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Riverside County **NEWS RELEASE**

As recession fades, property tax bills will increase because of Prop. 8

If you paid a smaller tax bill in recent years because the Riverside County Assessor lowered your property value to match slumping real estate prices during the recession, you might see more than the typical 2 percent maximum increase on this year's bill.

Under Prop. 13, property valuations throughout California usually can increase no more than 2 percent a year – and valuation determines the amount of your tax bill. The way it works is that the assessed value in the year you buy a piece of property is set as a baseline and valuations in future years are controlled by limits set in Prop. 13.

Valuations for all properties are reviewed annually and in an economic downturn, another state law requires counties to reduce assessed values to keep them in line with property values in your area. But that law, Prop. 8, also says that when real-estate prices start increasing again, the lower valuation that trimmed your tax bill during a recession must increase to match the current real-estate market.

“Prop. 8 means you pay less in taxes when real-estate prices are down, and we make sure you don't pay more than your fair share,” Assessor Larry Ward said. “But when real-estate prices start getting back to normal, state law says your fair share does, too.”

Taxpayers who think their property values are set too high this year may contact the Riverside County Assessor to determine the reason for the amount of the valuation. Often, the differences can be resolved at this stage. If a taxpayer and the assessor can't reach agreement, the taxpayer has the right to appeal the assessment. But if you appeal, make sure you pay your property tax bill while the appeal is pending. If taxes are not paid on time, you will be subject to a 10 percent penalty regardless of whether your assessment is subsequently adjusted.

Property owners who disagree with their property's assessed value may file a free decline-in-value application online. Applications are due by Nov. 3 and are available at www.riversideacr.com.

Property owners disputing the value set by the Assessor's office may file an appeal with the Riverside County Clerk of the Board until Dec 1. An application to appeal a changed assessment is available on the Clerk of the Board's website at www.rivcocob.com.

For more information, visit www.riversideacr.com or call (951) 955-6200 or toll free (800) 746-1544.