

Tax Revolt: Five years later

With '08-'09 assessments set to be issued soon, the residents directly involved with the Incline Village / Crystal Bay tax revolt are hoping for a large appellant turnout

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When Crystal Bay resident Gary Taylor put his assessed property value appeal in an Incline Village mailbox on Jan. 5 of this year, he expected it to arrive at the Washoe County Assessor's Office in Reno a few days later.

But a few days turned into three weeks, and the appeal arrived at the bottom of Mt. Rose well past Jan. 15.

What makes that significant? Jan. 15 is the appeal deadline, meaning Taylor was not one of the 1,000 Incline Village and Crystal Bay residents who submitted their appeals in time. Those 1,000 all received refunds earlier this year.

Taylor said he doesn't want to make the same mistake come the turn of the year.

"There was a whole slew of us that mailed them early, and they disappeared in a black hole," Taylor said. "So now we're going to hand-deliver it."

Taylor will get that chance soon, as the assessed property land values for the 2008-2009 tax year are expected to be mailed within a month.

Wayne Fischer, a member of the Village League to Save Incline Assets, the nonprofit group of Incline tax protesters, was one of the 1,000 appellants who got his petition in by the Jan. 15 deadline. He said he was among the group who hand-delivered almost all the appeals, in two large boxes, to the assessor's office in Reno.

Fischer said 1,000 appeals won't be enough this year.

"I would like to see at least 3,000 people file appeals, and maybe even more," Fischer said.

John Faulkner, chief deputy assessor with the Washoe County Assessor's Office in Reno, said his office doesn't know an exact date as to when the '08-'09 assessments will be issued to all county parcels.

He said the latest the assessments can be mailed is Dec. 31.

"We really don't have a set date yet," he said. "We definitely want to get them out as soon as possible, but we also have to make sure they're all correct. We'd rather take a little bit more time and make sure they are correct, but it would be nice to get them out there early to give citizens a chance to look at them and appeal if they choose."

Fischer said one problem with the appeal process is that assessments are sent out near the Christmas holiday; it can be easy to forget to mail in the appeal.

"I think probably 90 percent of people forgot about it last year because of the holidays," Fischer said.

As for what the assessments will reveal, Fischer and Maryanne Ingemanson, president of the Village League, both said they've heard rumors of properties doubling, some even tripling.

Ingemanson said she expects a large volume of appeals to be submitted to the assessor's office because the Village League has been persistent for the past five years.

"I think there will be a lot more (appeals) this year because they know we're getting things done," she said. "Frankly, the tax system is

broken, and I don't know how they're going to fix it."

If citizens choose to appeal the 2008-2009 assessed property values, they have until 5 p.m. on Jan. 15, 2008, to file a petition for appeal. Jan. 15 is the deadline every year, Faulkner said, unless the 15th falls on a weekend. Then citizens

Petitions for appeal can be obtained from the Washoe County Assessor's Office or Department of Taxation, Faulkner said.

"The best thing to do is call our office and let them know you want to appeal," Faulkner said.

Dave Simon, who lives at 235 Pine Cone Road, said he plans to file an appeal by the Jan. 15 deadline. He said every Incline Village resident should receive a hearing, not just the people who file a timely appeal.

"It doesn't make sense to give an appeal to 300 people when everyone deserves it," he said.

Simon recommended the district or Village League hold a periodic public forum to inform people in person what their options are.

"It would be good, every once in awhile," Simon said. "To explain the situation to everyone so everyone has a mutual understanding of what is going on."

For others like Simon who are planning to file an appeal, Fischer said the Village League Web site will provide explicit instructions on how to obtain and file an appeal by the Jan. 15 deadline.

People have the option to represent themselves in a petition for appeal, or they can choose to be represented by the Village League, Fischer said. Instructions on how to be represented by the Village League also will be given with instructions on how to file the appeal.

Besides obtaining a petition for appeal from the county, they also will be provided on the Village League Web site, in downloadable PDF files, no later than early January, Fischer said.

"I'd say by Thursday or Friday, a day or two after New Years, to start looking at your e-mails and the Web site," Fischer said. "You know, enjoy the holiday for a few days. But everyone has to stay tuned to what's going to happen."

From there, it's up to citizens to get their appeal to Reno, whether it be via mail or in person.

Simon recommends people do it in person.

"I would not use the post office," he said. "There's no accountability. If you want anything important done, you hand deliver it."

If citizens choose to appeal, they can mail completed petitions to the Washoe County Assessor's Office, P.O. Box 11130, Reno, NV 89520-0027.

Additional information about assessed values can be determined by calling the Washoe County Assessor's office at (775) 328 2200, or by visiting its Web site at www.washoecounty.us/assessor/.

By the numbers

Approximate number of people who appealed past assessed values by Jan 15 deadlines:

- 2003-2004; 130 appellants (2003)
- 2004-2005; 150 appellants (2004)
- 2005-2006; 1,200 appellants (2005)
- 2006-2007; 300 appellants (2006)
- 2007-2008; 1,000 appellants (2007)

Total number of parcels

(estimation as of Friday by the IVGID Public Works Department)

- 9,060 total parcels
- About 1,000 are state or federally-owned
- About 8,000 – 8,200 belong to the public sector and have option of appealing assessed values

What to do when you receive your assessed property values for the 2008 - 2009 tax year

You have two options: Pay your bill, or appeal it.

If you choose to pay it, you can pay it in one lump sum, or in a quarterly plan.

The quarterly payment dates are as follows:

- 1st Quarter -- third Monday in August;
- 2nd Quarter -- first Monday in October;
- 3rd Quarter -- first Monday in January;
- 4th Quarter -- first Monday in March.

If you appeal it, here are a few helpful hints:

- You must fill out a petition for appeal, which can be obtained from the Washoe County Assessor's Office or Department of Taxation.
- Call either office and ask for a copy to be mailed to you.
- Be sure to read the entire petition and fill out everything, make sure to note you are appealing the 2008-2009 assessed values.
- Petitions for appeal also will be available at the Village Leagues Web site – www.NevadaPropertyTaxRevolt.org -- no later than early January.
- You can choose to appeal on your own or request to be represented by the Village League -- members of the league will inform you how to do that, once the petitions are available on the Web site.
- The Washoe County Assessor's Office has to receive the appeal no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan 12, 2008 for it to be heard before the county board of equalization board.
- You can mail your completed petitions to the Washoe County Assessor's Office, P.O. Box 11130, Reno, NV 89520-0027.
- Additional information about your assessed values can be determined by calling the Washoe County Assessor's office at (775) 328-2200, or visit the Web site at www.washoecounty.us/assessor/.

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