

### Your Proposed Property Tax Notice Explanation

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAXES—DO NOT PAY—THIS IS NOT A BILL

● FOR PERMANENT CHANGE OF ADDRESS ●  
 Detach and show your new address below. Mail to: Attn: Quality Services, P.O. Box 1546, Fort Myers, FL 33902-1546 OR change your address on-line at www.leepa.org

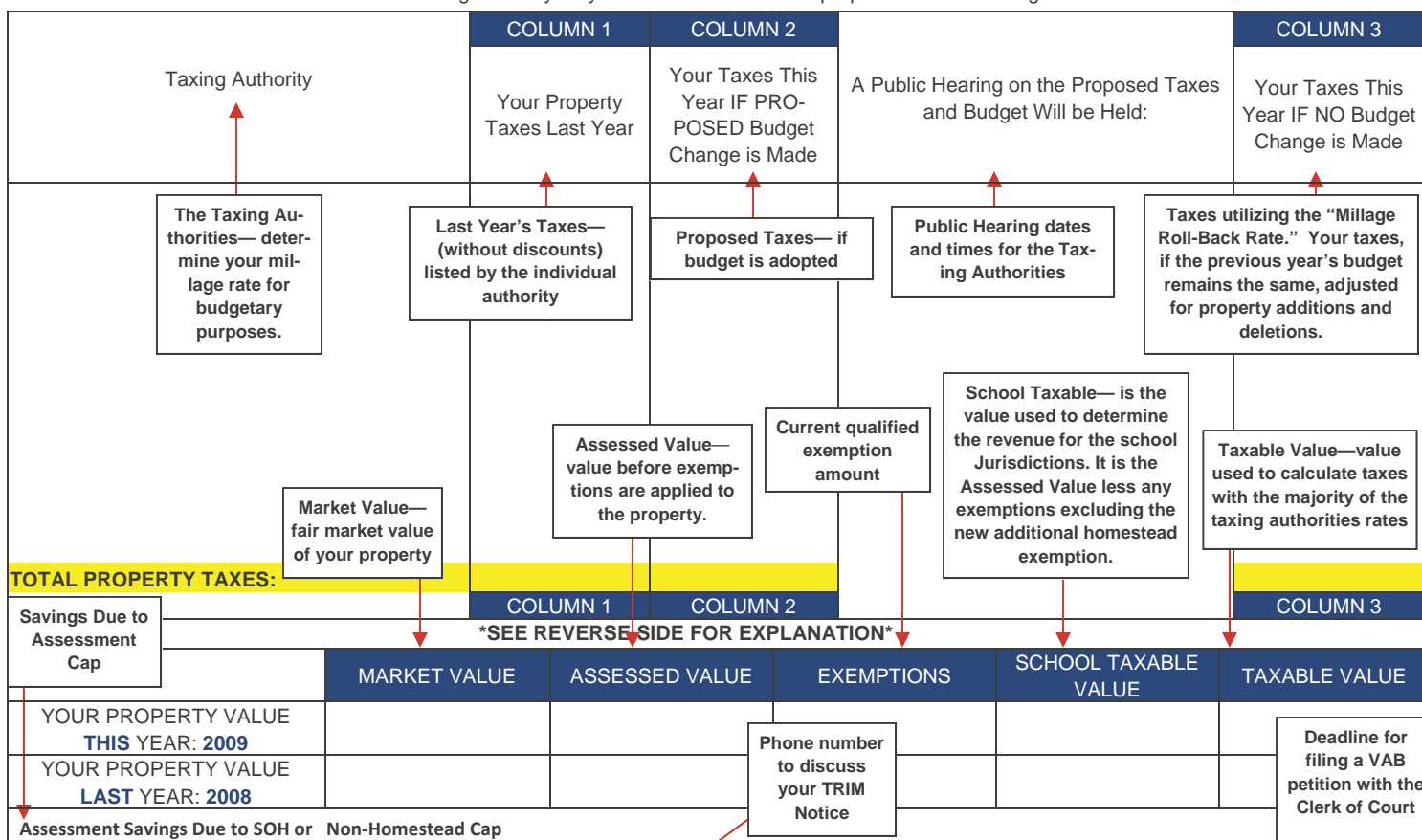
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Mailing Address changes— Detach here

Owner name and mailing address

Legal Description of your property including your site address and STRAP number

The taxing authorities which levy property taxes against your property will soon hold **PUBLIC HEARINGS** to adopt budgets and tax rates for the next year. The purpose of these **PUBLIC HEARINGS** is to receive opinions from the general public and to answer questions on the proposed tax change and budget **PRIOR TO TAKING FINAL ACTION**. Each taxing authority may **AMEND OR ALTER** its proposals at the hearing.



