

ASSESSOR / RECORDER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASSESSOR-RECORDER MARC TONNESEN LAUDS NEW LAW TO PROTECT HOMEOWNERS FROM PREDATORY SCAMS WHEN FILING FOR ASSESSMENT RELIEF

Solano County, December 16, 2009

Solano County Assessor/Recorder Marc Tonnesen lauds the passage of AB 992 which protects property owners from the predations of companies demanding high fees to file an application for property tax assessment review and relief. The application is available FREE from Assessor-Recorder Marc Tonnesen's office.

According to Tonnesen, "it is my obligation to provide fair, honest and equitable property tax assessments to all property owners in Solano County. Last year my office initiated the reduction of property tax assessments for 57,000 homeowners. Homeowners and other property owners may also file a FREE application to have my office review or re-review their property tax assessment. The application is available on the Solano County Assessor/Recorder website".

According to the State Attorney General, "Companies are sending deceptive mailers to homeowners offering help in reducing property tax assessments, if the homeowner pays the company hundreds of dollars in fees. The companies use official-sounding names such as "Tax Adjusters," "Tax Readjustment" or "Tax Review" to make victims believe the company is a government agency. Property tax reassessment is a free service provided by county tax assessors. If homeowners believe their property value has declined and they are paying too much in property taxes, the local tax assessor will review the property value for free for a possible downward assessment."

One sponsor noted that "These mass mailers - sent by the thousands during times of lower property values - often mimic government envelopes and forms, with pseudo-governmental seals and with bogus organization names confusingly similar to real agencies. The solicitations require the payment of hundreds of dollars, and in some cases "late fees" are added if the owners don't respond promptly. Many homeowners, and especially seniors, think these solicitations come from governmental agencies.

The new law amends the Business and Professions Code section 17537.9 and applies to companies providing assessment reduction filing services. The law prevents the companies from making any untrue or misleading statement or representation that would lead citizens to believe the company is a government agency.

The California Assessors Association supported the bill.

Assessor/Recorder Tonnesen wants all Solano County property owners to receive a fair and equitable property tax assessment especially in the current difficult economy climate where many homes and business properties are suffering declines in market value. Requesting a review of your assessment is FREE.

Any property owner who has additional questions may call the Assessor/Recorder department at 707-784-6210 or e-mail assessor@solanocounty.com . Taxpayers may also get additional information from the Solano County website under Assessor/Recorder.

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