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Satellite tax collections to begin

By MARK HICKS • The Leaf-Chronicle • January 8, 2009

Paying county property taxes has never been easier.

While the county Trustee's staff can't help with cash, they can assist with convenience.

Trustee Brenda Radford has arranged to collect taxes at county volunteer fire departments during January, and the first satellite collection will be Friday at East Montgomery Volunteer Fire Service.

"I want to make it as convenient as possible for taxpayers to pay their taxes in the neighborhoods where they live in the county and to be able to apply for tax relief at the fire stations," she said.

The initial idea was to help residents in rural areas of the county cut down or avoid a trip into Clarksville to pay their taxes, especially when gas prices were hovering around \$4 per gallon.

Although pump prices are down, the convenience of having the office staff come to the taxpayers will also realize savings.

"We know that grocery prices have not gone down, and while fuel prices for cars have come down, fuel for heating our homes has not," Radford said. "Families are looking for savings, and some people have lost their jobs. Our goal at the Trustee's Office is to keep families in their homes and also to collect the county's taxes."

Convenience and savings are why her office offers so many payment options, she said. In addition to paying at fire stations, local residents can pay taxes at 29 different local banks or drop off their payment after hours at the Trustee's Office lock box.

During February, the office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, and on Feb. 28 — when taxes are due — the office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Also, the staff — either at the office or at the fire halls — may be able to help some folks save more on their tax bill by determining whether they qualify for any tax relief or freezes. If so, they will assist with the application process that could net anywhere from a \$315 to \$1,364 break on property taxes.

Radford said her office has taken 899 applications for tax relief/freezes for the next fiscal year. The deadline to apply is April 6.

City residents can also apply for the tax relief/freeze options through the city's Finance and Revenue Office, One Public Square, or by calling 645-7436 for information.

The County Commission will vote Monday on an agreement that would allow the Trustee's Office to handle both county and city applications for tax relief/freezes.

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.

Mark Hicks covers county and school governments and can be reached at 245-0200 or markhicks@theleafchronicle.com.

SATELLITE COLLECTIONS

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. 16 — St. Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Service, 3850 Guthrie Highway.

Jan. 23 — Cunningham Volunteer Fire Service, 3967 state Highway 48.

Jan. 30 — Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Service, 2274 Dover Road.

Feb. 6 — Palmyra: Agriculture Extension Service at Cumberland Heights

TAX RELIEF

Elderly Homeowner — Must be 65 or older and provide proof. Annual income cannot exceed \$24,790. Must own home and use as primary residence. Up to \$315 of tax relief available. Deadline is April 6.

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 \$24,790. Must own home and use as primary residence. Up to \$315 of tax relief available. Deadline is April 6.

Disabled Veteran Homeowner — Must have service-related disability. Must provide identification. Must own home and use as primary residence. Up to \$1,364 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 \$1,364 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 \$31,780. Current year tax notice or other proof of ownership required, as is a copy of voter registration card.



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