

# SUMTER COUNTY, GEORGIA



FALL 2016

## Tag & Tax News

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IF YOU'VE SERVED OUR NATION...  
**THANK★YOU**

## The Tax Commissioner

A Publication of the Sumter County Tax Commissioner's Office

Wilkie Smith, Tax Commissioner

500 West Lamar Street • P.O. Box 1044 • Americus GA 31709

(229) 928-4530 fax (229) 928-4533

## 2016 Property Tax Bills

**Mailed: October 1, 2016 ♦ Due: December 1, 2016**

We hope you have received your 2016 Sumter County Property Tax Bills. All bills were mailed by October 1, 2016. By law, the owner of record on January 1, 2016 receives the property tax notice. If you have an escrow account, your property tax information will be made available to your mortgage company (upon request); however, it is ultimately the responsibility of the property owner to ensure taxes are paid.

If you owned property on January 1 of the tax year, you are mailed the bill and are responsible for all the taxes. If you sold your property since that date and the taxes are not paid, you can be named in a tax lien. If you sold the property and transferred the tax liability to another party through closing papers or a contract, you should provide those documents to our office. Once received, any lien for delinquent taxes will be filed in the name of whoever owns the property on the tax due date.

The 2016 property tax bills for real and personal property are due December 1, 2016. Interest accrues for each month the bill remains past due at a rate set by State Statute. The rate is currently 6.5% annual (.5417% per month). A 5% penalty is assessed each 120 days the taxes remain unpaid. The maximum penalty is 20%.

If you have not received your property tax bill, please contact the Tax Commissioner's Office. Not receiving tax bills or notices does not relieve a taxpayer's responsibility for payment of the taxes. If you should have any questions, please call the Sumter County Tax Commissioner. We will be happy to help you.

## Privacy of Motor Vehicle Information

Your Motor Vehicle registration information is a private record. The Driver's Privacy Protection Act states motor vehicle records are exempt from open records request. The disclosure of personal information, such as ID numbers, name, address, & telephone information is prohibited. Tags, lien information, previous owners, and such should not be disclosed.

That is the reason that you are asked to show your driver's license when you visit the Tag Office. We must be able to identify you as the vehicle's registered owner or connect you to the owner in some way.

If you are sending someone to conduct tag business on your behalf, it is suggested you call ahead to the Tag/Tax Office.

**Today ... and every day ...  
we are grateful for**

*our military service personnel,  
past and present, and the families  
who support them.*



If you've served our Nation ...

***THANK YOU !***

***\*NEW\**** Military license plates are now available: FREE to those who qualify.

Ask our Tag Agents for details.

Samples may be viewed at the Georgia Department of Revenue website.  
[www.dor.georgia.gov](http://www.dor.georgia.gov) Click on "License Plate Samples"

# Pay Your Property Taxes Online

Sumter County Property taxes may be paid on-line. Go to: [www.sumtercountygatax.com](http://www.sumtercountygatax.com)

Click on *Search & Pay Taxes*, read and *Accept* the Disclaimer, and begin searching.

Credit Cards accepted on-line are VISA®, MasterCard®, Discover®, and American Express®.

Transaction fees apply (2.25% & 30¢ per transaction) and are indicated prior to finalizing your payment.

Partial payments are not accepted on-line. You do NOT have to set up a PayPal account to pay.

Please call our office if you should have any questions. Other features now on this website are:

- ✓ Overview and Pay
- ✓ View & Print Receipt
- ✓ View & Print Bill
- ✓ Send us an Address Change

A new Georgia statute O.C.G.A. 48-3-3 (2016) reads:

"In the discretion of the Tax Commissioner, a taxpayer shall have the option of receiving tax bills or subsequent delinquent notices via email in lieu of receiving a paper tax bill via first class mail."

**GO PAPERLESS**

**NEW FOR 2017**

**Email Tax Bills**

**The Sumter County Tax Commissioner has elected to implement this option for the 2017 County Property Tax Bills.**

"This law allows property tax bills to be sent electronically, replacing, when requested, the printed paper tax bill sent by first class mail. It is easy to sign up, and you will receive your 2017 Property Tax bill securely by email," explains Tax Commissioner Wilkie Smith.

- See the reverse side of your 2016 Property Tax Bill for directions on how to sign up.
  - Visit our website, click on the logo, print the form and send it to our office.

## **IF YOU HAVE MOVED ... WE NEED THE CHANGE !**

If you have moved, we need the change for your motor vehicle information so that you will receive the proper vehicle renewal notice.

If your address changes, we need to send the property tax bill to the new address or to an address you specify for us.

Give us a call and we can offer several options concerning address changes.



## **Renew your tag before it expires!**



KNOW  
WHEN  
YOUR  
TAG  
EXPIRES

A vehicle registered in an individual's name has a birthday expiration. A vehicle registered in a business name has an expiration date at the end of the month designated by the first letter on the registration. A penalty will be assessed the next day unless your expiration date falls on a weekend or the tag office is closed for a holiday.

Not receiving a renewal notice does not relieve the registered owner from the obligation to renew the vehicle's registration by the due date. If the owner does not receive a renewal notice, it is still the owner's responsibility to renew by their expiration date. Penalties will not be waived because the owner did not receive the notice.

Additionally, law enforcement "frowns" on persons who drive on an expired tag. With new technology and "tag readers", don't risk being caught driving on an expired tag.

Call the Tag office if you do not get your renewal notice. We can tell you the amount of the renewal. Bring your driver's license or tag number to renew.

**Sumter County  
Office of the Tax Commissioner**

Sumter County Courthouse  
P. O. Box 1044  
500 West Lamar Street  
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Jeannette Welch, *Bookkeeper*



The Tax Commissioner is an elected Constitutional Officer responsible for the collection of property taxes, including preparation of the county tax digest, billing of taxes, and the accounting and distribution of those taxes.

Property taxes include those assessed on real estate, inventory and equipment, public utilities, heavy-duty equipment, timber sales and *ad valorem* taxes on motor vehicles and mobile homes. These collections are disbursed to state, county, school, and city governing authorities.

The Tax Commissioner also acts as an agent of the State of Georgia for the titling and registration of motor vehicles, and is responsible for the operation of the tag office in the Sumter County Courthouse.

We have an outstanding staff who can provide you excellent service concerning your tags or property taxes.

It is my pleasure to serve the citizens of Sumter County.

Wilkie Smith  
Tax Commissioner

Email: wsmith@sumtercountyga.us  
cspivey@sumtercountyga.us

## **Renew Your Tag Online**

Your vehicle tag may be renewed online. Go to the Sumter County Tax Commissioner website [www.sumtercountygatax.com](http://www.sumtercountygatax.com). In the Quick Links section, click on *Online Tag Renewal*, which takes you to the DOR website. There is a convenience fee of 2.35%, charged (by a DOR third party) to your credit or debit card.

Tags renewed online will be processed by the Tag/Tax Office and mailed to the owner's address of record usually the following business day. If the address on the renewal notice is not correct, then please **DO NOT RENEW ONLINE**. The new decal will be mailed to the address on record.

If you experience any issues in renewing your tag online, please give us a call at the Tag Office.

Sumter County does not accept E-Checks. Credit cards accepted online are:



### **TIP OF THE MONTH**

If you cancel the insurance on your vehicle,  
**YOU MUST CANCEL YOUR TAG.**  
Failure to do so will result in fines from the  
State of Georgia.  
Call us today if you need help.