

Making Dollars and Sense of the Tax Abatement at the Villas at Lake Blackthorn

In 2002, prior to the development of the land now known as the Villas at Lake Blackthorn, the South Bend Economic Development Commission designated the area as an "Economic Revitalization Area" and made it eligible for five-year tax abatement.

Real property owners in the Villas at Lake Blackthorn may apply for tax abatement, which when granted results in a reduction of the assessed value of their property. **The tax abatement represents approximately \$74,800 reduction in assessed value before applying the prevailing South Bend City, German Township tax rate, which in the past has correlated to a savings of about \$2200 annually in taxes, for the five consecutive tax years after initially filing the abatement.** The abatement cannot be filed on vacant land or "unimproved" property. Regardless of when the abatement is filed, property owners will have a full 5 years as long as the neighborhood remains designated as an "economic revitalization area" when they initially file. Other deductions may also apply for property owners such as the Homestead and Mortgage deductions, further reducing the total assessed value.

The designation for the area, which makes it eligible for tax abatement, currently expires in March of 2008.

The procedure for filing for tax abatement, for an individual property owner is as follows:

1. Complete sections I, II, III of Form 322 ERA
 - a. Key Number (found on your closing statement & mortgage titlework)
 - b. Name of Owner
 - c. Property Address
 - d. Legal Description (Found on your closing statement & Mortgage paperwork)
2. File the three (3) items listed below under #3, either in person or via US Mail with the St. Joseph County Auditor, **BEFORE MAY 10TH** (Unless there is an extension) of the year in which assessed valuation is made (typically the year your homes construction is completed). You may also contact them by telephone with any questions regarding your abatement at 574-235-9531 or 574-235-9528.
The Auditors address is: 227 W. Jefferson Blvd. South Bend, IN 46601
3. The forms you will need to file are-
 - a. Form 322 ERA with Sections I, II, III completed
 - b. Copy of Resolution 3138-02 (Attached to this letter)
 - c. Copy of Statement of benefits, Form SB-1 (Attached tot his letter)

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either the Auditor's office or the offices of Cooreman Real Estate Group at 574-277-0116.