

Tax Commissioner Renews Effort To Collect Watercraft, Personal Property Tax

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The Hall County Tax Commissioner's Office has launched a renewed effort to collect unpaid taxes on watercraft and personal property in the County.

"We are confident that these efforts, which started at the beginning of summer, are producing a positive result because our delinquent accounts are lower than this time last year," said Hall County Tax Commissioner Darla Eden.

Eden said the renewed effort was made possible, in part, by a new position in her office, which was approved by the Hall County Board of Commissioners in the 2015 budget.

"In prior years, the delinquent tax department was a one-man operation due to budget constraints," she said. "Having an additional staff member working on this initiative will show an immediate return on investment."

Eden said there are currently 7,071 delinquent watercraft and personal property accounts, totaling nearly \$5 million. She said 1,100 of those accounts became delinquent in 2013 and total approximately \$490,000 in unpaid personal property taxes. Eden said collecting these taxes has not been easy.

"Collecting delinquent personal property tax brings on new challenges due to businesses closing, changes in ownership and residents selling their personal property," she said.

The renewed effort comes on the heels of last year's initiative, which was the collection of unpaid taxes on mobile homes in Hall County. Eden said she hopes the renewed effort involving personal property will mirror the success they've seen in their collection of mobile home taxes. The collection rate on delinquent mobile home taxes in May 2013 was 69.98 percent. The collection rate for 2013 is now 90.98 percent.

"This increase in the collection rate has been made possible due to a partnership that our office has had with the Hall County Marshal's Office, who has been critical in issuing citations to mobile home owners who are delinquent" she said.

Although Eden has put a stronger emphasis on mobile home and personal property collections recently, real property has been the main focus for her and her staff since she took office in January 2013. Real property generates the most revenue for the county. The current collection rate for real property in 2013 is 99.57 percent.

"It is the responsibility of our office to collect taxes, and if all taxes are collected in a timely matter, it helps county departments operate as budgeted," Eden said. "If everyone pays in a timely manner then the tax burden is distributed throughout the County to support services such as fire, EMS, the sheriff's office, parks and leisure and the court system."