

MEDIA RELEASE

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Office of the County Assessor
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Lawrence E. Stone, Assessor

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County Assessor Larry Stone: “It’s not us vs. them”

Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone announced today that his office will mail Assessment Notification cards to all property owners in Santa Clara County this week, 441,678 postcards in total. This year 32,756 property owners will receive a temporary reduction in assessed value as the market values of their property fell below their assessed value due to the declining market conditions in Silicon Valley.

The purpose of the card is to provide advance notice to all property owners of their 2003 assessed value, which will be the basis for their 2003-2004 property tax bill. Santa Clara County is one of only seven counties in California that advises all property owners of their assessed value prior to the final close of the assessment roll on July 1, 2003. In many Counties, property owners do not discover their assessed value until they receive their property tax bill in October.

“This is a perfect example of how we’re doing business differently in Santa Clara County. Rather than waiting for a taxpayer to object after their assessed value has been enrolled on July 1, we notify taxpayers six weeks in advance,” said Stone. “It’s not us versus them. Instead, my office works with taxpayers, before the roll closing date, to make sure the value enrolled is the accurate and fair value.”

Each year, the County Assessor must officially enroll the value of all real and business personal property in the County by July 1, 2003. The assessed value is then used to determine the property tax bill.

“The Notification of Assessment card is important since it informs the property owner of the current assessed value (as of the valuation date January 1, 2003). We then invite property owners to submit a Proposition 8 Review Request Form, no later than June 15, 2003, if they believe the current market value is less than the value on the card,” he added. Forms are available on the Assessor’s web site (<http://www.scc-assessor.org>). Completed forms can be faxed to (408) 299-3015, mailed or hand delivered to the Assessor’s office. Property owners may also send the Assessor’s Office e-mail via the website or contact the Assessor’s Office at (408) 299-5300 and request a form. In order to provide a timely response to all public inquiries, the Assessor’s Office is encouraging property owners to make contact prior to June 15.

“After July 1, 2003, the primary remedy available to a taxpayer who believes their property is over assessed is to file a formal assessment appeal with the Clerk of the Board.” Stone said. The formal assessment appeals filing period begins on July 2, 2003, and ends on September 15, 2003.