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PRESS RELEASE

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PROPERTY TAX STORY

PART I

It is the right and responsibility of real property owners in the State of Illinois to pay property taxes. The money paid in property taxes in Boone County stays in Boone County and is distributed to the local tax districts. The taxes are paid to each of the tax districts listed on the property tax bills. The voters of Boone County **APPROVED** many of those tax districts by referendum including the Museum District, the Health Department, and the Boone County Council on Aging which are both part of the Boone County tax among others.

The governing bodies of the tax districts meet at least once a month, many twice a month to set policy and procedures by which the tax dollars are spent. These are public meetings opened for the property owners to attend and participate in to effect change in any or all tax districts.

What exactly do the property taxes do?

The largest part of the tax bill goes to funding the school districts and education of preschoolers all the way to adults in the public school districts and junior college districts. An education for all is provided in part through the property tax system. To move the burden of funding education from the property tax to another funding source will take a legislative change.

Beyond education the property taxes provide parks, recreation and conservation areas as well as public libraries and the museum. The Boone County Council On Aging and the Boone County Health Department are part of the taxes paid to Boone County, and provide valuable services. These services provide enrichment to the lives of the citizens of Boone County.

There are also districts that provide services that are mandated by the Illinois State Statutes. Property owners pay the bill whether they use these services or not, but how many would want to be without them. One of the largest of these is public safety and the courts. That includes the police on the streets, the state's attorney's office, the public defender's office, the courts and the probation office. Property taxes also pay for the circuit clerk's office that keeps the records.

Property taxes also pay for the maintenance of the roads and bridges traveled throughout the county that belong to the townships and county. The taxes pay for the record keeping of all the births, deaths, marriages and military service in the county as well as the deeds and liens recorded. The elections that take place in the county are also at the expense of the property owner.

The collection and disbursement of monies from the various agencies from animal control to the recording of deeds is also paid by property taxes. Animal control is also a function of the property tax system. The property taxes also pay for the administration of the various offices in the county and the other tax districts. The services can not be provided without staff.

Property Tax Extension Limitation Law – What is it?

A number of years ago concerned property owners, especially in Boone and Winnebago Counties effected a legislative change called PTELL or better known as “Tax Caps”. This law limits the spending of the tax districts in counties that have enacted the law. Boone County is a tax cap county.

The spending of the tax districts is limited to 5 percent or the cost of living which ever is less plus a percent of new construction. This is a very simplistic definition of a very complex law, but it basically limits the spending of the taxing districts. This law protects the property owners from huge increases in spending by the tax districts.

This law also demonstrates what the local citizens’ can do to make legislative changes in the laws that effect them.

What Can Property Owners Do Now That Taxes Are Issued?

Property owners need to examine the tax bill. Note what tax districts the property is in and what tax districts they are paying taxes too. Property owners need to be sure they have all the Homestead Exemptions they are entitled too. The exemptions available are listed on the Boone County website at www.boonecountyil.org on the Assessor’s Office. If there are questions, contact the offices listed on the tax bill or the website.