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Madison County Treasurer to offer grace period for first tax payment

EDWARDSVILLE – Madison County Treasurer Chris Slusser announced today that he plans to offer a 2 month grace period for the first property tax payment in order to assist those struggling financially due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The first installment for property taxes will be due on July 9, however, for those struggling financially, late penalties will be waived, as long as the payment is received by September 9. Madison County is one of only two counties in the state that offers taxpayers four installments to pay real estate taxes; all other counties offer only two.

“We understand that people are struggling; some are temporarily unemployed and local businesses are losing lots of revenue. So, we looked for ways to give struggling taxpayers a break,” said Slusser.

“Unfortunately, we can’t discount or abate real estate taxes, but we can give people a little more time if they’re facing a hardship.”

Slusser said he reached out to local school superintendents to inform them of his plans so they could prepare for a delay in receiving some of their funds. Local schools are by far the largest recipients of property tax revenue. “Our local school superintendents were very understanding and supportive of the measure. They understand we’re in unprecedented times, and they have time to prepare for the delay.”

State statutes require County Board approval for the plan to waive penalties for real estate taxes. Slusser reached out to members of the County Board's finance committee, and informed them of the plan, along with any potential budget impact. A resolution is expected to be presented to the board in May for approval.

"I applaud the Treasurer for finding a way to assist property taxpayers in Madison County by making it a little bit easier to pay their taxes during a time that is so tough for many. These are unprecedented times that call for creative solutions like Mr. Slusser's," said Tom McRae (R-Bethalto), a member of the County Board's finance committee.

Fellow Finance Committee member David Michael (R-Highland) also agreed. "This type of accommodation will have a significant impact on our home owners who have been negatively affected by the closure of their business or workplace. Many of the families who will take advantage of this have suffered a lot already due to these closures. The least we can do is provide a little more flexibility with their property tax payments to ease some of their burden."

Slusser noted that this program is geared towards individuals and businesses that have suffered financial hardship during the pandemic. "We're not going to require hardship waiver forms to take part, but we do ask that if you're able to pay on time in July, to please do so. We'll operate on the honor system."

The plan will offer relief to homeowners and businesses, however, escrow payments from banks and mortgage companies will not be eligible to take part in the waiver.

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