entitlement programs and hold meaningful discussion on the restructuring and consolidation of various federal agencies and departments.

We no longer have the luxury of thinking our voices do not count; America is a great country because of our active citizenry. More than ever we all must participate in order for our United States to remain the world's greatest example of a free and prosperous nation