

NEWS

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County improves process of assessment appeals

San Bernardino County residents now have several new tools at their disposal when filing appeals of property tax assessments. At this Tuesday's meeting of the County Board of Supervisors, Clerk of the Board, Dena Smith outlined improvements designed to ease the process for property owners including a revamped assessment appeals website (www.sbcounty.gov/assessmentappeals), a dedicated Assessment Appeals Hot Line phone number (909-387-4413), an appeal application form that can be completed and submitted via the internet and the "Your Assessment Appeals" video.

"Given the decline in property values and the resultant increase in appeal filings, it is more important than ever that we help taxpayers understand their rights and options as they relate to the assessment and valuation of their property," said Smith whose office experienced a 10 fold increase in appeals filed in 2008.

The Board of Supervisors of each California county serves as local representatives of the California State Board of Equalization and are tasked to ensure the equitable valuation and taxation of property within their county. The assessed value of property is determined by the Assessor and forms the basis upon which property tax is calculated and collected by the Treasurer-Tax Collector. The County Board of Supervisors appoints individuals to serve as board members or hearing officers to arbitrate disputes regarding the assessed value of property. The Clerk of the Board supports the appeal process and oversees the filing, review, processing and scheduling of appeals before the Assessment Appeals Board or Hearing Officer.

There are four types of assessment that a property owner may appeal, each with its own filing date requirements. The filing period for 2009 Decline in Value appeals is July 2 to November 30, 2009. For other filing deadlines and other answers to frequently asked questions about the appeals process visit www.sbcounty.gov. Property owners may also call the Assessment Appeals Hotline at (909) 387-4413, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.