



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senator Ritchie Reminds Seniors of Enhanced Star Deadlines

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Urges Central and Northern New Yorkers to not miss out on important property tax savings

State Senator Patty Ritchie urged residents of Central and Northern New York who will be 65 or older this year to check to see whether they qualify for an additional reduction in their property taxes. Deadlines to apply for the Enhanced STAR property tax relief program--available to homeowners who turn 65 or older this year--are fast approaching.

"Since I took office last month, I have been working to find ways to help reduce our state's tax burden on families," said Senator Ritchie. "That's been the number one issue raised by families I talk to who tell me how difficult it is for them to pay their bills, their mortgage and property taxes."

"If you or any member of your family is turning 65 this year, make sure you don't miss out on your chance to possibly reduce your school taxes by taking advantage of New York State's School Tax Relief Program known as STAR," Senator Ritchie said. "Residents of most communities have until March 1st to apply for this program that can help you lower your property tax payment."

The Basic STAR is available to anyone who earns less than \$500,000 a year. There is no age limit for Basic STAR, which exempts the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home from school taxes. Once a homeowner is approved for Basic STAR, they'll receive the tax break each year unless they move.

"If you or your spouse turn 65 at any time in 2011, you may be eligible for the Enhanced STAR exemption. If you have any family member turning 65 this year, make sure they are aware that they may be eligible to reduce their tax payment. To qualify, you must be 65 or older. You must own property that you use as your primary residence, and the total annual income of all the owners of the property must be \$79,050 or less, based on 2009 Income Tax Returns. If you qualify, the program exempts the first \$60,100 of the full value of your home from school taxes," she said.

"Most residents of the 48th Senate District must file their application by March 1st. Your town assessor's office can provide you with an application and answer any questions you might have. Residents of the city of Ogdensburg must apply by April 1st. Residents of the city of Watertown have until January 1st," she said.