

NEWS RELEASE from the Smith County Appraisal District 245 SSE Loop 323, Tyler, TX 75702. 903/510-8600 Michael Barnett, Chief Appraiser.

For **IMMEDIATE** Release

April 5, 2019

HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS MAY REDUCE PROPERTY TAX BILLS

“One of the easiest ways a homeowner can lower his or her property tax bill in 2019 is to file a homestead exemption. A homestead is generally the house and land used as the owner’s principal residence on Jan. 1 of the tax year,” Chief Appraiser Mike Barnett said.

Homestead exemptions reduce the appraised value of your home and, as a result, lower your property taxes. “Taxpayers who received a homestead exemption on their present home in 2018 do not need to reapply for 2019. Homeowners who have never received a homestead exemption on the home they owned and in which they were living on January 1, 2019, can apply to receive an exemption for 2019,” Barnett explained.

To apply for an exemption on your residence homestead, contact the Smith County Appraisal District.

Available homestead exemptions include:

- **School taxes:** All homeowners may receive a \$25,000 homestead exemption for school taxes.
- **Age and disability exemptions:** Individuals 65 or older or disabled as defined by law may qualify for a \$10,000 homestead exemption for school taxes, in addition to the \$25,000 exemption available to all homeowners. Also, any taxing unit may offer a local optional exemption of at least \$3,000 for taxpayers age 65 or older and/or disabled. Older or disabled homeowners do not need to own their homes on Jan. 1 to qualify for the \$10,000 homestead exemption. They qualify as soon as they turn age 65 or become disabled.

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- Taxing units may offer a **local option exemption** based on a percentage of a home's appraised value. Any taxing unit can exempt up to 20 percent of the value of each qualified homestead. Various optional homestead exemptions are offered by taxing units in Smith County. No matter what percentage of value the taxing unit adopts, the dollar value of the exemption must be at least \$5,000.
- **Donated Residence Homestead of Partially Disabled Veterans:** Texas law provides partial exemptions for any property owned by veterans who are disabled, surviving spouses and surviving children of deceased disabled veterans. This includes homesteads donated to disabled veterans by charitable organizations at no cost or not more than 50 percent of the good faith estimate of the homestead's market value to the disabled veterans and their surviving spouses. The exemption amount is determined according to the percentage of service-connected disability.
- **100 Percent Residence Homestead Exemption for Disabled Veterans:** A disabled veteran who receives 100 percent disability compensation due to a service-connected disability and a rating of 100 percent disabled or of individual unemployability from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is entitled to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of the veteran's residence homestead. Surviving spouses of veterans who qualified for this exemption or who would have qualified for this exemption if it had been in effect at the time of the veteran's death are also eligible with certain restrictions. The residence homestead application must be filed if this exemption is claimed.
- **Surviving Spouses of Members of the U.S. Armed Services Killed in Action:** The surviving spouse of a member of the U.S. armed services who is killed in action is allowed a total (100 percent) property tax exemption on his or her residence homestead if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the armed services member.
- **Surviving Spouses of First Responders Killed in the Line of Duty:** The eligible surviving spouse of a first responder killed in the line of duty is allowed a total (100 percent) property tax exemption on his or her residence homestead if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the first responder.

For more details on homestead exemptions, contact the Smith County Appraisal District, 245 SSE Loop 323, Tyler, Texas 75702. 903/510-8600. Homestead applications are available at www.smithcad.org. The homestead exemption application is also available online at comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/taxforms/50-114.pdf.