

BUSINESS

The Miami Herald



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009 | EDITOR: JANE WOOLDRIDGE



PROPERTY TAXES

Property value appeals rising

■ With tax rates rising, South Florida home owners are rushing to file appeals of their property assessments in order to lower their property tax bills. The deadline is Friday.

BY MONICA HATCHER
AND AMY SHERMAN

mhatcher@MiamiHerald.com

With the deadline to file property assessment appeals only two days away, local tax appeal firms say they are being overwhelmed by the crush of property owners hoping to lower their taxes.

"We're up to our ears in alligators," said Larry Puyanich with Tax Savers of Miami.

"We don't have enough people to man the phones."

Property owners in Miami-Dade and Broward counties have until Friday to file an appeal to challenge their tax assessments and pay the \$15 filing fee.

As of Tuesday, about 10,400 property owners had filed appeals in Broward.

•TURN TO APPEALS, 3C

How to appeal

- **The deadline** to file a property tax appeal in Miami-Dade and Broward is Friday.
- **In Miami-Dade**, you can file electronically at <http://www.miami-dade-clerk.com/dadecoc/VAB.asp> or call (305) 375-5641.
- **In Broward**, visit <http://bcvab.broward.org/ax-iaweb2009> or call (954) 357-7292.

PROPERTY TAXES

Friday deadline to appeal assessment

•APPEALS, FROM 1C

In Miami-Dade, 18,000 appeals had been entered into the system, but stacks of applications still needed processing. The counties usually get a rush of appeals filed in the last few days.

Several property tax abatement companies said

they are seeing a 20 to 30 percent increase in business this year as angry property owners look for ways to reduce their exposure to rising tax rates levied by cities and other taxing authorities.

"They see a decrease in their assessed values, but their property taxes are going up. It's very, very

frustrating," said M.J. Stone, of M.J. Stone & Associates in Fort Lauderdale.

In Broward, Jo Bieber, the county's value adjustment board and documents manager, anticipated fewer filings than last year's 30,000, mainly due to a drop in appeals from residential property

owners.

However, the county could see slightly more filings from commercial property owners, he said.

Miami-Dade is still dealing with a tidal wave of filings from last year. Some 102,000 appeals were filed.

About 36,000 appeals still have to be heard.