

3 STEPS TO PAYING THE LOWEST PROPERTY TAXES POSSIBLE

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We have recently received many questions relating to real estate taxes and how to lower them or contest them. It seems as though real estate property taxes rise each year, whether or not the value of the underlying property went up.

The truth is everyone feels as though their property taxes are too high, even if they are living in a low property tax state. The good news is you can usually fight your property tax assessment, but you typically have only a limited window of time in which to appeal your assessment; in some communities it takes some time for your appeal to be heard, and you'll have to keep paying the full amount you're assessed while the appeal

is ongoing, then get a refund on the other side.

There are three easy steps you should take to make sure you're paying the least amount (legally) for your property taxes.

1 — Make sure you're taking all of the exemptions to which you're entitled.

Many areas allow you to take a benefit of owning a home and having it as your primary residence. In some locations it may be called a homeownership exemption or homestead exemptions. And in some areas seniors get additional tax breaks. You need to know what tax breaks are offered in your area and make sure that you take them.

If you miss taking the exemptions to which you're entitled, and suddenly figured out you could be saving big

bucks, you may be able to go back retroactively for a short period of time (a few years) to try and claim the exemption. In some counties, you won't be able to claim exemptions for past years and will only be able to claim it for the current year.

2 — Understand when your assessment or property value changes and when you need to make your appeal.

These dates and time periods fluctuate all over the country. In Cook County, Ill., which is one of the most populous counties in the country, tax assessment notices are sent on a rolling basis. Every third year (called a triennial reassessment), your city or neighborhood will be reassessed. You'll then have roughly six to seven weeks between the time the notices are mailed and

when your assessment is due to file your appeal. In the state of Georgia, there is a uniform appeal form you must file within 45 days of receiving your assessment. In Travis County, Texas, notices of appraised value are typically mailed in April, and you then have 30 days to file your appeal.

Most county assessor's websites have this information online. If not, you can call your county assessor's office to get the specific dates for your home's reassessment and appeal deadlines. And, you need to remember that the terminology changes from state to state. We talk about the assessment of a property, but in some states they may use different terms. If you check the website for your local taxing body, you might obtain more information about

your taxes online. Or, you might have to call the taxing body or go into their office and get more information.

3 — Make sure the homes you compare your property to are in the same tax classification.

When the pros appeal a property tax assessment, they know they have to find comparable properties in the same tax classification. If you compare your home to properties in other tax classifications, your appeal likely won't work.

Your county assessor's office should be able to provide your home's tax classification, as well as others. You should find homes that are about the same age, size and with the same amenities that are paying less in taxes than you are when creating your appeal package.



PHILLIPS RESERVOIR PROPERTY - REDUCED - BAKER COUNTY, BAKER CITY, OR - 21 miles from Baker City, the property offers a beautiful timbered estate, gorgeous views and year round recreation opportunities. This property has a little over 2 acres in a secluded area bordering the National Forest boundary. **\$295,000 #RG00117**



BALLARD CREEK - BAKER COUNTY/OXBOW, OR - 160 acres hunters paradise surrounded by BLM and NF 3 sides. Good water and timber. Zoned timber/grazing. **\$160,000 #RG01916**

SALMON CREEK RANCH - PENDING - BAKER COUNTY, BAKER CITY, OR - 42 acres, home, equestrian facility, timber, pasture, springs and USFS adjacent. 6 mil from town. **\$599,000. #RG00115**

COUSE CREEK PROPERTY - SOLD - UMATILLA COUNTY, MILTON-FREEWATER, OR: 16.93 acres with 14.5 acres fenced and crossed fenced in pasture. Craftsman style, 1,442 sq. ft. home. Outbuildings include double car garage/cook house, machine shed and shop. Couse Creek runs through property. **\$380,000. #RG03016**

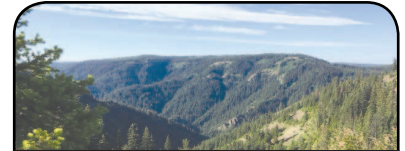
STEVENSON FARM #1 - UMATILLA COUNTY/PENDLETON, OR: Development potential on this 76.37 acre parcel. Zoned to allow the creation of 4ea nine acre lots with 40+ acres of river bottom remaining for recreation. **\$350,000. #RG02415**

Big Buttercreek CRP - Morrow County/Echo, OR: CRP income property. 186.9 acres of land with 157.7 acres of CRP. Annual CRP payment of \$10,992 with power and well located on the property. CRP contract runs through 2020. The balance of the property is range pasture. **\$295,000. #RG03515**

McNamara Trust CRP - Umatilla County/Pendleton, OR: 150.64 total acres of which 142 acres currently enrolled in CRP. Great potential home site near Pendleton with power located near property. **\$250,000. #RG00716**

ELKHORN MOUNTAIN GETAWAY RANCH - BAKER COUNTY/BAKER CITY, OR: 230 +/- acres timber parcel located between Rock Creek and Muddy Creek. Adjacent to ODFW area at the base of the Elkhorn Mountains. Located 8 mi West of Haines. **\$230,000. #RG00717**

STEVENSON FARM #2 - PENDING - UMATILLA COUNTY/PENDLETON, OR: Potentially buildable lot of record. 39.24 acres with great views of the Blue Mountains. Adjacent to a County road and 1/2 mile to power. Past uses include wheat production. **\$150,000. #RG02515**



SKEELS PROPERTY - UNION COUNTY, UNION, OR - Secluded buildable 80 +/- acres near Tollgate and the Spout Springs Ski Resort. Mixed timbered and open parcel on the breaks of Lookingglass Creek. Forest Road access is seasonal. Bordered on 2 sides by Umatilla National Forest. Great view property. **WMU 56. \$290,000. #RG02316**



OLD RATTRAY RANCH WEST - GILLIAM COUNTY, CONDON, OR - 939.75 total acres. Property consisting of 612.27 acres of range, 229.52 acres currently in wheat production, and 97.96 acres of CRP. Abundant deer and upland birds with occasional elk. **\$385,979. #RG02516**

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