

Appeal pushes property tax issue back to Equalization board

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The Incline Village property tax issue will go before the Nevada State Board of Equalization again because Washoe County Assessor Josh Wilson has appealed the reduced land values given to nearly 1,000 homeowners.

Wilson filed an appeal Monday of the county Board of Equalization's decisions to reduce the land values for the tax year that starts July 1. Most of the 1,000 appeals were heard Feb. 21.

Wilson said he has an estimate of the land value reductions but said he will drop the appeal if he loses another appeal about land reductions granted to all 9,000 Incline homeowners for the current tax year.

"There's no reason to beat a dead horse," he said.

Three days of hearings are scheduled to start March 27.

If the state board upholds the county appeals board, Incline homeowners would be eligible for a total of \$13.5 million in tax refunds. Of that, the county would be responsible for paying \$6 million, the school

district \$4.5 million and the North Lake Tahoe fire district \$2 million.

Last March, the county appeals board voted to equalize or lower the land values for all Incline homeowners to 2002-03 levels after reducing land values in 287 appeals. But action was delayed until the Nevada Supreme Court ruled Dec. 28 in the case of 17 Incline homeowners.

In that case, the court invalidated methods used by the assessor to judge Lake Tahoe views, beaches and other factors in an appraisals for the 2003-04 tax year and said the methods should have been approved by the Nevada Tax Commission.

Officials and taxpayers across the state will be watching Washoe's appeal. The Nevada Constitution requires a uniform and equal rate of property assessments.

If the rollback in values holds, county officials said Incline taxable property values will be 39 percent of market values compared with a 95 percent rate for Clark County.

Rollbacks across the state to equalize these ratios would result in a loss of \$360-\$720 million in property taxes, including \$50-\$100 million in Washoe County, said county Finance Director John Sherman.

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