



Taxpayer beware

Last year in 2010 you may have seen the signs with the nifty clause "We Lower your Taxes." Many Nassau County taxpayers received letters from tax representatives stating that for a fee ranging from \$100 to \$250 and with a percentage of return under a contract provision, they promised to "lower your taxes."

I was contacted by some of the individuals that had filed and had my staff make contact with all of the property owners that had entered into this agreement of "We WILL lower your taxes" with tax representatives. My staff of appraisers and I found that in most cases the property owners felt that they had been taken advantage of.

One property owner had only sent his money in because they had "promised" to lower his taxes. When discussing the value that the Property Appraiser had placed on his property, he stated, "I had no problem with the value, I just felt that the taxes could be lower." In this instance the company that promised to lower taxes had presented the 2009 value to the property owner falsely, when the 2010 value was the real value at hand and was less than the prior year. This particular case ended in the company tax representative not even showing up at the Value Adjustment Board hearing or even submitting any data whatsoever - thus an easy \$175 for no work accomplished.

The appraisers on staff indicated that this was the response of most taxpayers that they spoke with. Concerned taxpayers did call and ask if the tax representatives even showed up. The response was that of 235 petitions filed by tax representatives, only 16 actually went before the Value Adjustment Board for hearing; of those only three had changes made by the Value Adjustment Board magistrate.

I urge the Nassau County citizens and taxpayers to beware. I also would encourage you to contact my office. I am elected by the people and that is who I serve, according to the Constitution, statutes and laws of Florida. I took an oath, and I took it seriously - if my staff and I can make a change to the value, that is simply what we do.

For more information please feel free to call 491-7300 or visit our website at www.nassaufpa.com.

The Nassau County Property Appraiser's Office will be mailing out the Notice of Proposed Taxes, which includes your 2011 value information, the third week of August. The 2011 values will also be posted to our website the first week of August. Please feel free to visit the website and review your information and call if you should have any questions or comments.

Tammy C. Stiles, C.F.A., Nassau County Property Appraiser