

CHAPTER 2013-72

Senate Bill No. 1830

An act relating to ad valorem taxation; amending s. 192.047, F.S.; providing that the postmark date of commercial mail delivery service is considered the date of filing for certain ad valorem applications or returns; creating s. 192.048, F.S.; allowing certain ad valorem communications to be sent electronically in lieu of first-class mail; providing requirements; amending s. 193.122, F.S.; requiring a property appraiser to publish notices of date of tax roll certifications and extensions on the property appraiser's website; amending s. 193.155, F.S.; providing that a change of ownership for purposes of assessing property at just value does not apply to lessees entitled to the homestead; extending the time for appealing a value adjustment board's denial of a taxpayer's application to transfer prior homestead assessment limitations to a new homestead; amending s. 193.451, F.S.; providing that aquacultural crops are exempt from taxation until marketable; amending s. 193.461, F.S., relating to the classification of agricultural land for tax assessment to revise the definition of "agricultural purposes" to include algaculture; amending s. 193.703, F.S.; authorizing a county to waive the annual application requirement for a reduction in the assessed value of homestead property used to provide living quarters for the parents or grandparents of the owner or spouse of the owner; requiring the property owner to notify the property appraiser if the reduction no longer applies; providing for tax, penalty, and interest assessments if the property owner improperly received reductions; providing for liens; amending s. 196.031, F.S.; deleting the express requirement that titleholders of homesteads live on the homestead in order to qualify for homestead tax exemption; amending s. 196.075, F.S., as amended by s. 1 of chapter 2012-57, Laws of Florida; clarifying that local governments that provide additional homestead exemptions to persons 65 and older may provide exemptions up to a certain amount; repealing s. 196.082(1)(b) and (3)(a), F.S., relating to the requirement that a veteran applying for a discount on the ad valorem tax owed on homestead property be a state resident at the time of entering military service; amending s. 196.1978, F.S.; removing the ability of a general partner classified as a 501(c)(3) organization to qualify as a limited partnership for the affordable housing property tax exemption; providing for retroactive application; amending s. 196.198, F.S.; clarifying the ownership of property used for education purposes and exempt from ad valorem taxation; amending s. 4 of chapter 2012-45, Laws of Florida; providing that taxes imposed by school districts in certain areas are not included in determining the taxes that must be transmitted to St. Lucie County pursuant to the transfer of property from St. Lucie County to Martin County; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 192.047, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

192.047 Date of filing.—

(1) For the purposes of ad valorem tax administration, the date of an official United States Postal Service or commercial mail delivery service postmark on ~~of~~ an application for exemption, an application for special assessment classification, or a return filed by mail is ~~shall be~~ considered the date of filing the application or return.

Section 2. Section 192.048, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

192.048 Electronic transmission.—

(1) Subject to subsection (2), the following documents may be transmitted electronically rather than by regular mail:

(a) The notice of proposed property taxes required under s. 200.069.

(b) The tax exemption renewal application required under s. 196.011(6)(a).

(c) The tax exemption renewal application required under s. 196.011(6)(b).

(d) A notification of an intent to deny a tax exemption required under s. 196.011(9)(e).

(e) The decision of the value adjustment board required under s. 194.034(2).

(2) Electronic transmission pursuant to this section is authorized only under the following conditions, as applicable:

(a) The recipient consents in writing to receive the document electronically.

(b) On the form used to obtain the recipient’s written consent, the sender includes a statement in substantially the following form and in a font equal to or greater than the font used for the text requesting the recipient’s consent:

NOTICE: Under Florida law, e-mail addresses are public records. By consenting to communicate with this office electronically, your e-mail address will be released in response to any applicable public records request.

(c) Before sending a document electronically, the sender verifies the recipient’s address by sending an electronic transmission to the recipient and receiving an affirmative response from the recipient verifying that the recipient’s address is correct.

(d) If a document is returned as undeliverable, the sender sends the document by regular mail, as required by law.

