



Certified Louisiana Assessor

# LAWRENCE E. CHEHARDY, CLA

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April 10, 2006

Dear Homeowner,

Please find enclosed a two part card. The card marked "1" is your homestead exemption receipt. Your homestead exemption is now permanent. You do not have to reapply each year to keep it. You will keep your homestead exemption by continuing to **own and occupy** this property as your home. However, if you no longer own **and** occupy this property as your home, you must contact this office immediately so that the exemption can be cancelled. You should retain this card for your records as proof that you have your homestead exemption for 2006.

The second card, marked "2", is an application for the special assessment level for a homeowner who is sixty-five years of age or older and who has an adjusted gross income of \$58,531.00 or less on the homeowner's 2005 federal income tax return. If you believe that you qualify for the special assessment level which freezes your assessment at its current level please follow the instructions located on the card and fill out the card completely. If after filling out the card you meet the requirements to qualify for the special assessment level, please sign the card and return it to this office prior to the return date indicated on the card.

## **I. The aftermath of the hurricanes.**

Last year Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated our neighborhoods and this region. Recovery is well on its way in Jefferson Parish while New Orleans still struggles to rebuild.

Because of the damage caused by the hurricanes, I went to the state legislature to seek legislation that would allow my office to value and reassess all damaged property in its damaged condition. Current law made no provisions to adequately reassess such damaged property. With the support of our parish's legislative delegation, parish officials, and others, we succeeded in changing state law to benefit property owners with storm damaged property.

At the end of last year this office conducted a damage assessment throughout Jefferson Parish, neighborhood by neighborhood. As a result of that survey this office reduced the assessments of damaged homes and businesses throughout the parish. Homeowners were then mailed notices informing them of the assessment changes.

These reductions in assessments have given property owners who suffered hurricane related damage the opportunity to repair and rebuild their homes and businesses while being shielded from unnecessary and burdensome taxes.

## **II. Additional legislation.**

Later this year Louisiana voters will vote on a constitutional amendment which will insure that those homeowners who have been displaced from their homes as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will not lose their homestead exemptions. In addition the amendment will make certain that our senior citizens who have the Special Assessment Level and who suffered storm damage will not lose it and will not have their property tax bills increase after their homes have been repaired or rebuilt.

**If this amendment fails many homeowners whose homes suffered damage as a result of the storms will lose their homestead exemptions, and senior citizens who rebuilt after the storms will lose their frozen assessments and face significantly higher property tax bills.**

Voters statewide will have the opportunity to vote on this amendment on Saturday, September 30, 2006.

## **III. Closing.**

It has been very difficult over the past seven months for so many of our residents who suffered so much at the hands of Katrina and Rita. To those of our neighbors who suffered from the storms I hope that your efforts to repair and rebuild your homes and property are moving along and that those of you who have not yet returned to your homes will do so soon. My prayers, and the prayers of my family, are with you.

In closing, I want to thank you for allowing me to serve you in public office as your assessor.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

Lawrence E. Chehardy, CLA  
Assessor  
Jefferson Parish