Tax notices in the mail

Oconee avoids repeat of last year's delays

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — What a difference a year makes.

This time a year ago, Oconee County was forced to request the first of two 30-day extensions from the South Carolina Department of Revenue to finish processing the 2009 tax notices.

Oconee got that monkey off its back this year.

County Auditor Ken Nix said Tuesday that 76,060 tax notices are being mailed out this week without delay.

Nix said a Columbia-based company that specializes in printing tax notices for many counties in South Carolina would mail out all the notices at one time.

"The county has never printed their own notices," Nix said.

He said that for the time being, the pressure is off his office and the other Tax Center departments that pitched in to help calculate property taxes on time.

Similar to last year, issues with Oconee's Manatron tax processing system threatened to hold things up again.

Unlike last year, however, the issues surfaced early enough for the county to deal with the problem.

County Administrator Scott Moulder set up a special Tax Center Fund that covered employee overtime and equipment purchases to prepare this year's notices.

Employees worked long days and on weekends to get the job done on time.

Nix said tax information was available at the county's Administrative Offices by Sept. 27. The state requires that information to be posted by Oct. 1.



FOR THE JOURNAL

Tax notices are being mailed out this week to 76,060 Oconee County property owners without delays as there were last year.

The notices include taxes on real estate, airplanes, boats and motors, industry and business personal property, Nix said.

The auditor said that property owners that have not changed the use or added improvements should see the value of their property remain the same as last year.

Nix said the new user-friendly notices would allow residents to compare their new real estate tax bill with last year's taxes. He said taxpayers should see a decrease because of a decrease in millage approved by County Council.

Taxpayers have until Jan. 18 to pay their taxes without penalty.

Nix said many of them rush to pay before Dec. 31 so they can deduct them on their income tax returns.

Taxpayers now can make their payments online directly to the Oconee County Treasurer at http://taxpay.oconeesc.com. However, the Treasurer's Office has stopped taking credit card payments at the office. People going to Pine Street in Walhalla must pay by check or cash.

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