



PROPERTY APPRAISER

PEDRO J. GARCIA



All About Your 2012 TRIM Notice: Please Read Carefully

A Message from Your Property Appraiser

Last year we started seeing the early stages of a stabilizing real estate market and property values, indicating that our community was on the road to recovery. This year I can say with even greater certainty that after four tumultuous years of decline, property values in Miami-Dade are unquestionably on the rebound.

While the overall news is good, with a near two-percent county-wide growth in taxable values, some cities have not yet rebounded. However, in these areas, the property values have not declined by double-digits as in previous years. In summary, as we move forward, the outlook appears to be good.



I wish to draw your attention to the enclosed TRIM Notice. As I have said to property owners at many of the community and business meetings I attend, this is one of the most important documents you will receive from my Office. I ask that you take the time to read it carefully. This document gives

you a snapshot of your property value, exemptions (if any), proposed millage (tax) rates and taxes, and budget hearing information.

If you have questions about property values and exemptions in this Notice, please call us at 786-331-5321. If you need personal attention, my offices in Downtown Miami and at the South Dade Government Center are open to you Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Questions regarding your proposed taxes should be addressed to the respective taxing authority by call the number listed. My Office does not set tax rates or collect taxes.

I would also like to let you know that since taking office in 2009, I have made great strides in rooting out Homestead Exemption fraud in Miami-Dade County. This is a problem in our community that I take very seriously. For every person who evades taxation, it shifts the burden to the rest of us law-abiding property owners who have to pick up the difference through higher property taxes. Let me be clear - I have dedicated resources to aggressively investigate exemption fraud and compliance over the last four years. I have more than doubled my office's investigative staff and added six detectives from the Economic Crimes Bureau of the Miami-Dade County Police Department.

Owners reaping the illegal benefits of property tax exemptions will pay significantly more in the long run. Exemption liens can impose back-taxes up to 10 years. Typically these liens can be in excess of \$10,000, including a 50% penalty and 15% interest. Since January 2012, we have issued a record \$30 million in exemption lien notices.

The law requires property owners to notify the Property Appraiser's Office when they are no longer entitled to an exemption. I would like caution those individuals who obtain or retain exemption benefits illicitly that they will be aggressively pursued.

If you know someone claiming homestead or any other exemption to which they are not entitled, you can report them anonymously by calling 786-331-5321 or e-mailing the information to www.pawebmail.gov.

Pedro J. Garcia
Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser

Legislative Update

This November, Florida voters will get to decide on several important constitutional amendments related to property valuation and taxation. The following is a summary of those ballot items.

Enhanced Senior Exemption: This proposed amendment would benefit a homeowner who qualifies for the senior citizen exemption, whose home market value does not exceed \$250,000 and who has lived on the property continuously for at least 25 years. It would allow counties and municipalities to grant an additional homestead tax exemption to such a homeowner, equal to the assessed value of homesteaded property.

Exempting Property Taxes for the Surviving Spouse of A First Responder Who Died In the Line of Duty: This amendment would authorize the Legislature to totally or partially exempt from ad valorem taxation the homestead property of the surviving spouse of a first responder killed in the line of duty. The amendment defines First Responder as a law enforcement officer, a correctional officer, a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, or a paramedic.

Expanded Veteran Discount Exemption: Currently, the law allows a tax discount on the homesteaded property of a veteran who became disabled as a result of a combat injury. However, to qualify, the veteran needed to have been a Florida resident when s/he joined the service. This amendment would expand the availability of the property tax discount to include those who were not Florida residents when they entered the military.

Limits the Save Our Homes Recapture Law: The Save Our Homes feature of Amendment 10, as it was enacted in 1994, required the Property Appraiser to increase the assessment of a homesteaded property by three percent or the CPI (whichever was lower) as long as the assessed value of the property was less than the market value. This was known as the Recapture Rule. As a result, in years when the real estate market was in decline, homeowners could see their assessed value go up, even though their market value had gone down. This proposed amendment would prevent an increase in the assessed value of the property when the market value decreases.

Reduction in the Non-Homestead Cap: Currently, the law limits any increase in the assessment of non-homesteaded property to 10-percent. This amendment would set that limit at 5-percent.

Additional Homestead Exemption for owners of homestead property who have not owned homestead property for three years: In general, property owners who have not owned property within three previous calendar years can receive an additional homestead exemption within one year of purchasing a new property. The additional exemption is an amount equal to 50 percent of the property's market value once the homestead exemption is established, and cannot exceed the median market value of all homesteaded property within the county where the property is located, for the calendar year immediately preceding January 1 of the year the homestead is established. The additional exemption shall apply for five-years or the year of sale of the property. The amount of the additional exemption shall be reduced in each subsequent year by an amount equal to 20 percent of the amount of the initial new exemption or by an amount equal to the Save Our Homes difference, whichever is greater. The additional homestead exemption shall apply to all levies except school districts and is not available in the sixth and subsequent years after it is first received.

Increased Tangible Business Property Tax Exemption

This proposed amendment would provide an exemption from ad valorem taxes levied by counties, municipalities, school districts, and other local governments on tangible personal property, if the assessed value of an owner's tangible personal property is greater than \$25,000, but less than \$50,000. Also authorize a county or municipality for the purpose of its respective levy, and as provided by general law, to provide tangible personal property tax exemptions by ordinance.

Online Tools Available To You

The Property Appraiser's Office is constantly working to upgrade and expand the services available on its website www.miamidade.gov/pa, the ultimate goal being the creation of a 'virtual office.'

Need another copy of your TRIM Notice? Do you want to see how your 2012 taxes are being distributed? Or do you want to file an exemption application? These services and more are available on the website.

Here's a listing of the available online services:

- Tax Visualizer
- Tax Comparison
- Tax Estimator
- Track Your Exemption Application Status
- Property Sales
- Homestead Exemption and Portability
- Renew Senior Exemption Online
- Property Search
- TRIM Notice

Of course if you require personal attention, our Downtown Miami and South Dade Government Center offices are open 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.