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County officials to have new tax relief details in fall

Income limit increase leaves 600 more eligible

By CHANTAL ESCOTO
The Leaf-Chronicle

Betty Scoggins, 68, hopes the new property tax relief law passed by state legislators last month will make her life a little more manageable.

She said raising the income limit from \$20,000 to \$24,000 a year will make her eligible to receive the state voucher. She works part-time at the Ajax Turner Senior Citizen Center.

"I qualify under the income limits," said Scoggins, whose husband died last year. She has since bought a condominium near the new hospital that came with higher taxes.

"Right now my car is tore up and I'm on a lot of medication. Oh yes, this will definitely help me."

While the new property tax laws for seniors are being worked out, Montgomery County officials won't have the details until the fall.

According to the law, property owners 65 and older, whose combined income is \$24,000 or less, will qualify for the tax relief this year.

Those eligible can apply at the tax collection office when they receive their tax bills. County taxes are due before the end of February. City taxes are due before the end of May.

The law provides for eligible seniors to have all or a portion of their property taxes to be paid by the state, but it is not an exemption, and will be reimbursed for the first year.

After that, the seniors will receive a voucher along with their property tax bills. The voucher should then be submitted to the tax collection office.

Ivette Perez, deputy trustee, said she has seniors, disabled veterans and widows coming into her office wanting the tax relief now.

"We just explain to them that we don't have all the information yet and that we don't even have the tax bills yet (to mail out)," she said.

District 67 state Rep. Joe Pitts said nearly 600 more elderly homeowners in Montgomery County will qualify for the tax relief with the increased income allowance.

Statewide, nearly 60,000 more will qualify.

Pitts, who sponsored the House bill to get the income amount raised, said he was happy to see more support for senior citizens.

"It's gratifying to do it and it was necessary that we include that group," Pitts said.

Other laws passed recently were the Property Tax Freeze Program and Disabled Veteran Tax Relief.

The tax freeze authorizes the city and county to adopt a property tax freeze for homeowners 65 years and older. The income limit to qualify for Montgomery County is \$30,760 and it only applies to a principal residence.

City and county officials should be voting on this measure within the next couple of months.

Moreover, all disabled veteran property owners who have a Department of Veterans rating of "permanent and total" will also receive vouchers for tax relief.

Chantal Escoto covers the military and can be reached by telephone at 245-0742 or by e-mail at chantalescoto@theleafchronicle.com.




Betty Scoggins, 68, looks at a hand of cards held by Leroy Woodard at the Ajax Turner Senior Citizen Center. Scoggins said not having to pay property tax will allow her to pay for her medicines and other costs.

FOR MORE

- Call the Montgomery County Trustee's office at 648-5717, or go to the state Web site at <http://www.comptroller.state.tn.us/>.

This article does not have any comments associated with it

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