



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 29, 2008

From: Dick Larsen, Treasurer-Tax Collector
(909) 387-6383

USER-FRIENDLY PROPERTY TAX BILL TO LAND IN MAILBOXES

After 35 years, new San Bernardino County property tax statement designed by stakeholders to improve taxpayers' understanding of their bills and encourage use of electronic payment options.

San Bernardino County, CA — Treasurer-Tax Collector Dick Larsen has unveiled a new property tax bill that will be mailed this week to more than 760,000 San Bernardino County taxpayers.

The new bill replaces an outdated 35-year-old statement that many taxpayers found confusing and difficult to interpret, Larsen said. He added that a user-friendly bill is important because taxpayers have a right to understand what they are being billed for and how to pay timely to avoid costly penalties and interest. The bill is also the mechanism used to collect more than \$2 billion a year in property taxes, which pay for many public services that are vital to the quality of life of the County.

“The new bill is just our latest step in many we’re taking to improve the property tax process,” Larsen said. “At our office the taxpayers come first, so we went to them to find out ways to make the bill a greater resource for them.”

Representatives from the Treasurer-Tax Collector’s office visited dozens of community groups and met with hundreds of residents across the county during the first half of this year to gather suggestions about ways to improve the bill’s design.

“We knew the people who use the bill should be the ones to tell us what to change to better serve their needs,” said Annette Kerber, Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector/Public Administrator. “We received hundreds of comments and suggestions that allowed us to improve the new bill for property owners. One such suggestion was the addition of a legend to briefly explain information on the statement.”

The new bill also features photos of familiar county landmarks. Overall the bill underwent a complete transformation. New features were added to clarify relevant information. A highlighted “Important Messages” box clearly identifies information specific to the parcel the bill is for.

The bill highlights the various payment options that are available to property owners, including online payment at www.MyTaxCollector.com. Last year, over 115,000 property owners utilized the Office’s online and automated payment options.

(MORE)

“These methods are safe and secure and more taxpayers are taking advantage of these automated options because they’re able to pay their taxes in just a few quick steps,” Larsen said.

The new design will be used on all versions of the property tax bill, including unsecured and supplemental tax bills. Each bill includes a bilingual informational insert and legend to familiarize users with the new format.

In the coming week or so, a new link will be online at www.MyTaxCollector.com where property owners will have a chance to get a sneak preview and interactive look at the new bill.

Property Tax Installments are collected twice a year. Payments can be made online at www.MyTaxCollector.com, 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. Payments can also be made over the phone, by mail, or in person. To make a payment by phone, property owners can call (909) 387-8308. Internet payments can be made using a checking or savings account free of charge. Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover credit card payments are also accepted, but will include a processing fee charged by the credit card company.

Mailed payments must be postmarked on or before the deadline dates, and sent to Dick Larsen, Treasurer-Tax Collector, 172 W. Third Street, San Bernardino, California, 92415. Payments in person can be made by cash or check at 172 W. Third Street, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

For information regarding this press release, please contact:

Annette Kerber, Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector
Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office
County of San Bernardino
Phone: (909) 387-6383
Fax (909) 387-6326
akerber@tcpa.sbcounty.gov
www.mytaxcollector.com