

Too the victors...

editorial

By now you've heard the news shouted on high.

The state supreme court quit its foot-dragging and, seemingly just before the clock rang 2007, came down with a decision in favor of Incline's tax revolters.

The Champagne corks popped, the sighs of relief blew out last week's storm front and the PO boxes were checked Monday for five years worth of rebates.

... Well, not really.

But now does come the interesting part: Tax revolters, like any impassioned group, are sometimes subject to hyperbole, but they are not exaggerating about the far-reaching and historic ramifications of last week's decision.

A three-pronged look at the fallout is as such:

- The decision locally. A petition is now available on the group's Web site: nevadapropertytaxrevolt.org for each of the 9,000-plus privately held parcels in Incline Village/Crystal Bay. This is the "fallout" that tax revolters have been waiting for and the county has feared. If there is, indeed, a wholesale refund of property taxes the county could be swimming in up to \$50 million of money owed (taxes back with interest). There's no telling what kind belt-tightening this would mean for the county, schools, sheriff and fire - but the amount of staff time

and energy spent just figuring out who gets what would also be astronomical.

- A decision state-wide. The 2007 legislature is coming up and with lawmakers like Sen. Randolph Townsend in support of the effort there is almost a guarantee that some kind of sweeping property tax reform will begin to take shape. That the legislature, which also has the arcane habit of meeting every other year, resulting in a dearth of fast action, may also be a topic of much concern.

- A decision nationally. Tax revolters in Idaho are already deluging their lawmakers with e-mails, e-bulletins and the good-old-fashioned handwritten letters. Similar efforts in Florida and New Jersey may also take root. Of course, there is no "perfect" property tax solution. California's Prop. 13, which many Nevadans refer to as a great catch-all solution, has more holes than a box of Krispy Kremes.

What we, at the Bonanza can do is hope that tax revolters don't get greedy or power-hungry. There is a cross-roads here. The group could be the leaders in a nation-wide movement for fair assessment. They also have the power to bankrupt a county. We are confident the battle-cry of fairness for all will not be lost on those who've worked so hard as the underdogs, who have earned the upper hand.

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