(e) Documents sent pursuant to this section comply with the same timing and form requirements as if the documents were sent by regular mail.

(f) The sender renews the consent and verification requirements every 5 years.

Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 193.122, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

193.122 Certificates of value adjustment board and property appraiser; extensions on the assessment rolls.—

(2) After the first certification of the tax rolls by the value adjustment board, the property appraiser shall make all required extensions on the rolls to show the tax attributable to all taxable property. Upon completion of these extensions, and upon satisfying himself or herself that all property is properly taxed, the property appraiser shall certify the tax rolls and shall within 1 week thereafter publish notice of the date and fact of extension and certification on the property appraiser’s website and in a periodical meeting the requirements of s. 50.011 and publicly display a notice of the date of certification in the office of the property appraiser. The property appraiser shall also supply notice of the date of the certification to any taxpayer who requests one in writing. These certificates and notices shall be made in the form required by the department and ~~shall be attached to each roll as required by the department by rule regulation.~~

Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) and paragraph (1) of subsection (8) of section 193.155, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

193.155 Homestead assessments.—Homestead property shall be assessed at just value as of January 1, 1994. Property receiving the homestead exemption after January 1, 1994, shall be assessed at just value as of January 1 of the year in which the property receives the exemption unless the provisions of subsection (8) apply.

(3)(a) Except as provided in this subsection or subsection (8), property assessed under this section shall be assessed at just value as of January 1 of the year following a change of ownership. Thereafter, the annual changes in the assessed value of the property are subject to the limitations in subsections (1) and (2). For the purpose of this section, a change of ownership means any sale, foreclosure, or transfer of legal title or beneficial title in equity to any person, ~~except as provided in this subsection. There is no change of ownership if:~~

1. Subsequent to the change or transfer, the same person is entitled to the homestead exemption as was previously entitled and:

- a. The transfer of title is to correct an error;

b. The transfer is between legal and equitable title or equitable and equitable title and no additional person applies for a homestead exemption on the property; ~~or~~

c. The change or transfer is by means of an instrument in which the owner is listed as both grantor and grantee of the real property and one or more other individuals are additionally named as grantee. However, if any individual who is additionally named as a grantee applies for a homestead exemption on the property, the application is shall be considered a change of ownership; or

d. The person is a lessee entitled to the homestead exemption under s. 196.041(1).

2. Legal or equitable title is changed or transferred between husband and wife, including a change or transfer to a surviving spouse or a transfer due to a dissolution of marriage;

3. The transfer occurs by operation of law to the surviving spouse or minor child or children under s. 732.401; or

4. Upon the death of the owner, the transfer is between the owner and another who is a permanent resident and who is legally or naturally dependent upon the owner.

(8) Property assessed under this section shall be assessed at less than just value when the person who establishes a new homestead has received a homestead exemption as of January 1 of either of the 2 immediately preceding years. A person who establishes a new homestead as of January 1, 2008, is entitled to have the new homestead assessed at less than just value only if that person received a homestead exemption on January 1, 2007, and only if this subsection applies retroactive to January 1, 2008. For purposes of this subsection, a husband and wife who owned and both permanently resided on a previous homestead shall each be considered to have received the homestead exemption even though only the husband or the wife applied for the homestead exemption on the previous homestead. The assessed value of the newly established homestead shall be determined as provided in this subsection.

(1) The property appraisers of the state shall, as soon as practicable after March 1 of each year and on or before July 1 of that year, carefully consider all applications for assessment under this subsection which have been filed in their respective offices on or before March 1 of that year. If, upon investigation, the property appraiser finds that the applicant is entitled to assessment under this subsection, the property appraiser shall make such entries upon the tax rolls of the county as are necessary to allow the assessment. If, after due consideration, the property appraiser finds that the applicant is not entitled ~~under the law to~~ the assessment under this subsection, the property appraiser shall immediately prepare ~~make out~~ a notice of such disapproval, giving his or her reasons therefor, and a copy of

