

DioGuardi obsessed by budget

By Laura Knight
Staff Writer

OCALA — The national deficit is an obsession for U.S. Rep. Joe DioGuardi, R-N.Y., Ocala's self-proclaimed "other" congressman.

He was in Ocala this week to check on his family home in west Ocala. He has called himself this city's other congressman since he first won the congressional seat to New York's Westchester County in 1984.

The title Certified Public Accountant that follows DioGuardi's name in his office literature tells the part of the story of where the 47-year-old Republican stands on fiscal issues.

He was a partner for 22 years for the New York accounting firm, Arthur Andersen.

He speaks of fiscal responsibility in Washington and encourages taxpayers to save more money. He doesn't necessarily want to decrease taxes. He just wants to see the budget get balanced.

DioGuardi still has the edge over congressional freshmen, an edge that so often wanes as they realize the laws cannot be changed overnight.

He is a great critic of Washington's bureaucratic waste. And he says it's the constituents who can help turn the waste to order.

"They know how to run their households. They do a better job of running their households than we run the country," DioGuardi said Thursday morning.

In the true fashion of a CPA, DioGuardi has put together a taxpayer's "credit card statement" that breaks down where the nation's taxes go.

The credit card is the voting card every congressman uses to vote on issues, according to DioGuardi. Money spent by the federal government is the taxpayer's credit card bill. Taxes from the private citizen pay that credit card bill, he says.

DioGuardi argues that taxpayers can't understand what \$2.4 trillion in a national deficit means. Citizens can understand that in 1987, \$18,569 was spent for each of the 100 million taxpayers in the U.S.

All of DioGuardi's favorite issues are linked to the two things he knows best — money and family.

With his hands moving as quickly as his words, the son of Italian immigrants tells of his concern of how he thinks these issues are all tied to respect for the family.

He links issues to images of his hard-working father and the close family ties that he says supported him to his present position. DioGuardi's father, who spent winters in Ocala until his death last year,



Berry Davis/HStar-Barrier

DioGuardi uses a prop to explain the deficit.

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U.S. REP JOE DIOGUARDI

was proud of his work as a grocery store owner in the Bronx.

He says he doesn't like how the dignity of people on welfare has been taken from them. He wants to see a program implemented that would teach people employment skills.

He doesn't like it that 2,000 families in his district live in motels because they can't afford the otherwise wealthy county's housing. Housing runs about \$300,000 per home, according to DioGuardi.

He says succeeded in getting subsidized housing for the families.

His activities in committees show the issues, DioGuardi says he stands for. He is a member of the Committees for Banking and Urban Affairs, Government Operations and the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. Drugs are another issue the congressman stresses as too long ignored by Washington.

"Washington is putting out fires," and not organizing their priorities, according to DioGuardi.