

County explains 2011 property taxes

Approximately 188,000 property tax statements will be mailed to Washington County property owners by October 25. In the weeks that follow, staff in the County's Department of Assessment & Taxation will assist the public with a variety of inquiries, including how property tax bills are determined, what local services are paid for and what the options are for an appeal.

Property Taxes in Oregon pay for local services. This year the average property tax dollar in Washington County breaks down in the following manner:

- 18 cents for County government services (Public safety, road improvements, libraries, elections, public health, etc.)
- 32 cents for neighborhood services provided by cities and special districts (police, fire protection, parks and water, Urban Road Maintenance District, Enhanced Sheriff's Patrol District and Urban Renewal Projects)
- 47 cents for Education (K-12, Portland Community College, Education Service District)
- 3 cents for Regional Services provided by Metro, Tri-Met and Port of Portland.

Tax statements reflect the amount of tax paid to each taxing district that provides service in the area where the property is located. Tax rates vary based on the unique mix of taxing districts in a given location called a tax code area. There are 279 separate tax code areas in

Washington County this year.

This year's property tax statements account for a total of \$801 million, which will pay for the services mentioned above. These services are provided by 49 local taxing districts (cities, county, special districts, schools, regional governments) throughout the County. This is an increase of about 2.28 percent or \$17.9 million compared to last year. The increase in taxes is due to several factors, including the 3 percent increase in assessed value on most properties, additional value from new construction activity and new or increased taxing district levies.

The most common question taxpayers have is, "Why did my taxes go up when my market value went down?"

In most cases your tax statement includes two values: the Real Market Value and Assessed Value (which is used to calculate your tax bill).

The Real Market Value represents the market value of your property as of the assessment date of January 1, 2011.

It is important to understand that your property taxes are based on your Assessed Value, not market value. Therefore, a decline in the market value does not automatically reduce your property taxes.

Another reason why your tax bill may have increased is because the tax bill is calculated taking "Assessed Value times a rate." As voters approve tax measures the tax rate increases and then the tax bill increases.

For more information, refer to Publications / A&T Brochure on our website or call 503-846-8826.

There are new Levies or Bonds approved or reauthorized by the voters that will be reflected in this year's tax bill. The majority of taxpayers, approximately 156,000 accounts, will receive tax statements that have increased when compared with last year. Approximately 149,000 accounts will have tax increases between 0 and 5 percent, and 7,000 accounts increase over 5 percent. Additionally, approximately 26,000 taxpayer accounts will reflect a tax decrease. The majority of these reductions are due primarily to local option levies expiring, compression, or the taxing districts levying a lesser amount.

Values and Appeals

The tax statement includes a section on current and prior-year values. Taxpayers concerned that their Assessed Value or Real Market Value is too high should call the Appraisal Division at 503-846-8826 to discuss the basis for their property's appraisal.

See Property on page 14

Lap warmers now on special at Bonnie L. Hays Animal Shelter

Brrrr...the weather is getting chilly! It's time to sit next to the fire and sip hot chocolate. Or better yet, adopt a lap warmer. Cats and kittens are on special through November 18 at the Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter in Hillsboro.

"If you think that it's too late in the year to adopt a cuddly little kitten, you're in for a happy surprise," says Deborah Wood, manager of Animal Services for Washington County.

"The last two years we've had extremely long kitten seasons. We just keep getting kittens...and kittens...and kittens...and kittens. We have a lot of warm, furry lap warmers looking for great homes," says Wood.

For those who prefer a gorgeous adult cat, the shelter is bursting at the seams with choices. "Long-haired, short-haired, active, mellow, male, female - take your pick," says Wood.

The summer kitten season adoption prices are still in effect. "Adult cats are only \$10. Kittens are \$80 for the first kitten, half-off for a second kitten," says Wood.

All cats are spayed or neutered, microchipped, up-to-date on shots, and test negative for major cat diseases (FIV and FeLV). Washington County area veterinarians will provide a free introductory check-up for pets adopted from the shelter, as well. "The total value of these services is about \$250," says Wood.

Adoption hours are 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays and from noon to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. The shelter is closed on Sundays. It is located at 1901 SE 24th Avenue in Hillsboro, just in front of Lowe's on Tualatin Valley Highway. The phone number is 503-846-7041.

Kitten Food Donations Welcome: "All our animals are fed by donations from our generous community," says Wood. "We aren't in a crisis yet, but donations of kitten food would help to make sure the cupboards stay full."

To see adoptable animals and learn more about the shelter: www.WashingtonCountyPets.com.

Main Street Pizza

680 S. Main
Oak Village Shopping Center
Banks, Oregon
503-324-5858

Receive \$2 off any large Pizza.

\$2⁰⁰ Off

Expires 11-30-11. Coupons cannot be sold or duplicated.

Main Street Pizza

680 S. Main
Oak Village Shopping Center
Banks, Oregon
503-324-5858

Receive \$1 off any medium Pizza.

\$1⁰⁰ Off

Expires 11-30-11. Coupons cannot be sold or duplicated.

**WANT SOMETHING DEPENDABLE?
WE HAVE IT!**

Power through outdoor clutter with the BG 55 STIHL HomeScaper Series™ handheld blower. This gas leaf blower quickly clears leaves and grass clippings from driveways and sidewalks.



Stihl BG 55 Handheld Blower \$149⁹⁵
Electric Blowers starting at \$99⁹⁵

Buy a Stihl MS 290 Chain Saw and get a Stihl Carrying Case for Free*. MS 290, our most popular model. Designed for rugged farm use. *\$39.⁹⁵ value. Offer ends Nov. 12.



Stihl MS 290 Chain Saw with 20" bar \$399⁹⁵

PRECISION OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT

Banks Hardware
503-324-5221 • 150 N. Main St., Banks

- Mon - Fri 8am to 6pm
- Saturday 8am to 5pm
- Sunday 10am to 4pm

STIHL®