

## APPLICATION FORMS FOR SENIOR FREEZE MAILED- ALL SENIORS MUST APPLY FOR EXEMPTIONS THIS YEAR

Contact Person: Rich Kelly

Orland Township senior citizens who received either the Senior Exemption or the Senior Freeze last year will receive renewal applications this week, and will have until March 8 to return them to the Cook County Assessor's office. In the past, those who had previously applied for a Senior Exemption did not have to renew it, as the exemption was automatically renewed. This year, however, the Senior Exemption will be renewed only for those who apply for it.

The senior applications being mailed out are for 2010 property taxes, (paid in calendar year 2011) and the savings from the exemptions will appear on tax bills mailed in the fall of 2011. Seniors should feel free to call the office of Orland Township Assessor Rich Kelly for help completing the forms.

### **Eligibility and Application Procedures for Senior Exemptions**

There are two senior citizen property tax exemptions. The Senior Exemption is available to all seniors regardless of income. It reduces property taxes by about \$350, and is available to any owner-occupied residential property whose owner was born in 1945 or earlier. The Senior Freeze provides seniors with additional tax savings if the combined income of all occupants in a senior's household is less than \$55,000, and if the senior has been an owner-occupant of the house since January 1, 2009.

Applications have always been required for the Senior Freeze program. Prior to 2008, seniors also had to complete applications annually to obtain the Senior Exemption. But since people get older and not younger, and since it is expensive to mail renewal applications, the county began automatically renewing Senior Exemptions in 2008.

This year, the state legislature, concerned that automatic renewal meant some ineligible properties were getting the Senior Exemption, changed the law on the Senior Exemption to its pre-2008 status. As a result, all seniors will again have to apply to renew the Senior Exemption.

### **Information for Seniors not Receiving Mailings**

Homeowners who were born in 1945 turned sixty-five in 2010, and thus are likely to be eligible for one of the senior exemptions for the first time.

“Any taxpayer who has recently turned 65 will not receive an application when the senior renewal forms are mailed,” Assessor Rich Kelly said. “These individuals may call my office to obtain the forms required to receive the senior benefits or they may be accessed at [www.cookcountyassessor.com](http://www.cookcountyassessor.com)