

## New year brings property tax deadlines

Georgia property owners who feel their property has decreased in value due to the slump in the housing market can file a property tax return (Form PT-50R) between Jan. 1 and April 1 of each year.

This little known process allows property owners to declare what they feel is the true market value of their property and will activate the appeals process. The property tax returns then go through the same course an appeal would, getting reviewed by staff and eventually the county Board of Assessors.

According to James Bell, founder of the Douglas County Tax-

payers Coalition, county property tax assessors are quick to target homes for reassessment that have sold for more than the assessed values but are slow to reassess properties that have fallen below assessed values.

"Filing a property tax return will force a review of your property and will trigger the appeals process which could lower your taxes", said Bell. "It is the responsibility of property owners to keep their neighborhood values in line with the market."

Bell said some neighborhoods hit by foreclosures have dropped in value by 10 to 50 percent, leaving many prop-

erty owners paying more in taxes than they should.

April 1 is another important deadline to file for Homestead Exemptions. You must have owned the property on Jan. 1 to qualify for these tax savings. These exemptions can save property owners hundreds of dollars each year.

For more information on Property Taxes visit: [www.douglasTaxes.com](http://www.douglasTaxes.com).

Property Tax Return Form:

<http://www.etax.dor.ga.gov/PTD/adm/forms/pt50r/index.aspx>

Tax Facts for your County:

<http://www.etax.dor.ga.gov/PTD/county/index.aspx>

## Drug-related arrests made in Early County

Recent search warrants have resulted in several drug-related arrests by the Early County Drug Unit.

Officers executed a search warrant at 519 North Avenue which led to two arrests. Chris Coleman, 27, and Eron Brown, 28, both black males, were arrested after cocaine and marijuana were found at the residence. Both men are charged with possession of marijuana and cocaine with intent to distribute.

A Dec. 30 search at 219 Lee Street led to the arrest of Benjamin Byrd, a 21-year-old white male. Byrd was charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute after drugs were found in the home.

During the week of Dec. 10, 2008, Pataula

Drug Task Force in conjunction with the Early County Department of Public Safety made numerous arrests which resulted from undercover drug operations.

Arrested and charged with the sale of a controlled substance were Rocky Montez Thomas, black male, approximately 28 years of age, Comer Bernard Davis, black male, approximately 51 years of age, Willie Charles King, black male, approximately 50 years of age, James Earl Sheppard, approximately 48 years of age, Felicia Ann Griffin, black female, approximately 33 years of age, and Tyrone D. Sparrow, black male, approximately 26 years of age. Also arrested and charged with theft by

taking was Quinton Deshun McClendon, black male, approximately 32 years of age.

More arrests and warrants are to be served as a result of the undercover drug operations.

## 2008

From page 1 community block development grant for renovation of the Early County Health Department.

Primary Care of Southwest Georgia held a ribbon cutting for its facility on College Street.

The Georgia Court of Appeals agreed to consider reversal of Fulton Superior Court Judge Moore's ruling on the Longleaf Power project.

The Early County Commissioners agreed to enter into a contract with EC2055 for economic development services for a fee of \$80,000 per year.

**September**  
The community was saddened when Billy and Pat Parish of Blakely were killed in a single vehicle accident in Bowie, Texas.

A Sawyer Brown performance highlighted EC 2055's annual block party.

Henrinel Middleton and Anagene Gibbs were honored for their service as educators. Each has logged 50 years in the field.

Two teenage burglars who went on a weekend crime spree were caught after one of the suspects activated a stolen cell phone with his own cell

phone number.

Gas prices rose to almost \$5 a gallon after Hurricane Ike halted production in the gulf.

The Bainbridge College Early County Site saw enrollment climb from 585 last fall to 763 this semester.

Tori Askew of Arlington was crowned homecoming queen at Southwest Georgia Academy.

**October**  
The ECHS Band of Blue performed on Georgia Tech's Grant Field.

The 38th annual Kolomoki Festival drew a large crowd from around the tri-state area to Kolomoki Mounds.

Shaquina Reed was named homecoming queen and Escondarius Yarbrough king at Early County High's homecoming festivities.

A candidate forum gave voters the chance to hear from candidates on the ballot Nov. 4.

The **Early County News** entered it's 150th year of operation.

**November**  
Heath Busby of the Early County High School FFA chapter was a national winner in landscape management competition.

See 2008 on page 7

# The economy 'going to the dogs'?

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