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September 20, 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brechner Center names Top 30 FOI Stories of past 30 years

GAINESVILLE, FLA. – In celebration of its 30th anniversary, The Brechner Center for Freedom of Information has selected the top 30 freedom of information stories published in Florida in the past 30 years.

“The story behind the stories,” recognizes more than 60 journalists and 11 Florida newspapers for their use of freedom of information laws in hard-hitting investigative journalism. The articles illustrate the importance of open government laws and reflect how these stories benefitted the public.

The top 30 stories and their authors are featured in a multi-media, online presentation at www.brechner.org/top30. Through personal interviews with many of the journalists who wrote the articles, visitors to the Web site will be able to learn “the story behind the stories.”

“These stories are terrific examples of why access to government information is so important,” said Sandra F. Chance, executive director of the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information. “Without the public’s right-to-know laws, the stories could not have been told and the government reform which followed would not have been possible.”

The project will be unveiled at the Florida FOI Summit on Sept. 21, where each of the top 30 stories and their authors will be recognized. The conference will focus on freedom of information and its importance to journalists, government officials, media lawyers, students, and citizens.

Since 1977, the Brechner Center has served as a resource, education center, and clearinghouse for freedom of information issues. The Center has guided and assisted many journalists, students, attorneys, and citizens in their quest to understand freedom of information laws and ensure an open government. This project is The Center's latest effort to help educate the next generation of journalists and the public about the power and importance of public records.