the notice must be served upon the applicant by the property appraiser either by personal delivery or by registered mail to the post office address given by the applicant. The applicant may appeal the decision of the property appraiser refusing to allow the assessment under this subsection to the value adjustment board, and the board shall review the application and evidence presented to the property appraiser upon which the applicant based the claim and shall hear the applicant in person or by agent on behalf of his or her right to such assessment. Such appeal shall be heard by an attorney special magistrate if the value adjustment board uses special magistrates. The value adjustment board shall reverse the decision of the property appraiser in the cause and grant assessment under this subsection to the applicant if, in its judgment, the applicant is entitled to be granted the assessment or shall affirm the decision of the property appraiser. The action of the board is final in the cause unless the applicant, within 60 ~~15~~ days following the date of refusal of the application by the board, files in the circuit court of the county in which the homestead is located a proceeding against the property appraiser for a declaratory judgment as is provided under ~~by~~ chapter 86 or other appropriate proceeding. The failure of the taxpayer to appear before the property appraiser or value adjustment board or to file any paper other than the application as provided in this subsection does not constitute a ~~any~~ bar to or defense in the proceedings.

Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 193.451, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

193.451 Annual growing of agricultural crops, nonbearing fruit trees, nursery stock; taxability.—

(1) Growing annual agricultural crops, nonbearing fruit trees, ~~and~~ nursery stock, and aquacultural crops, regardless of the growing methods, shall be considered as having no ascertainable value and shall not be taxable until they have reached maturity or a stage of marketability and have passed from the hands of the producer ~~or~~ and/or offered for sale. This section shall be construed liberally in favor of the taxpayer.

Section 6. Subsection (5) of section 193.461, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

193.461 Agricultural lands; classification and assessment; mandated eradication or quarantine program.—

(5) For the purpose of this section, the term “agricultural purposes” includes, but is not limited to, horticulture; floriculture; viticulture; forestry; dairy; livestock; poultry; bee; pisciculture, ~~if when~~ the land is used principally for the production of tropical fish; aquaculture, including algaculture; sod farming; and all forms of farm products as defined in s. 823.14(3) and farm production.

Section 7. Subsections (5) and (6) of section 193.703, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:

193.703 Reduction in assessment for living quarters of parents or grandparents.—

(5) At the request of the property appraiser and by a majority vote of the county governing body, a county may waive the annual application requirement after the initial application is filed and the reduction is granted. Notwithstanding such waiver, an application is required if property granted a reduction is sold or otherwise disposed of, the ownership changes in any manner, the applicant for the reduction ceases to use the property as his or her homestead, or the status of the owner changes so as to change the use of the property qualifying for the reduction pursuant to this section ~~If the owner of homestead property for which such a reduction in assessed value has been granted is found to have made any willfully false statement in the application for the reduction, the reduction shall be revoked, the owner is subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000, and the owner shall be disqualified from receiving any such reduction for a period of 5 years.~~

(6) The property owner shall notify the property appraiser when the property owner no longer qualifies for the reduction in assessed value for living quarters of parents or grandparents, and the previously excluded just value of such improvements as of the first January 1 after the improvements were substantially completed shall be added back to the assessed value of the property.

(7) If the property appraiser determines that for any year within the previous 10 years a property owner who was not entitled to a reduction in assessed value under this section was granted such reduction, the property appraiser shall serve on the owner a notice of intent to record in the public records of the county a notice of tax lien against any property owned by that person in the county, and that property must be identified in the notice of tax lien. Any property that is owned by that person and is situated in this state is subject to the taxes exempted by the improper reduction, plus a penalty of 50 percent of the unpaid taxes for each year and interest at a rate of 15 percent per annum. However, if a reduction is improperly granted due to a clerical mistake or omission by the property appraiser, the person who improperly received the reduction may not be assessed a penalty or interest. Before such lien may be filed, the owner must be given 30 days within which to pay the taxes, penalties, and interest. Such lien is subject to s. 196.161(3).

