



## Veterans tax relief details ready

### Trustee's Office has set aside two Saturdays to help applicants with paperwork

By CHANTAL ESCOTO  
The Leaf-Chronicle

The Montgomery County Trustee's Office is hoping to make it easier for those homeowners applying for the Veterans Property Tax Relief benefit this year.

State legislation made effective July 1 says all veterans who are rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs with a "total and permanent" disability should qualify for the tax relief. The change to the law includes service-connected disabled veterans instead of only combat-related injuries and illness.

That will bring the number of eligible veterans from 80 to about 500 in Montgomery County who could apply.

Trustee Brenda Radford met with the Veterans Property Tax Committee last week to put in place a system for how to apply. Montgomery County has the third-largest concentration of veterans in the state, Radford said.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for veterans to receive the tax relief," Radford said, who also will help applicants apply for the city property tax relief.

Applicants can apply for up to \$1,374 in tax relief from the county.

Because the county tax bills should be mailed out the first week of October, Radford wants to be sure eligible veterans don't get overwhelmed with trying to figure out the paperwork by themselves. The F-16 form will be available at the Trustee's Office, which gives consent to the state to access information about the veteran from the VA. This is why the Trustee's Office is holding two meetings for veterans to help with the paperwork.

"If we don't prepare, we may have people waiting outside the door," said Deputy Trustee Jo Ann Baggett.

For those applying for the property tax relief for the first time, the veteran or their mortgage company must first pay the county and city taxes to the Trustee's Office before the Feb. 29 deadline. The payment and paperwork will then be sent to the state, which will contact the VA for verification and eligibility. Upon approval, the state will refund the tax amount paid.

Retired Command Sergeant Major Noel Pritzel, spokesman for the local Veterans Property Tax Committee, said it's a good start to getting the information out.

"The meeting was extremely productive," Pritzel said. "We want to make sure the Trustee's Office isn't bombarded with people who aren't qualified. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a system of processing and to get in and out in an expedient manner. That will only occur if they bring the proper paperwork with them."

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#### FOR MORE

- The Trustee Office, 350 Pageant Lane, has set aside two Saturdays to help veterans fill out the necessary paperwork for property-tax relief:

**Oct. 20** — 9 a.m.-noon

**Nov. 3** — 9 a.m.-noon

- The eligible veteran, widow or their authorized representative will need to bring a military photo ID, Social Security card and Medicare card if applicable. If the spouse's name is on the tax bill notice, the spouse will also need to attend.

- To qualify for the Veterans Property Tax Relief the words "permanent and total" must be listed on the veteran's rating decision paper received from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

- If you are unsure about your rating, call the VA at (800) 827-1000 or go to <http://www.va.gov/>.

Other helpful numbers:

- Veterans Property Tax Information — 648-4292
- Montgomery County Trustee — 648-5717
- City tax collection office — 648-6146



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