

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 27, 2005

CONTACT:

Duane Zussy
Special Projects Administrator
Leon County Tax Collector's Office
3425 Thomasville Road, Suite 19
Tallahassee, FL 32309
850-488-2139 (Voice)
850-488-7828 (Fax)
zussyd@leoncountyfl.gov
www.leontaxcollector.net

**Leon County Tax Collector Explains How Certain Taxpayers May
Qualify to Defer the Payment of Property Taxes and Assessments
on Their Homestead**

Doris Maloy, Leon County Tax Collector, explained that state law provides conditions under which those who are entitled to claim the homestead tax exemption may choose to defer payment of a portion of the taxes and assessments that would otherwise be due. This can be accomplished by filing an annual application for tax deferral on or before January 31st.

Effectively, this type of deferral is best suited to the needs of older, lower income taxpayers who have significant equity in their homestead property but are finding it difficult to pay their current taxes.

Conditions for approval include household income limitations that vary with the age of the applicant. Approval cannot be granted if the primary mortgage financing on the property exceeds 70% of its assessed value or if the total amount of deferred taxes, assessments, and the accumulated interest on those amounts, if any, added to the amount of all other unsatisfied liens against the property exceeds 85% of its assessed value. Once approved, the property owner must maintain appropriate fire and extended loss insurance on the property with a loss-payable clause to the Tax Collector.

Copies of the application are available upon request at the Tax Collector's office in the Leon County Courthouse. Also, interested parties can call 850-488-4735 to speak with a Customer Service Representative who will answer questions and mail the form to those who wish to receive one.

Doris Maloy said, "This option is definitely not for everyone. However, for those who qualify, it can be an attractive alternative." She went on to say "This is a provision of the

property tax laws that is neither widely nor well known among our taxpayers, so I feel obligated to bring it to the attention of those who may find it a beneficial alternative. It is especially important that we inform taxpayers of this option at this time of year, because the 2005 tax bills will be in the mail by November first and anyone who may choose to apply for deferral of those taxes must do so no later than January 31, 2006.”

"Making Taxing Situations Easier"