

Spring is in the Air!

We've been enjoying some beautiful weather, enough to make you go outside, enjoy the fresh air and find some time to relax! I hope you all get to do that!

However, the assessment & tax cycle never end! 😊 If you live in Round Lake, you should all be aware of the following referendum that will be on your March 19th primary ballot. I am not here to tell you how to vote, but I do want to let you know that this is how you are directly involved in your tax bill. You get to vote on how you want your tax dollars spent. The Round Lake Library has very detailed information on their website that will answer many of your questions.

The one question that you will all come to ask me about is how much will the proposed library increase your taxes? From the Round Lake Library website:

19. How much will the proposed library increase my taxes?

For a homeowner with a house at the median fair market value in our area of \$228,200, the library's tax rate will increase approximately \$0.95 per day (\$28.82 monthly).

HOME VALUE	\$100k	\$150k	\$200k	\$228,200 <i>median</i>	\$250k	\$300k
ADDITIONAL COST PER DAY	\$0.36	\$0.59	\$0.82	\$0.95	\$1.05	\$1.28
PER MONTH	\$10.81	\$17.83	\$24.86	\$28.82	\$31.88	\$38.91
PER YEAR	\$129.70	\$214.00	\$298.29	\$345.84	\$382.59	\$466.89

The General Primary Election is on March 19, 2024. As of January 11, 2024, the referendum on the ballot will be written as such:

ROUND LAKE AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

Proposition To Issue \$36,404,233 Library Bonds

Shall the bonds of the Round Lake Area Public Library District, Lake County, Illinois, in the amount of \$36,404,233 be issued for the purpose of erecting a library building to replace the existing Round Lake Area Public Library building, purchasing and improving a site therefor and furnishing necessary equipment and acquiring library materials and electronic data storage and retrieval facilities in connection therewith?

The next Spring housekeeping item is Homestead Exemptions. Make sure you are getting the Property Tax Exemptions that you are entitled to.

Welcome New Homeowners!

We have been hearing more often lately that people are being told that the General Homestead Exemption is automatic. It is not. When the county reviews sales transactions, prior exemptions are removed from the property. Once you get a driver's license or State ID with your new address, remember to file for your General Homestead Exemption.

Benefit: This exemption lowers the assessed value of the property by \$8,000.

Qualifications:

- You owned your home as of January 1st, 2024
- Your home is your principal residence as of January 1st, 2024
- Only one property (primary) can receive this exemption

Seniors - Are you turning 65? – Happy Birthday!

If you're turning 65, make sure you come into the Grant Township Assessor's Office to sign up for your Senior Homestead Exemption. This benefit is in addition to the General Homestead Exemption.

Benefit: This exemption lowers the assessed value of the property by \$8,000.

Qualifications:

- You're 65 or older in the year you're applying for
- You owned your home as of January 1st, 2024
- Your home is your principal residence as of January 1st, 2024
- Only one property (primary) can receive this exemption
- If your property is held in a trust you will need to bring in a copy of the trust as well

2024 Low-Income Senior Citizen Assessment Freeze

If you qualify for the Senior Homestead Exemption (above) and your total household income is \$65,000 or below, you may apply for this exemption. The final filing date for the 2024 Senior Citizen Assessment Freeze (taxes payable 2025) is July 31st, 2024.

Benefit:

The Low-Income Senior Freeze provides limited-income seniors with protection against real estate tax increases due to rising property values. It is not a tax freeze or a tax reduction and does not protect against increased taxes due to tax rate increases. Because this exemption provides for a base year frozen assessment, it will potentially provide increased savings each year a senior is eligible. The base assessment used in the Low-Income Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption initially equals the assessed value from the prior year tax calculation. In subsequent years, if the new assessed value is lower than their original base value, the new lower value becomes the new base amount.

Qualifications:

- You're 65 or older in the year you're applying for
- Have owned and occupied the home as their principal residence on Jan. 1 of the past two years
- Have a total household income of \$65,000 or less
- This exemption needs to be applied for each year, based on total household income.

Homestead Exemption for Persons with Disabilities

Benefit:

This exemption lowers the equalized assessed value of the property by \$2,000 and may be claimed in addition to the General Homestead Exemption and the Senior Homestead Exemption, if applicable. However, this exemption cannot be claimed in addition to the Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption or the Disabled Veterans' Exemption of \$100,000; you can only receive one of these exemptions and, if you are a veteran, you should choose to apply for the one most beneficial to you.

Qualifications:

- Own or have a legal or equitable interest in the property
- Have lived on the property on or before January 1st of the tax year.
- Be disabled under the Federal Social Security Act and supply either:
 - A copy of your [Illinois Disabled Person Identification Card \(PDF\)](#) stating that you are a Class 2 or 2A disability (for each year you qualify); or
 - Proof of Social Security Administration Social Security Benefits. This proof includes an award letter, verification letter, or annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) - This paperwork must be issued in the tax year for which you are applying. Whichever you supply, it must indicate that the benefits are for disability; or
 - Proof of Veterans Administration disability benefits which includes an award letter or verification letter indicating you are receiving a pension for a non-service connected disability; or
 - Proof of Railroad or Civil Service disability benefits which would be an award letter showing a total 100% disability; or
 - A completed [PTAX-343-A Form](#), Physician's Statement for the Homestead Exemption for Persons with Disabilities

All applications must be submitted online through the Lake County Smartfile E-Filing Portal on www.lakecountyil.gov. This system allows you to electronically file most applications related to your property's assessment, and to change your mailing address. If you need help creating an account or logging in, please contact the Chief County Assessment Office at assessor@lakecountyil.gov or (847) 377-2050.

If you do not have computer access, Grant Township will continue to help you fill out exemption paperwork here in our office and then file online on your behalf. We can also walk you through the online instructions by phone. Please contact our office at 847-546-8880 for assistance.