IF YOU FEEL THE MARKET VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY IS INACCURATE OR DOES NOT REFLECT FAIR MARKET VALUE, OR IF YOU ARE ENTITLED TO AN EXEMPTION THAT IS NOT REFLECTED ABOVE, CONTACT YOUR COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER AT:  
 - 2480 Thompson Street, 4th Floor (at the corner of Fowler & Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.) or P.O. Box 1546, Ft. Myers, FL 33902. If the Property Appraiser's Office is unable to resolve the matter as to market value or an exemption, you may file a petition for adjustment with the Value Adjustment Board. Petition forms are available from the County Property Appraiser and must be filed ON OR BEFORE your final tax bill may contain non ad valorem assessments which may not be reflected on this notice such as assessments for roads, fire, garbage, lighting, drainage, water, sewer, or other governmental services and facilities which may be levied by your county, city, or any special district.

#### LEE COUNTY TAXING AUTHORITIES: Listed is general information regarding the use of budgetary funds

Ad Valorem Taxes	
Type	Taxing Unit
General Revenue	County Services
Capital Improvement	Building Construction
Library	Library Operations
Schools—State & Local	School Support & Construction
Fire	Fire Protection Services
Municipalities	City Services
Municipal Service Taxing Units	Special Needs Purposes
S. FL Water Management	Water Resource Preservation
W. Coast Inland Waterway	Maintain Intracoastal Waterway
Mosquito & Hyacinth	Mosquito & Hyacinth Control

**AD VALOREM TAXES** These taxes are calculated based on the value of your property. Authority approved tax rates are multiplied by the property value to determine the taxes due for that year.  
**NON AD VALOREM TAXES** These taxes are based on measurements other than the property value, such as: acreage, units, or square footage. The measurement is multiplied by the approved non ad valorem rate to determine the taxes due for that year.

Non Ad Valorem Taxes	
Type	Taxing Unit
Water Management/Drainage	Acres
Solid Waste	Units, Square Feet
Community Improvement	Units

The above Non Ad Valorem Taxes are not listed on the T.R.I.M. Notice, but may be included on your November tax bill.

## Lee County Property Appraiser Honorable Kenneth M. Wilkinson, CFA T.R.I.M. GUIDE



### Understanding Your Notice of Proposed Property Taxes (Truth in Millage-T.R.I.M. Notice)



#### Dear Lee County Property Owner:

Your property value is as important to me as it is to you, especially in these difficult economic times. It is our duty to provide you, the taxpayer, with sound, reliable, and equitable assessments.

Your 2009 T.R.I.M. Notice reflects the market value of your property on January 1, 2009. The Florida Constitution and Statutes require that we assess property at the market value created by qualified market transactions.

If you agree that the fair market of your property, based on 2008 sales, is at least as much as shown in the notice, you do not have to do anything. However, if you have any questions about this value, we encourage you to contact this office.

The Property Appraiser does not determine the amount of tax you pay. Taxing Authorities determine the tax rate based on money needed to fund their budgets. It is my goal as your elected Property Appraiser to provide fair assessments for all property. Feel free to contact us. We are here to serve you.

Respectfully,

Kenneth M. Wilkinson, CFA  
 Lee County Property Appraiser

#### Tax Bills are mailed by November 1st

This is **NOT** your tax bill. In early November of each tax year, the Lee County Tax Collector's Office mails tax bills.

This is your T.R.I.M. Notice or Truth in Millage Notice. This notice is provided to allow taxpayers the opportunity to review the values on all property and the ability to attend hearings for those

taxing authorities that levy the tax rates. The bill you will receive in November includes an early payment discount percentage. This bill will also include any non-ad valorem (not according to value) assessments, such as your garbage bill. Non-ad valorem assessments are based on factors other than the property value and appear on your real property bill only.