Section 8. Subsection (1) of section 196.031, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

196.031 Exemption of homesteads.—

(1)(a) A ~~Every~~ person who, on January 1, has the legal title or beneficial title in equity to real property in this state ~~and who resides thereon and who~~ in good faith makes the property ~~same~~ his or her permanent residence, or the permanent residence of another or others legally or naturally dependent upon him or her ~~such person~~, is entitled to an exemption from all taxation, except for assessments for special benefits, up to the assessed valuation of

\$25,000 on the residence and contiguous real property, as defined in s. 6, Art. VII of the State Constitution. Such title may be held by the entirety, jointly, or in common with others, and the exemption may be apportioned among such of the owners as shall reside thereon, as their respective interests shall appear. If only one of the owners of an estate held by the entirety or held jointly with the right of survivorship resides on the property, that owner is allowed an exemption of up to the assessed valuation of \$25,000 on the residence and contiguous real property. However, an ~~no such~~ exemption of more than \$25,000 is not allowed to any one person or on any one dwelling house, except that an exemption up to the assessed valuation of \$25,000 may be allowed on each apartment or mobile home occupied by a tenant-stockholder or member of a cooperative corporation and on each condominium parcel occupied by its owner. Except for owners of an estate held by the entirety or held jointly with the right of survivorship, the amount of the exemption may not exceed the proportionate assessed valuation of all owners who reside on the property. Before such exemption may be granted, the deed or instrument shall be recorded in the official records of the county in which the property is located. The property appraiser may request the applicant to provide additional ownership documents to establish title.

(b) Every person who qualifies to receive the exemption provided in paragraph (a) is entitled to an additional exemption of up to \$25,000 on the assessed valuation greater than \$50,000 for all levies other than school district levies.

Section 9. Subsection (2) of section 196.075, Florida Statutes, as amended by section 1 of chapter 2012-57, Laws of Florida, is amended to read:

Section 1. Section 196.075, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

196.075 Additional homestead exemption for persons 65 and older.—

(2) In accordance with s. 6(d), Art. VII of the State Constitution, the board of county commissioners of any county or the governing authority of any municipality may adopt an ordinance to allow either or both of the following an additional homestead exemptions:

(a) Up to \$50,000 ~~Fifty thousand dollars~~ for any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, who has attained age 65, and whose household income does not exceed \$20,000; or

(b) The amount of the assessed value of the property for any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate with a just value less than \$250,000 and has maintained thereon the permanent residence of the owner for at least 25 years, who has attained age 65, and whose household income does not exceed the income limitation prescribed in paragraph (a), as calculated in subsection (3).

Section 10. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) and paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 196.082, Florida Statutes, are repealed.

Section 11. Applying retroactively to the 2013 tax roll, section 196.1978, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

196.1978 Affordable housing property exemption.—Property used to provide affordable housing serving eligible persons as defined by s. 159.603(7) and natural persons or families meeting the extremely-low-income, very-low-income, low-income, or moderate-income limits specified in s. 420.0004, which ~~property~~ is owned entirely by a nonprofit entity that is a corporation not for profit, qualified as charitable under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and in compliance with Rev. Proc. 96-32, 1996-1 C.B. 717, ~~is or a Florida-based limited partnership, the sole general partner of which is a corporation not for profit which is qualified as charitable under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which complies with Rev. Proc. 96-32, 1996-1 C.B. 717,~~ shall be considered property owned by an exempt entity and used for a charitable purpose, and those portions of the affordable housing property which provide housing to natural persons or families classified as extremely low income, very low income, low income, or moderate income under s. 420.0004 ~~are~~ shall be exempt from ad valorem taxation to the extent authorized in s. 196.196. All property identified in this section must shall comply with the criteria provided under s. 196.195 for determining determination of exempt status and to be applied by property appraisers on an annual basis as defined in ~~s. 196.195~~. The Legislature intends that any property owned by a limited liability company ~~or limited partnership~~ which is disregarded as an entity for federal income tax purposes pursuant to Treasury Regulation 301.7701-3(b)(1)(ii) shall be treated as owned by its sole member ~~or sole general partner~~.

