

Tax deadline approaching for property owners

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Owners of taxable personal property are nearing the deadline to file their 2013 schedules.

Dawson County Assessor John Moore said this week that all schedules must be in his office, postmarked or electronically filed by May 1.

Moore said he's offering the friendly reminder so property owners can avoid statutory penalties of no less than 10% of the taxes (not the value) generated.

Those who have never filed must come to the assessor's office or file by mail, he said, because passwords for e-filing must be obtained directly from the staff.

Moore said this is a year of transition.

A property owner may prefer to do business through what amounts to an email, the assessor noted, but to facilitate the process this year the assessor's office has continued to mail hard copies along with post cards containing a password, and information explaining how to file online.

The web site is <http://www.personal>

[propertyonline.us/](http://www.personalpropertyonline.us/).

Dawson County offers preprinted forms utilizing information still on the record in 2012. Purchases made during 2012 are to be added to the 2013 schedule.

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Tax years begin Jan. 1 so Moore said anything purchased after Dec. 31, 2012, would not be reported on a 2013 schedule.

Submission of federal depreciation worksheets with the personal property schedules continues to be part of the process as well. He said many schedules may only need to be signed by the owner and returned if no new purchases occurred.

The county assessor said an owner's depreciation worksheet is needed to determine what items are eligible for taxation. Personal property in Nebraska is taxed on a net book value or purchase price minus depreciation.

Only the assessor and his staff have access to individual schedules that are filed electronically, Moore said.

Once the schedule is filed, only the assessor's office can edit the form although forms may be returned via email to the owner to make a correction.

"It is imperative for those who owned personal property and reported it to my office in 2012 to contact the office again this year, even if it's to let us know the property is gone," Moore said. "We are required to file a schedule on the owner's behalf despite any unknown facts. If an owner doesn't clear the record in some fashion, we would be unaware of a change."

Property owners should be involved even if a professional completes the clerical work.

Moore said owners shouldn't assume that their accountant or attorney took care of the filing. Instead, they may actually receive just a copy of the yet-to-be-filed schedule and fail to take the final step in the process.

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Owners can have the schedule e-filed for them by a professional but assigned passwords will still have to be utilized, Moore said. Accountants and attorneys will be able to file online on behalf of their client only if the client shares their password.

Moore said there are penalties involved for filing late based on the amount of tax to be paid—not on the valuation. Initially, the late fee adds another 10% onto the taxes but Moore said that figure could jump as high as 25% for someone who is excessively late. May 1 is the initial filing deadline.

“We send out several alerts in order to avoid applying a penalty,” he said, “but there seem to be some each year regardless.”

The first notification arrives in January at the owner’s last known mailing address. Even if an owner does not receive a schedule, he or she is still required to file.

Schedules are available in the assessor’s office on the first floor of the courthouse or on the Department of Revenue Property Tax Division website.

Questions may be directed to Moore or his staff at 308-324-3471.