

What you need to know about property taxes

BY CHERYL ARMITAGE

In Harris County, there are a number of elderly tax payers that don't have their "over 65 exemptions" and this is a disgrace. No elderly over 65 should lose his or her property due to delinquent property taxes. There are a number of homeowners who don't have their homestead exemptions. There are many ways that property owners can save on their property taxes.

Taxpayers' Rights, Remedies and Responsibilities

THE BASIC

Property Taxes Help To Pay For Public Schools, City Streets, County Roads, Police, Fire Protection, and Many Other Services.

- Property taxes are local taxes.
- Your local officials value your property. Set your tax rates and collect your taxes.
- Property taxes are based on the value of the property.

Texas Constitution Sets Five (5) Rules For The Property Taxes

- Taxation must be equal and uniform.
- With some exceptions, all tangible property must be taxed on its current market value. The exceptions include agricultural land and timberland.
- All property is taxable unless a federal or state law provides an exemption for it.
- Property owners have a right to reasonable notice of increase in appraised property value.
- Each property in a county must have one appraised value.

HOW DOES THE SYSTEM WORK?

There are Three (3) parts to the Property Tax System in Texas

- The appraisal district sets the value of your property each year. A chief Appraiser is the chief administrator.
- The appraisal review board (ARB) settles disagreements between the property owner and the appraisal district regarding the value of the property.
- Taxing units decide how much they will spend and determine the total amount of taxes that you pay.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 1 – marks the beginning of the appraisal
- April 30 – Notices are sent
- May 31 – File your protest
- October 1 – Taxes bills are sent
- January 31 – Taxes are due
- February 1 – penalty and interest charges begin accumulating on most unpaid tax bills and Tax Collectors may start legal action to collect unpaid taxes