Section 12. Section 196.198, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

196.198 Educational property exemption.—Educational institutions within this state and their property used by them or by any other exempt entity or educational institution exclusively for educational purposes ~~is~~ shall be exempt from taxation. Sheltered workshops providing rehabilitation and retraining of disabled individuals who have disabilities and exempted by a certificate under s. (d) of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, are declared wholly educational in purpose and are exempt shall be ~~exempted~~ from certification, accreditation, and membership requirements set forth in s. 196.012. Those portions of property of college fraternities and sororities certified by the president of the college or university to the appropriate property appraiser as being essential to the educational process are shall be exempt from ad valorem taxation. The use of property by public fairs and expositions chartered by chapter 616 is presumed to be an educational use of such property and ~~is~~ shall be exempt from ad valorem taxation to the extent of such use. Property used exclusively for educational purposes shall be deemed owned by an educational institution if the entity owning 100 percent of the educational institution is owned by the identical persons who own the property, or if the entity owning 100 percent of the

educational institution and the entity owning the property are owned by the identical natural persons. Land, buildings, and other improvements to real property used exclusively for educational purposes shall be deemed owned by an educational institution if the entity owning 100 percent of the land is a nonprofit entity and the land is used, under a ground lease or other contractual arrangement, by an educational institution that owns the buildings and other improvements to the real property, is a nonprofit entity under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and provides education limited to students in prekindergarten through grade 8. If legal title to property is held by a governmental agency that leases the property to a lessee, the property shall be deemed to be owned by the governmental agency and used exclusively for educational purposes if the governmental agency continues to use such property exclusively for educational purposes pursuant to a sublease or other contractual agreement with that lessee. If the title to land is held by the trustee of an irrevocable inter vivos trust and if the trust grantor owns 100 percent of the entity that owns an educational institution that is using the land exclusively for educational purposes, the land is deemed to be property owned by the educational institution for purposes of this exemption. Property owned by an educational institution shall be deemed to be used for an educational purpose if the institution has taken affirmative steps to prepare the property for educational use. The term “affirmative steps” means environmental or land use permitting activities, creation of architectural plans or schematic drawings, land clearing or site preparation, construction or renovation activities, or other similar activities that demonstrate commitment of the property to an educational use.

Section 13. Section 4 of chapter 2012-45, Laws of Florida, is amended to read:

Section 4. The governing bodies of St. Lucie County and Martin County shall enter into an interlocal agreement ~~by no later than~~ May 1, 2013, which ~~must~~ shall provide a financially feasible plan for transfer of services, personnel, and public infrastructure from St. Lucie County to Martin County. The agreement ~~must~~ shall include compensation for the value of infrastructure investments by St. Lucie County in the transferred property minus depreciation, if any. ~~Upon the Effective July 1, 2013 date of this act,~~ the total tax and assessment revenue that would have been generated in fiscal year 2013-2014 by all St. Lucie County taxing authorities levying taxes or assessments within the area transferred to Martin County, except for taxes levied by school districts, less 10 percent shall be transmitted to St. Lucie County for distribution to the county and all other affected taxing authorities. Thereafter, through fiscal year 2022-2023, the tax and assessment revenue amount that would have been generated by all St. Lucie County taxing authorities levying taxes or assessments in the transferred area for fiscal year 2013-2014 shall serve as the base amount of tax and assessment revenue for further annual reductions of 10 percent of the base amount before annual distributions to the St. Lucie County through fiscal year 2022-2023. However, for any fiscal year through fiscal year 2022-2023, if ~~when~~ the total taxes and assessments collected within the transferred area

exceed the base amount by more than 3 percent, St. Lucie County shall receive the same percentage distribution from the tax and assessment revenue that exceeds the base amount by more than 3 percent as they will receive from the base amount. All distributions to St. Lucie County shall occur within 30 days after the beginning of each calendar year.

Section 14. This act shall take effect July 1, 2013.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 2013.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 2013.