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Senior Discounts!

TAXES: Programs offer deferral options to seniors, disabled

Region, province help seniors hard hit by new tax assessment

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
 STAFF WRITER

Some senior and disabled residents hit hard by their new assessments could be eligible for a tax break.

As part of the region's "counter impact" programs authorized by the province, several policies have been adopted by both the Region of York and its nine area municipalities.

While they won't do anything to mitigate either the region or any possible town tax increase, they may help those faced with higher provincial assessments.

The policies include possible tax deferrals for those whose assessments bring their annual taxes up by more than \$300 a year, said Markham's Commissioner of Corporate Services Joanne Chechalk.

"We don't want to force people out of their homes because Current Value Assessment has drastically changed their tax rate," she said. "But the town can't absorb it either."

She said any increase caused by CVA over \$300 can be deferred until the homeowner's death or the sale of the house. The maximum deferral is up to 75 per cent of the value of the home

If you're a senior, you should be eligible if you're 65 years and over and if you qualify for the federal GAINS program, which is a guaranteed income supplement for those whose pension is considered low income.

If you're disabled, you qualify if you

"We don't want to force people out of their homes because Current Value Assessment has drastically changed their tax rate."

are receiving the federal disability pension.

"It's a way to make sure people don't lose their homes because of tax changes," Chechalk said. "It's like a reverse mortgage or a lien against the home to ensure the town doesn't have to assume responsibility."

Other counter-impact programs include a 40 per cent rebate of taxes to registered charities and non-profit organizations.

Chechalk explained that up until

this year property taxes and business taxes were paid separately and registered charities housed in commercial buildings were exempt from the business tax portion.

This year the province folded both taxes into one, leaving registered charities in a bind, thus the 40 per cent rebate.

"We think 40 per cent is about the equivalent of the business tax they would have to pay," Chechalk said. "We're trying to keep it revenue neutral."

All nine municipalities are currently trying to hammer out a policy to deal with the myriad of non-registered charities and non-profit groups, she added.

Other options, like phasing in assessment increases as Toronto is doing, capping and graduated tax banding were nixed by the region.

Chechalk explained many of those options didn't make sense for all nine municipalities and it had to be all regional municipalities or none.

The deadline to appeal assessments is Aug. 31.

For information about these programs call the town office at 640-1900.

Railway Ties – sister communities sharing a railway heritage

The York-Durham Heritage Railway runs weekends and holiday Mondays from May 16 to October 18.

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Departing from Stouffville
 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

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Adults	\$15
Seniors	\$12
Ages 4-12	\$8

For details contact the hotline at 905-852-3696

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Jughead's Diner

Jughead's Diner now has its liquor license. People who have been coming to the '50s-style restaurant for great food at reasonable prices can now enjoy a beer with their homemade burgers or a glass of wine with their spaghetti dinner, said Fred Karakolis, who owns the restaurant.

People keep coming back to Jughead's because they know they will receive excellent service and delicious food in a unique atmosphere.

Decorated in primary colours, the bright and airy restaurant is a fun place to be.

Old advertisements for movies and products line the walls of Jughead's and each brightly coloured booth has a jukebox.

People can order the breakfast special – two pancakes, two eggs, two strips of bacon, two links of sausage, one piece of ham and homefries for \$3.95 or they can order Jughead's nature burger for \$3.35.

Jughead's also has a variety of sandwiches, side orders, house specialities, salads and soups as well as a children's menu and desserts.

Jughead's new summer hours are Saturday to Wednesday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday and Friday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Jughead's is located at 6242 Main St. Stouffville (beside the library). For details call 642-9511.

At Jughead's people can order the breakfast special – two pancakes, two eggs, two strips of bacon, two links of sausage, one piece of ham and homefries for \$3.95.