#### What do all of these 'Values' mean?

At the bottom of your T.R.I.M. Notice you will find 2008 and 2009 information regarding your **Market Value, Assessed Value, Exemptions, School Taxable and Taxable Value.**

The **Market Value** is a reflection of value based on the characteristics of your property and 2008 sales in your market area.

The **Assessed Value** is the Market Value less any consideration for the "Save Our Homes" Cap or Agricultural Classifications.

The **Exemption** area provides any exempted amount received (certain exemptions apply only to certain taxing authorities while others apply to all authorities). The **School Taxable** is the value used to determine the revenue for the school jurisdictions. It is the Assessed Value less any exemptions excluding the new additional homestead exemption.

The **Assessed Value** less Exemptions will provide a **Taxable Value**. This value is used to calculate your proposed tax dollars for most taxing authorities.

#### What is market value and how is it calculated?

Florida law requires that the just value of all property be determined each year. The Supreme Court of Florida has declared "just value" to be legally synonymous to "full cash value" and "fair market value."

The fair market value of your property is the amount for which it could sell on the open market. The Property Appraiser analyzes market transactions annually to determine fair market value as of January 1, 2009. Fair market value must be determined for every piece of property in Lee County each year. This includes over

530,000 parcels consisting of residential, agricultural, commercial, governmental and industrial properties, as well as over 74,000 tangible personal property accounts.

Market value is determined by the three approaches to value as stipulated in the Florida Statutes: 1.) "Direct Sales Comparison"; 2.) "Cost Approach"; and 3.) "Income Approach." In Lee County, we use a computer assisted mass appraisal system that incorporates elements of all three approaches to value.

**New Information Inside**

Your Lee County Property Appraiser's Office is the proud recipient of the following awards:  
 International Association of Assessing Officers Certificate of Excellence in Assessment Administration Award, Belon Winner for Innovations in Mass Appraisal, International Association of Assessing Officers Most Distinguished Assessment Jurisdiction, National Association for Counties Achievement Award for Consolidation of Geographic Information, International Association of Assessing Officers Public Information Award



### What is Homestead Exemption and "Save Our Homes"?

Homestead Exemption is a constitutional benefit that exempts up to \$50,000 from the assessed value of your property.

After the base year of the qualified Homestead Exemption application, the Assessed Value cannot increase more than 3% per year because of the "Save Our Homes" (SOH) benefit. This limits or "caps" the increases to your assessed value (not your taxes). That capped value is the SOH Assessed Value. From the SOH Assessed Value exemptions are subtracted to arrive at the Taxable Value on a Homestead Exempted property.

This constitutional benefit that Mr. Wilkinson authored in 1992, was to prevent homestead property owners from being taxed out

of their homes in the face of a rapidly increasing market. For more information please review the general examples provided and our website [www.leepa.org](http://www.leepa.org).

#### Order of values on a Homestead parcel:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Market (Just) Value} \\ & \text{(LESS) Your SOH Savings (Possible Portable Amount)} \\ & \text{SOH Assessed Value (SOH Capped Value)} \\ & \text{(LESS) Exemptions} \\ & \text{Taxable Value} \end{aligned}$$

If the Market Value drops below the SOH Assessed Capped Value, the new Market Value becomes the new SOH Assessed Capped Value:

2008 Market Value \$200,000    2008 SOH Assessed Value \$175,000    2008 SOH Differential/Savings \$25,000

2009 Market Value \$150,000    2009 SOH Assessed Value \$150,000    2009 SOH Differential/Savings \$0

Additional Homestead Exemption	
IF YOUR ASSESSED VALUE IS...	YOUR EXEMPTION WILL BE...
\$75,000 AND UP	Original Homestead Exemption plus the full \$25,000 Additional Exemption
\$50,000 TO \$75,000	Original Homestead Exemption plus Additional Homestead Exemption up to \$25,000
\$1 TO \$50,000	Original Homestead Exemption and NO Additional Homestead Exemption

### Non-Homestead 10% Limitation

Florida law requires that all non-homestead residential property and certain residential and non-residential property be granted a 10% limitation. The 2008 tax year's assessed value has been captured and is the base value for the implementation. The assessed value will not increase more than 10% in 2009 and every year thereafter. **This limitation is automatic and no application is necessary.**

Look for in 2009

### "Senior's Exemption"

All Lee County residents who are 65 or older (as of January 1st) who qualify for and receive the homestead exemption and whose 2008 annual gross adjusted household income does not exceed \$25,873, are eligible to receive the exemption. Although you must make an initial application (January 1st—March 1st), an annual re-application is not required as long as your income does not exceed the annually adjusted income limitation.

