



Slusser Proposes “Auto Renewal” for Senior Citizen Homestead Exemptions in Madison County

by Submitted by Patrick McRae
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EDWARDSVILLE - Madison County Treasurer Chris Slusser has proposed a plan that will allow senior citizens in Madison County an automatic extension for their senior citizen homestead exemption. This new proposal to be voted on at the Madison County Board finance committee meeting next week.



“We should be reducing pointless red tape whenever we can,” said Slusser. “We recently found a clause in the state statute governing the senior citizen exemptions that allowed for automatic renewal if passed by the County Board. Once someone turns 65 and they’re given the exemption, automatic renewal only makes sense. It’s not like they’re getting any younger,” Slusser said.

“In Illinois, we have the second highest property taxes in the country,” said Slusser. “Senior citizens are often the hardest hit by this property tax burden. This is the least we can do to make things easier for them to receive the savings they’re eligible for. This resolution does that and makes a lot of sense.”

Slusser spoke with new Chief County Assessor, Denise Shores, and she indicated her office was on board and supportive of the move. Shores previously held the position of Chief County Assessor in Coles County, where the automatic renewal was already in place for seniors.

According to the Illinois Compiled Statutes 35 (ILCS) 15-170 (j): *In counties with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, the county board may by resolution provide that if a person has been granted a homestead exemption under this Section, the person qualifying need not reapply for the exemption.*

“Under this plan, no senior will have to worry about missing their renewal paperwork again,” said Slusser. “This will make life a lot easier for the more than 25,000 senior citizens in Madison County who are currently receiving the senior homestead exemption. Every year, we have several hundred seniors who fail to turn in their renewal paperwork, and they miss out on the real estate tax savings. This resolution prevents that from happening.”

Slusser also said that 1,500-2,000 seniors turn in the paperwork late each year. The late paperwork is still accepted, if received within the current tax year, and triggers the Treasurer’s Office to send a corrected tax bill, adding thousands of dollars in additional cost to taxpayers.

The bulk of the savings will be in the County and township assessor’s offices. Tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars are spent each year sending out the renewal notices to seniors, as well as the labor costs to process them.

The senior citizens homestead exemption lowers a homeowner’s assessed value by \$5,000, which results in an annual tax savings of \$350-500 for homeowners.

The finance committee will take up the resolution at next Thursday’s meeting. Once it passes, it will go before the entire board at the February 21 County Board meeting. “I’m very supportive of this resolution, and I expect it to pass unanimously,” said County Board Member Chris Guy (R-Maryville). Guy also serves as Chairman of the Finance Committee.

A few township assessors were resistant to the change. However, once passed by the County Board, the automatic renewal will apply to the entire county.