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## You can pay Montgomery County property tax at fire halls

BY MARK HICKS • THE LEAF-CHRONICLE • JANUARY 5, 2010

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For the second year, county Trustee Brenda Radford will have satellite property tax collection during January at county fire halls.

Radford didn't have specific numbers of how many took advantage of the service during the inaugural year, but she said it was well received.

"Everyone said they appreciated the convenience," she said. "I anticipate we'll have more this year than we did last year as more people find out about satellite tax collection."

The first satellite collection will be Friday at East Montgomery Fire Service.

### COLLECTION POINTS

On the following days, these locations will serve as tax collection sites from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.:

- **Friday** — East Montgomery Volunteer Fire Service, 200 McAdoo Creek Road.
- **Jan. 15** — St. Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Service, 3850 Guthrie Highway.
- **Jan. 22** — Cunningham Volunteer Fire Service, 3967 state Highway 48.
- **Jan. 29** — Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Service, 2274 Dover Road.
- **Feb. 5** — Palmyra, Agriculture Extension Service at Cumberland Heights.

### TAX RELIEF

- **Elderly Homeowner** — Must be 65 or older and provide proof. Annual income cannot exceed \$25,360. Must own home and use as primary residence. Up to \$320 of tax relief available. Deadline is April 5.
- **Disabled Homeowner** — No age limit, but proof must be provided. Must be "totally" and permanently disabled as defined by the Social Security Administration. Annual income cannot exceed \$25,360. Must own home and use as primary residence. Up to \$320 of tax relief available. Deadline is April 5.
- **Disabled Veteran Homeowner** — Must have service-related disability. Must provide identification. Must own home and use as primary residence. Up to \$1,400 of tax relief available.
- **Disabled Veteran Widow(er) Homeowner** — Available to surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who was married to the vet at the time of death. Must provide spouses death certificate. Up to \$1,400 of tax relief available.
- **Clarksville-Montgomery County Tax Freeze** — Allows property taxes to be "frozen" at current rate. Must be 65 or older and provide proof. Annual income cannot exceed \$33,510. Current year tax notice or other proof of ownership required, as is a copy of voter registration card.

For information, call 648-5717.

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Radford relayed an incident at the fire station last year when an elderly man came in to pay more than \$1,000 in property taxes.

"He said he would have forgotten to pay his taxes had he not seen the sign outside the fire hall," she said.

Radford began the satellite collections last year as relief from high gasoline prices.

"While gas isn't \$4 a gallon now, Social Security checks did not increase any this year," she said. "So I'm sure people are looking for many ways to save money."

In addition to the five satellite collection sites, the trustee's office will again be open from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays during February to make paying taxes more convenient. Residents may also drop off payments after hours in the lock box at the trustee's office, Suite 101-B, 350 Pageant Lane.

Also, taxes can be paid at 30 local bank branches.

Property taxes are due March 1.

City residents must pay their city property taxes at the Finance Office on the first floor of City Hall. In addition to mailing payments, residents may pay via the telephone with a credit card by calling 645-7436.

Both city and county residents may apply for tax relief at the county trustee's office.

Those who qualify for tax relief or a tax freeze could net a savings from \$320 to \$1,400 on their property taxes.

Radford said there are more than 3,200 residents on the tax rolls who have qualified for tax relief/freezes.

The deadline to apply or reapply for next fiscal year is April 5.

Residents wanting to apply for the tax help should bring documentation, such as proof of income and age, a death certificate if they are applying for widow benefits and disability information. For married couples, both spouses must sign the application.

New for 2010 is a requirement that income information must be provided for both spouses, Radford said.

She said since she took office in 2006 through 2009, homeowners in the county have reaped \$2.2 million in savings from tax relief/freeze.

Radford said the majority of that amount has been reimbursed by the state, so "the burden has been diminishing for county taxpayers."

"The biggest and largest amounts come back (from the state) to disabled veterans and disabled veterans widows," she said.

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