### Tangible Personal Property

Effective for the 2008 tax year, all Tangible Personal Property Accounts, such as businesses, rental, and mobile home attachments, will receive a \$25,000 exemption. A DR-405, Tangible Personal Property Tax Return, must be filed with this Office in the initial year of application to be eligible.

To view your values and exemptions see the reverse side of your T.R.I.M. (Proposed) Notice. For detailed calculations including the proposed rates for your property visit our website at [www.leepa.org](http://www.leepa.org).



### Portability

- Portability means that you can transfer **some or all** of your old home's "Save Our Homes" benefit to your new home in an amount up to \$500,000.
- The "Save Our Homes" benefit is the **difference** between the assessed value and market value of a homestead property.
- Visit our website at [www.leepa.org](http://www.leepa.org) to obtain a copy of the required form.

Portability is available only in Florida.  
Portability may be used an unlimited number of times.

#### Existing Homestead Property



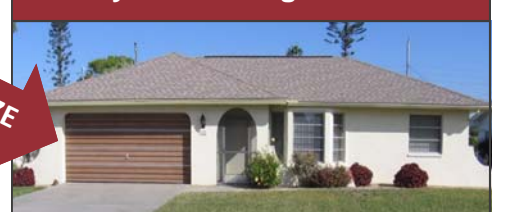
Market/Just Value	\$400,000
LESS Assessed Value (Value with 3% Cap)	- \$200,000
Portability Difference =	\$200,000
OR	
50% of the Market Value would be Portable	

#### Increasing in total Market Value from your Existing Homestead.



Market/Just Value	\$800,000
LESS Portable Amount	- \$200,000
New Home Assessed Value	\$600,000

#### Decreasing in total Market Value from your Existing Homestead



Market/Just Value	\$200,000
LESS Portable Amount (50% of New Market Value)	- \$100,000
New Home Assessed Value	\$100,000

### What if I do not agree with my 'Values'?



If you believe that your assessment does not represent the fair market value of the property, you may file a petition with the Clerk of Court for a hearing before the Value Adjustment Board (V.A.B.). This Board is created by State Law and is comprised of five members. The Board appoints Special Magistrates who are qualified appraisers or attorneys, independent of the Property Appraiser's Office, to conduct valuation hearings. The Special Magistrates are appointed only to determine whether the appraised value of the property is fair market value as of January 1st. Petitions to the Board and further details concerning this process can be obtained by visiting the Property Appraiser's Office or on our website at [www.leepa.org](http://www.leepa.org). **Petitions must be received (not merely postmarked) by the Clerk of Court before the date that appears**

**on the T.R.I.M. Notice. The petition must be accompanied with a \$15.00 per parcel filing fee.** Submission with the petition of all requested information ensures proper review of your request. MAKING A CASE: You can prevail at V.A.B. by presenting evidence and testimony that your property's assessed value is not market value. The fact that your assessed value increased or decreased from last year, is not a basis to alter this year's assessment. Problems common to the neighborhood are already considered in the sales prices of properties sold. Also, you cannot base your case on personal hardship, such as living on a fixed income or an inability to pay taxes. You may, however, be eligible for the Tax Deferral Plan or Installment Payments offered through the Tax Collector's Office. Information regarding these plans is avail-

able at the Tax Collector's website ([www.leetc.com](http://www.leetc.com)). THE VAB HEARING: Value Adjustment Board hearings begin in the fall. While an attorney is not required, one may represent you. You will present your evidence and testimony to a Special Magistrate. An appraiser from this office will present evidence as to the market value of your property. After the Special Magistrate hearing, the V.A.B. will notify you in writing of their decision. If you accept the decision, do nothing further. If you disagree with the V.A.B. decision, you may file a Circuit Court civil action pursuant to Florida Statute 194.171. Additional information can be obtained from our office, or you may contact the Lee County Clerk of Court's Office at (239) 533-2328 regarding the filing process.