

## **FINAL AGENDA**

### **State and Local Government Finance amid Economic Turbulence**

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis  
Washington University's  
Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy

April 9, 2010

7:30-8:15am **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

8:15-8:30am **Welcome, Opening Remarks**

8:30-9:30am **Keynote Address: The Current State of State and Local Public Finance**  
Speaker: Ronald C. Fisher, Professor, Michigan State University

*Discuss the changing financial roles of state and local governments since WWII. What are recent budget actions state and local government have taken amid recessions, e.g. taxes, borrowing, expenditure cuts? What are the pros and cons of such actions? What are the difficulties in budgeting during economic downturns?*

9:30-10:45am **An Economic Evaluation of State and Local Taxes**  
Speaker: Ray Nelson, Associate Professor, Brigham Young University

*Discuss short-term variability versus long run growth of various state and local government revenue sources. What are the implications for state and local budgets during economic downturns? Also discuss the tradeoffs – in terms of efficiency, adequacy, and fairness – of the major state and local taxes.*

Discussant: Elizabeth McNichol, Senior Fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

10:45-11:00am Break

11:00-12:15pm **Fiscal Federalism in the United States**  
Speaker: Robert Inman, University of Pennsylvania

*Discuss the expenditure relationship between federal, state and local governments in the U.S and the implications for state and local government finance. Discuss the role of state governments in the implementation of federal fiscal policy.*

Discussant: Paul Rothstein, Federal Trade Commission

12:15-1:15pm Lunch

1:15-2:45pm **Non-traditional Revenue Sources and Implications for Growth**

Speaker: William Fox, Professor, University of Tennessee

*Discuss state and local governments' increasing reliance on non-traditional revenue sources, such as gambling, cigarettes, etc. to fund various social programs. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages in terms of efficiency and revenue adequacy, especially during economic slowdowns.*

Discussant: Gary Wagner, University of Arkansas – Little Rock

2:45-3:00pm Break

3:00-4:45pm **Panel Discussion: The Future of State and Local Government Finance**

*Discuss one or more of the following issues: is our changing economy making current tax system obsolete? Are state and local governments too big – what is proper role for state and local governments? Innovative strategies for state and local government finance? Why do states counter federal fiscal policy, i.e. reduce spending and/or raise taxes? What are the effects?*

Panelists: Robert Tannenwald, Vice President, FRB of Boston  
Chris Edwards, Director of Tax Policy Studies, Cato Institute  
Karl Kurtz, National Council of State Legislatures

4:45-5:30pm Reception