

# TRIM NOTICE

## INFORMATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

### ED HAVILL, LAKE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

Main Office  
320 W. Main Street  
Tavares  
8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.  
(352) 253-2150

The Villages  
902 Avenida Central  
Lady Lake  
8:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.; 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.,  
Tuesday & Thursday  
(352) 750-4545

#### DEAR LAKE COUNTY PROPERTY OWNER:

YOUR 2011 NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAXES (**TRIM NOTICE**) SHOWS OUR ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2011. **MARKET VALUE** IS THE SAME AS **JUST VALUE**. MARKET VALUE MEANS THE AMOUNT A WILLING BUYER (WHO DID NOT HAVE TO BUY) WOULD PAY A WILLING SELLER (WHO DID NOT HAVE TO SELL). THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION AND STATUTES REQUIRE THAT WE MAKE APPRAISALS AT JUST VALUE. **IF YOU AGREE THAT THE MARKET VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY WAS AT LEAST AS MUCH AS SHOWN IN THE NOTICE, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.** THE TAX BILL YOU RECEIVE IN NOVEMBER WILL BE BASED ON THIS VALUE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS VALUE, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTACT OUR MAIN OFFICE. ONE OF OUR APPRAISERS WILL DISCUSS YOUR VALUATION WITH YOU. IN THIS WAY, YOU CAN ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH ACTUAL REAL ESTATE MARKET FACTS—AS OPPOSED TO RUMORS—CONCERNING WHAT PEOPLE ARE PAYING FOR PROPERTY IN YOUR AREA.

#### THE PROPERTY APPRAISER'S DUTIES

OUR OFFICE DETERMINES THE ASSESSED VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY. THIS IS OUR ONLY PART IN THE TAXING PROCESS. EVERY YEAR, OUR APPRAISERS REVIEW THE VALUE OF EACH PROPERTY IN LAKE COUNTY AND PHYSICALLY INSPECT EACH PROPERTY WHICH SOLD THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

THE VARIOUS TAXING AUTHORITIES IN WHICH YOUR PROPERTY LIES SET THE MILLAGE RATES. (SEE THE END OF THIS BROCHURE FOR A LIST AND DESCRIPTION OF EACH OF THE TAXING AUTHORITIES.)

YOUR TAX BILL WILL BE BASED ON YOUR ASSESSED VALUE (SEE "AMENDMENT 10—SAVE OUR HOMES") LESS EXEMPTIONS, TIMES THE MILLAGE RATES OF ALL TAX DISTRICTS IN WHICH YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED.

IF, AFTER CONFERRING WITH ONE OF OUR APPRAISERS, YOU BELIEVE YOUR ASSESSED VALUE IS HIGHER THAN MARKET VALUE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2011, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO FILE A PETITION WITH THE VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD.

## HOW IS MARKET VALUE DETERMINED?

THERE ARE THREE APPROACHES TO VALUE STIPULATED IN THE FLORIDA STATUTES: "REPLACEMENT COST," "DIRECT SALES COMPARISON," AND "CAPITALIZATION OF INCOME." IN FLORIDA, WE USE A COMPUTER-ASSISTED MASS APPRAISAL SYSTEM THAT INCORPORATES ELEMENTS OF ALL THREE APPROACHES TO VALUE. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND, THE BEST EVIDENCE OF THE MARKET IS WHEN SEVERAL PROPERTIES SIMILAR TO YOURS SELL BEFORE JANUARY 1.

## WHAT IS TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY?

TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY (TPP) REFERS TO **ALL** ASSETS USED IN A **BUSINESS OR RENTAL** ACTIVITY THAT ARE SUBJECT TO AN AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT. MORE SPECIFICALLY, IT IS FURNITURE, FIXTURES, TOOLS, MACHINERY, HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES, EQUIPMENT, SIGNS, LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS, SUPPLIES, LEASED EQUIPMENT WHATEVER IS USED TO GENERATE INCOME. EACH TPP TAX RETURN IS ELIGIBLE FOR AN EXEMPTION OF UP TO \$25,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE. YOUR INITIAL TPP TAX RETURN (DR-405) WILL BE CONSIDERED YOUR APPLICATION FOR THE EXEMPTION.

## HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION (GENERAL)

HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION IS A CONSTITUTIONAL BENEFIT OF A \$25,000 EXEMPTION (ADDITIONAL \$25,000 EXEMPTION ON VALUES BETWEEN \$50,000 & \$75,000 EXCLUDING SCHOOL MILLAGE) REMOVED FROM THE ASSESSED VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY. IT IS GRANTED TO THOSE APPLICANTS WHO TIMELY FILE BY MARCH 1, POSSESS A RECORDED TITLE TO REAL PROPERTY, AND ARE BONA FIDE FLORIDA RESIDENTS LIVING IN THE DWELLING, AND MAKING IT THEIR PERMANENT HOME ON JANUARY 1.

### **A HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION IS NOT TRANSFERABLE. YOU MUST FILE A NEW APPLICATION EVEN IF YOU RECEIVED AN EXEMPTION LAST YEAR BUT ESTABLISHED A NEW RESIDENCE PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2011.**

ADDITIONALLY, IF YOU PURCHASED YOUR PROPERTY AFTER JANUARY 1, 2011, AND YOUR TRIM NOTICE REFLECTS A 2011 HOMESTEAD, THIS IS AN EXEMPTION WHICH WAS GRANTED TO THE PRIOR OWNER. THIS EXEMPTION CEASES ON DECEMBER 31, 2011. THUS, IF YOU WISH TO QUALIFY FOR A 2012 HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, YOU MUST FILE AN ORIGINAL APPLICATION IN OUR OFFICE BY MARCH 1, 2012. HOWEVER, YOU ARE URGED TO FILE IMMEDIATELY TO ENSURE YOU DON'T OVERLOOK THIS SAVINGS OF APPROXIMATELY \$400 TO \$800 ON YOUR AD VALOREM TAX BILL.

IF YOU NO LONGER QUALIFY FOR THE EXEMPTION, PLEASE NOTIFY OUR OFFICE OF THE CHANGE IMMEDIATELY. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING EXEMPTIONS, YOU MAY CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT (352) 253-2154.

## SENIOR CITIZEN EXEMPTION

THE EXTRA HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION ONLY APPLIES TO THE COUNTY MILLAGE PORTION OF YOUR TAX BILL AND THE CITY PORTION OF CLERMONT, LADY LAKE, MINNEOLA, MOUNT DORA, AND TAVARES. **IT DOES NOT APPLY TO TAXES PAID FOR SCHOOLS, WATER DISTRICTS, SPECIAL DISTRICTS, STORMWATER OR TO THE OTHER CITIES.** IF YOU HAVE QUALIFIED FOR THIS EXEMPTION, YOUR SAVINGS IS REFLECTED ON THE ENCLOSED NOTICE. TO QUALIFY, YOU MUST HAVE REGULAR HOMESTEAD, BE 65 YEARS OLD OR OLDER AS OF JANUARY 1 OF THE YEAR IN WHICH YOU APPLY, HAVE AN ADJUSTED GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME UNDER \$26,203 AND APPLY EACH YEAR BY MARCH 1.

## AMENDMENT 10 — SAVE OUR HOMES (GENERAL)

THE 3% HOMESTEAD PROPERTY **ASSESSMENT LIMITATION** IS A CONSTITUTIONAL BENEFIT APPROVED BY FLORIDA VOTERS IN 1992 WHICH PLACES A **LIMITATION OF 3%** ON ANY ANNUAL **ASSESSMENT INCREASES** ON HOMESTEAD PROPERTIES IN FLORIDA. THE PROPERTY IS ASSESSED AT FULL MARKET VALUE THE FIRST YEAR HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION IS GRANTED AND THE FIRST YEAR IMPROVEMENTS ARE ADDED TO THE TAX ROLL. THIS ASSESSMENT CAP BECOMES EFFECTIVE THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

