



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senator Ritchie Helps Hundreds of Seniors Qualify for Tax Break

PATTY RITCHIE March 9, 2011

| ISSUE: **STAR (SCHOOL TAX RELIEF PROGRAM)**

Town Assessors Say Senator Ritchie Helped Their Constituents

Hundreds of senior citizens across Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence County are now going to see a reduction in their school property taxes thanks to State Senator Patty Ritchie's efforts to inform senior citizens about the benefits of the Enhanced STAR program.

Senator Ritchie utilized email, postal mail and posts on her Facebook page to inform seniors about an upcoming deadline to apply for the program, which provides substantial property tax savings for homeowners who are turning 65 or older.

Individual Town Assessors throughout the 48th Senate District reported that dozens of homeowners who were previously unaware of the program had contacted their offices and filed applications.

"Senator Ritchie reached a lot of people who will be turning 65 this year and helped them discover they qualified for the enhanced STAR tax break," said William Van Patten, Town Assessor in Mexico, Oswego County. "Thanks to Senator Ritchie's efforts, 33 residents in just the town of Mexico alone discovered they qualified for a substantial tax break."

Marlene Norfolk, the Town Assessor in Adams, Jefferson County, said, "Like every other Assessor in Central and Northern New York, I work hard to make sure the residents of my community are aware of every property tax break they are entitled to receive," she said. "That's why I was very surprised when it turned out that 20 residents in my town had been missing out on the enhanced STAR benefit. Senator Ritchie has helped me help them."

Ogdensburg City Assessor Kathy Bateman reported similar results in her city.

"Thanks to Senator Ritchie's efforts to make people aware, they were able to qualify for this substantial tax break. But if just one person had benefitted, it would have been worth it. If it was your mom who learned she was eligible for a \$60,000 reduction in her assessment, you would want her to receive it," she said.

"I am working hard to find ways to help reduce the property tax burden on hardworking Central and Northern New York families," said Sen. Ritchie. "But first of all, it's important that we make sure that homeowners are taking advantage of the tax relief that's already available.

"I want to thank the Town Assessors of Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties who are working every day to make sure that homeowners get the tax relief they deserve," she said. "Their help has been crucial in making this effort a success."

Homeowners had until March 1st to qualify for Enhanced STAR--and its counterpart, Basic STAR, which applies to most homeowners under 65--for 2011. The deadline in Ogdensburg is April 1, and Watertown residents had to apply before Dec. 1.

Applications received after those dates will apply to 2012 tax bills.