

FIRST INSTALLMENT TAX BILLS ARE DUE MARCH 1

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First installment property tax bills for tax year 2011 should have arrive in the first week of February, according to Pamela Kende, River Forest Township Assessor. "Property taxes are paid in two installments," Pamela Kende said. "The first installment bill is fifty-five percent (55%) of the total property tax bill for the previous year, and will be due on March 1."

Taxpayers should note that first installment tax bills will not reflect homeowner, senior citizen or other exemptions, nor will they reflect a successful assessment appeal that were filed in calendar year 2011. "The first installment is just an estimate based on what was paid last year," Pamela Kende the River Forest Township Assessor explained. "When the second installment bill is mailed in the fall, it will reflect all exemptions for which the property is eligible as well any savings due to successful 2011 tax appeals."

Details about Paying Taxes. If money for property taxes is paid into an escrow account with a taxpayer's mortgage company, the financial institution should receive the tax bill electronically, even if the taxpayer also receives a copy of the bill. Assessor Pamela Kende advises taxpayers with property tax escrows held by their mortgage companies not to pay property taxes on their own. If they do, an overpayment of property taxes may result.

Property owners who do not have mortgage companies paying their taxes can make tax payments in person, by mail, or on-line at the Cook County Treasurer's web site, www.cookcountytreasurer.com. In-person payments are accepted at the Cook County Treasurer's downtown office at 118 N. Clark Street and at any Chase Bank in the Chicago area.

Last Year's Due Date Was Different. Although March 1 has long been the due date for first installment tax bills, it is worth noting that last year's due date for first installment taxes was April 1. But the April 1 due date was in effect for one year only. Prior to the first installment bill last year, a tax bill had been due on December 13, 2010, the latest due date ever for property taxes in Cook County. Because the prior bill was unusually late, the state legislature delayed the due date for the next tax bill by one month. Circumstances are different this year, and as a result the normal due date of March 1 has returned.

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