## SAVE OUR HOMES PORTABILITY

HOMESTEAD PROPERTY OWNERS CAN TRANSFER UP TO \$500,000 OF THEIR SAVE-OUR-HOMES BENEFITS OR CAP, WITHIN 2 YEARS FROM A PRIOR HOMESTEAD TO A NEW HOMESTEAD. THIS BENEFIT CAN BE TRANSFERRED ANYWHERE WITHIN THE STATE OF FLORIDA BY FILING A SEPARATE APPLICATION FOR PORTABILITY BY MARCH 1.

## "HOW CAN THE ASSESSED VALUE OF MY HOME INCREASE IN A DOWN MARKET?"

FOR MANY HOMESTEAD PROPERTY OWNERS IN FLORIDA, THE MARKET VALUE HAS INCREASED OVER THE YEARS AT A FAR GREATER PACE THAN THE 3% "CAPPED" ASSESSED VALUE THUS CREATING THE SAVE-OUR-HOMES "TAX SAVINGS BENEFIT". IN THE CURRENT MARKET, THE MARKET VALUE FOR MOST HOMEOWNERS IS DECLINING; HOWEVER, UNDER FLORIDA LAW, THE ASSESSED VALUE MAY STILL INCREASE IF THE LOWERED MARKET VALUE IS STILL HIGHER THAN THE CURRENT ASSESSED VALUE. THIS IS REFERRED TO AS "RECAPTURE".

## NON-HOMESTEAD PROPERTY 10% LIMITATION

SPECIFIED NON-HOMESTEAD PROPERTIES ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS ARE CAPPED AT 10% AND AT NO TIME MAY THE ASSESSED VALUE EXCEED THE MARKET VALUE. THIS LIMITATION DOES NOT APPLY TO SCHOOL TAX LEVIES AND WILL EXPIRE IN 2018, AT WHICH TIME VOTERS WILL DECIDE WHETHER IT SHOULD BE CONTINUED.

## THE VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD

THE VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD IS CREATED BY STATE LAW AND IS COMPRISED OF TWO CITIZENS, TWO MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION AND ONE MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD. PETITIONS TO THE BOARD ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE PROPERTY APPRAISER'S OFFICE. THE PROPERTY APPRAISER IS SIMPLY A PARTY BEFORE THE BOARD, THE SAME AS THE PETITIONER. ONE OF THE ISSUES THE BOARD MEMBERS DETERMINE IS WHETHER THE APPRAISED VALUE OF A PETITIONED PROPERTY EXCEEDS ITS MARKET VALUE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2011. THE DEADLINE FOR FILING A PETITION TO

THE BOARD IS PRINTED ON THE ENCLOSED NOTICE. SUPPLYING ALL OF THE REQUESTED INFORMATION ON THE PETITION MAKES IT EASIER FOR THE PROPERTY APPRAISER'S OFFICE TO REVIEW YOUR REQUEST FOR A LOWER ASSESSMENT. THE PETITION FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN ITS ENTIRETY, INCLUDING THE **PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (ALTERNATE KEY), TELEPHONE NUMBER, SIGNED AND NOTARIZED**. THE PETITION SHOULD BE SENT OR HAND DELIVERED TO:

VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD  
CLERICAL SUPPORT, ROOM 346, 315 W. MAIN ST.  
PO BOX 7800  
TAVARES, FL 32778-7800

A SEPARATE PETITION SHALL BE FILED FOR EACH SEPARATE PARCEL OF PROPERTY PETITIONED.

