

Date: November 21, 2003

Alert #32: Bonanza Editorial Column

Dear Property Owners,

Kirk Caraway, editor of the Bonanza wrote a fantastic article in today's Editorial Column. Ted Harris and I felt it was so good, that all people on our Alert Email List should read the article. What Kirk said is right on.

The text of the article is below. Or click on the following link for the article:

<http://www.tahoebonanza.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20031121/OPINION/311210201>

Sincerely,
Wayne Fischer, Web Master
Tax Revolt Committee Member
www.NevadaPropertyTaxRevolt.org

===== Bonanza Editorial Column =====

November 21, 2003

Complication and taxation

Column by Kirk Caraway, editor of the Bonanza (www.Tahoe.com)

There are a lot of issues circulating these days around the village, but probably none gets the ire up more than property taxes.

Residents who are already used to the yearly hikes due to the increases in taxable value of their homes got a shock this year when their bill to Washoe County rose by an average of about 30 percent.

Nobody likes to see taxes go up, but Incline residents are seeing theirs rise at rates that boggle the mind. Remember, this 30 percent is on top of the 30 percent that Gov. Kenny Guinn and the Nevada Legislature tacked onto the residents of this state this year. Gee, and they call Nevada a tax haven!

Now a lawsuit has been filed to fight the property tax increases here at the lake, claiming the methods used by the county assessor are improper. And after talking with people from both sides, I certainly question some of what they do to determine the taxable value of homes. But I'll leave it to the judicial system to work out the details.

What I found most distressing about this whole thing is the extremely complex and convoluted system that is used to assess taxes in this state. I spent the better part of a morning with Washoe Assessor Bob McGowan and three other county employees, listening to them explaining how taxes are figured. And all through this exercise, I was thinking, "How in the heck did we get a stupid system like this?"

Later I received a booklet from the Nevada Taxpayers Association titled, "Understanding Nevada's Property Tax System." After reading it, I can see why so many people in this state have no clue about their property taxes. It's as if the system was created that way.

And this isn't the only tax system that operates this way. Many are hidden or obscured in ways so you either don't see them, or you have no clue as to what they are and what you are really paying.

Sorry, but I like the simple solutions the best. Let's take property taxes. The county and state could save a whole lot of money, and save a lot of grief, if they just based property taxes on the sale price of a home. That is a concrete figure, not arbitrary. You don't need depreciation allowances, view ratings and all that other crap. One person and a good computer could figure taxes for the entire state. And everyone who buys a house would know pretty much up front what the taxes are going to cost, which would be a great help to retiring seniors.

The tax situation in this county, this state and this country is just getting out of control. Citizens deserve a simple, transparent and fair tax system that everyone can understand. And we should start at the state level and change the property tax system before only the billionaires in town can afford to live here.

PS. Kirk Caraway gave Wayne Fischer verbal permission to email the above article to the Alert Email List on November 21, at noon.

PPS. If you are interested in reading the above referenced booklet "Understanding Nevada's Property Tax System", go to the following link to download the 16 page pdf file:
<http://www.nevadataxpayers.org/pdf/property-tax-2000.pdf>