



## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TAX BILL!**

**Due to the severe downturn in the national economy and declining state revenues, in 2009 the State of Georgia will not be paying a portion of your homestead property tax bill through the Homeowners Tax Relief Grant program. In the past, this appeared as a credit on your tax bill.**

**Changes made to the program in House Bill 143 provide that for calendar year 2009 and going forward, this credit will only be provided if it is affordable for the state to do so without jeopardizing core services. As a result, in your 2009 tax bill, this credit will not be provided. The grant applied only to homesteaded property. Commercial and industrial property taxes are not affected.**

**This does not affect your homestead exemption. If you have qualified for an exemption by the April 1, 2009 deadline, you will receive the exemption on this year's tax statement.**

**In addition, there is a millage rate increase on the County portion of your tax bill for 2009. For the residents of unincorporated Spalding County, there is also an increase in the millage rate for fire protection. The millage rates for Sunny Side, Orchard Hill and the Griffin Spalding County school system remained the same, while there is a slight decline in the rate for the City of Griffin.**

**For more information about available homestead exemptions, please read the other side of this insert and the back of your tax bill.**

### **Office Hours**

**8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday**

## LOCAL HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION CHANGES FOR 2009

A new exemption went into affect for senior citizens who own and occupy their homes as of January 1 of the taxable year. Those homeowners who are **65-69 years of age by January 1**, regardless of income, are eligible for an exemption of \$5000 from the school portion of their taxes for 2009. This exemption will increase to \$10,000 in 2010. Homeowners 65 and older are fully exempt from the state portion of the tax bill on a house and up to 10 acres of land.

Homeowners who are **70-74 years of age**, regardless of income, are eligible for an exemption in the amount of \$10,000 from the school portion of their taxes for 2009 on the home they own and occupy as of January 1. This exemption will increase to \$20,000 in 2010.

Homeowners who are **75 or older**, regardless of income, are eligible for an exemption in the amount of \$15,000 from the school portion of their taxes for 2009 on the home they own and occupy as of January 1. This exemption will increase to \$30,000 in 2010.

To receive this or any exemption for the current year, you must have applied by the April 1, 2009 deadline. Anyone applying after that date will receive the exemption in 2010. **It is the responsibility of the homeowner to re-apply when the homeowner becomes eligible for a different age-based school exemption.**

### More exemption information.....

**Individuals over 62 OR 100% disabled (regardless of age)**, with a gross household income of \$12,500 or less, who own and occupy their home as of January 1 of each year, may qualify for full exemption from county and school taxes on their house and up to 3 acres of land. Proof of income required each year (includes gross income from all family members who live in the home.) A letter from a physician is required stating that the homeowner is 100% disabled along with proof of income, as well.

Homeowners **65 years of age or older with a GROSS income** of husband and wife of \$40,000 (exclusive of \$55,742 in social security and retirement benefits), may exempt up to \$10,000 in value from COUNTY taxes. Proof of income required in the first year of application.

The **standard homestead exemption** is available to all homeowners who otherwise qualify by ownership and residency requirements and it is an amount equal to \$2,000 which is deducted from the 40% assessed value of the homestead.

The **deadline for applying for all exemptions is April 1<sup>st</sup>** in the Tax Commissioner's office at 132 E. Solomon Street, the Spalding County Courthouse. Any applications received after that date will be granted in the following year.