### **MAKING A CASE**

CAN YOU WIN A REDUCTION BEFORE THE VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD? YES, YOU CAN OBTAIN A REDUCTION FROM THE BOARD IF YOU CAN PROVE THAT YOUR APPRAISAL EXCEEDED MARKET VALUE. BUT IF YOU BASE YOUR CASE ON A PERSONAL HARDSHIP, SUCH AS LIVING ON A FIXED INCOME OR AN INABILITY TO PAY ANY MORE TAXES, THE UNFORTUNATE ANSWER IS "NO." HOWEVER, YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE TAX DEFERRAL PLAN ADMINISTERED BY THE TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE. THAT OFFICE INCLUDES INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLAN WITH THE TAX BILL YOU RECEIVE IN NOVEMBER. THEIR NUMBER IS (352) 343-9622. THE VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD DOES NOT SET THE MILLAGE RATE. ITS MAIN FUNCTION IS TO DETERMINE WHETHER YOUR APPRAISAL EXCEEDED MARKET VALUE. HOWEVER, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO INFORMALLY DISCUSS YOUR VALUE WITH A MEMBER OF THE PROPERTY APPRAISER'S STAFF BEFORE YOU FILE A PETITION WITH THE BOARD. THE PROPERTY APPRAISER'S GOAL IS NOT TO INCREASE VALUES, BUT TO DETERMINE THAT YOUR PROPERTY IS APPRAISED EQUITABLY AND ACCURATELY. IN FACT, NO TAXING AUTHORITY CAN PRESSURE US INTO SETTING A VALUE HIGHER THAN IT SHOULD BE.

### **PREPARING FOR YOUR HEARING**

IF YOU ARE TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT YOUR HEARING, YOUR PRESENTATION MUST BE BASED ON FACTS AND NOT GENERALITIES. THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR YOUR HEARING IS TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE REGARDING SALES (NOT ASSESSMENTS) OF COMPARABLE PROPERTIES THAT SOLD BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2011. **THE FACT THAT YOUR VALUE INCREASED FROM 2010 TO 2011 IS NOT A BASIS TO REDUCE THIS YEAR'S APPRAISED VALUE.** PROBLEMS COMMON TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD ARE ALREADY CONSIDERED IN THE SALE PRICES OF PROPERTIES SOLD.

### **HEARING PROCEDURES**

THE BOARD WILL APPOINT A SPECIAL MASTER TO PRESIDE OVER THE HEARING SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN THE FALL. THESE HEARINGS ARE INFORMAL. TESTIMONY AND COPIES OF ALL EVIDENCE YOU FEEL WILL SUPPORT YOUR CASE MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE PROPERTY APPRAISER PRIOR TO THE HEARING. THE SPECIAL MASTER WILL HEAR TESTIMONY FROM YOU AND FROM THE PROPERTY APPRAISER AND THEN MAKE HIS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD. ALL EVIDENCE PRESENTED WILL BECOME PROPERTY OF THE BOARD AND A WRITTEN COPY OF THE VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD'S DECISION WILL BE MAILED TO YOU.

### **WHAT THEN?**

IF YOU ACCEPT THE BOARD'S DECISION, YOU NEED DO NOTHING FURTHER. IF YOU DISAGREE WITH THE BOARD'S DECISION, THE NEXT STEP IS A CIVIL ACTION IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, UNDER SECTION 194.171 OF THE FLORIDA STATUTES.

### **REMEMBER**

THE PROPERTY APPRAISER AND HIS STAFF ARE AT YOUR SERVICE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY VALUE.

IT IS MY GOAL AS YOUR ELECTED PROPERTY APPRAISER TO PROVIDE FAIR APPRAISALS FOR ALL PROPERTY OWNERS, WHETHER LARGE OR SMALL. WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU.

RESPECTFULLY,



ED HAVILL  
LAKE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER



## MAILING ADDRESS CHANGES

THE PROPERTY APPRAISER AND THE TAX COLLECTOR USE THE SAME MAILING ADDRESS FILE. IF YOU NOTIFY US OF AN ADDRESS CHANGE, PLEASE PROVIDE ONLY ONE ADDRESS WHICH IS VALID THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THE TWO MAIN MAILINGS ARE THE ENCLOSED TRIM NOTICE IN AUGUST AND THE TAX BILL IN NOVEMBER. PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE THE PROPERTY PARCEL NUMBER (ALTERNATE KEY) WITH YOUR REQUEST.

