

TAXES

Every year, around this time, many of us receive a boost to our blood-pressure. Yes, the Tax bill.

While researching the previous articles on municipal government, I became more aware of what a difficult job our Councils have to do. They spend much time estimating the funds they will need for the up-coming year, naming priorities, trying to cover the ever increasing costs for basic services and carefully choosing new projects for the benefit of the residents. Once the total amount has been set, they can then establish the mill rate to be paid by each property owner.

As the funds from the tax payers arrive at various times of the year and likewise the government grants, the Council may have to borrow funds to maintain its operation. This is normal and most councils try to keep these loan charges to a minimum. However there are some tardy tax payers who, by not paying their taxes, cause these loan charges to increase. These charges are added to the income needed by Council and therefore are included in the budget requirements and show up on your tax bill.

While the majority of tax payers pay their taxes on time, Mr Tardy Taxpayer, while using all the services of his Township, is actually costing YOU money. Oh, there is a penalty for late payment but most Municipal officials do not feel it is enough to prompt our free-loader to pay up.

While Councils acknowledge that this is not a major problem at the present time, they are concerned due to the high rates prevalent on the money market. The defaulting property owner can hold out for up to three years and while the bank rates fluctuate, the penalty charge remains the same.

The amount Councils may charge is governed by the Provincial Government.

Perhaps Councils should have more means at their disposal to overcome this matter. Maybe being allowed to charge the highest interest rate in the previous 12 months PLUS 2% additional penalty could bring about the desired results. Just remember if YOU pay YOUR taxes on time, we can all SAVE some money.

AS THE PRESS SEES IT . . .

WHY I LOVE TO PAY MY TAXES

BY Richard Brockman, Publisher, Platteville Journal - published in "The Municipality"-League of Wisconsin in Municipalities, April 1979, pg. 75

Dear City Council, City Manager and School Board:

Today I paid my city property taxes. Usually I try to get to the city finance director's office the day the notices are out so that I can be among the first to pay. This year I didn't quite make it.

But don't take that as a signal I was angry, disillusioned or just unhappy.

You see, I consider it an honor to be able to pay those taxes. It bothers me to pay my state taxes and my federal taxes, but not the city, county and school district taxes because I fervently believe that I get more (much more) for my money.

I don't think that people mind paying taxes nearly as much as some people think. What people don't like is having to pay taxes and not know what they're getting for their money. Of course, we all disagree on how portions of that money should be spent. But on the local, grassroots, level of government at least we know that regardless of how the money is spent, at least we'll get as close to a dollar's value for our money as is possible for our money as is possible with government.

The money that I paid the city today will go to educate children of my relatives and friends. It will go to provide good roads on which I can drive, for a good public library, swimming

pool, and parks. It will go for police and fire protection for my home. It will go to pay somebody to plow out the road in front of my home in the middle of the night so that when I get up at 6 a.m. it's all done in time for me to use the car. The list goes on and on.

Sure, there are some things I'd rather not pay for and there are other things I'd rather see in the city's budget. But there's no way everyone can be satisfied.

The alternative to paying city taxes is for each of us to hire the work and services we want done separately. Most of us require an awful lot of city services and we'd soon find that the individual bills would quickly mount past what we collectively pay once a year in taxes.

Oh, I'll still fight the other 51 weeks of the year for those things I think are best for this community . . . things which will make it continue to prosper and to provide the best for its citizens, young and old, but this one week out of the year I'll just be thankful that I had the privilege of paying those local taxes.

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