## LAKE COUNTY TAXING AUTHORITIES

THE TAXING AUTHORITIES CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THEIR PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR. AT ONE OF THE BUDGET HEARINGS, THE MILLAGE RATE NECESSARY TO FUND THE AGENCY'S PROPOSED BUDGET IS SET. **THE DECISIONS MADE AT THESE HEARINGS ARE THE DETERMINING FACTOR IN HOW MUCH TAX YOU WILL PAY.** CONTACT EACH TAXING AUTHORITY DIRECTLY FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. THE ADDRESS, DATE, AND TIME OF THE BUDGET HEARINGS ARE LISTED ON YOUR NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAXES.

## LAKE COUNTY GENERAL REVENUE

GENERAL REVENUE FUND TAXES PROVIDE FOR COUNTY SERVICES, SUCH AS THE COUNTY CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM, LIBRARIES, PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, HUMAN AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES, COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING, ANIMAL CONTROL, ENFORCING OF LOCAL BUILDING CODES, AND PROVIDING ZONING INFORMATION. THERE IS ALSO A NON-AD VALOREM COUNTY FEE FOR GARBAGE DISPOSAL AND FIRE PROTECTION.

## (MSTU) UNINCORPORATED MUNICIPAL SERVICES TAXING UNITS

THESE **MSTU** DISTRICTS LEVY TAXES ON PROPERTY WITHIN SPECIFIC AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, PROVIDING THOSE SAME AREAS WITH SERVICES SUCH AS FIRE, STREETLIGHTS, STORMWATER SYSTEMS, PARKS, AND ROADS. LAKE-SUMTER EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INC. (EMS) PROVIDES AMBULANCE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES TO ALL OF LAKE COUNTY. THE MSTUs ARE ENACTED BY ORDINANCE BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OR BY LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES.

## CITIES

THERE ARE 14 DIFFERENT MUNICIPALITIES IN LAKE COUNTY: THEY ARE THE CITIES OF ASTATULA, CLERMONT, EUSTIS, FRUITLAND PARK, GROVELAND, HOWEY IN THE HILLS, LADY LAKE, LEESBURG, MASCOTTE, MINNEOLA, MONTVERDE, MOUNT DORA, TAVARES, AND UMATILLA.

## LAKE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

IS A COUNTYWIDE TAXING DISTRICT AUTHORIZED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL WATERWAYS WITHIN LAKE COUNTY. ITS MEMBERS ARE ELECTED BY LAKE COUNTY VOTERS.

## ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

ARE TWO REGIONAL DISTRICTS CHARGED BY THE STATE TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT FLORIDA'S WATER RESOURCES. THEIR MISSION IS FLOOD CONTROL, WATER SUPPLY, AND WATER QUALITY.

## HOSPITAL DISTRICTS

LAKE COUNTY IS DIVIDED INTO THREE HOSPITAL DISTRICTS. FLORIDA HOSPITAL-WATERMAN SERVES THE NORTHEAST; LEESBURG REGIONAL SERVES THE NORTHWEST; AND SOUTH LAKE MEMORIAL SERVES THE SOUTH SECTION OF THE COUNTY.

## SCHOOLS

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY STATE LAW

THIS MILLAGE LEVY AND RESULTING TAXES ARE REQUIRED BY THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE IN ORDER FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FLORIDA EDUCATION FINANCE PROGRAM AND TO RECEIVE STATE DOLLARS APPROPRIATED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY LOCAL BOARD

THIS MILLAGE IS LEVIED BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD. THERE IS A LEVY AUTHORIZED BY THE LEGISLATURE TO SUPPLEMENT STATE FUNDS FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSES AND A LEVY OF 2 MILLS TO PAY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SCHOOLS, RENOVATION OF OLDER SCHOOLS, AND EQUIPMENT.