

State agencies to aid in tax relief claims

Several state agencies, in cooperation with local units of government and various civic groups, have set up programs to assist Michigan taxpayers file claims for property tax relief.

While state officials expect to return about \$20 million this year to state residents whose property taxes are relatively high in proportion to their income, the assistance service announced last week by Gov. William Milliken is aimed at those who might fail to take advantage of the relief to which they are entitled.

Although Michigan is recognized as having one of the broadest programs of state property tax relief in the nation, the workings of the system seem to be unclear to many taxpayers, he said.

Some people fail to apply, and many who do receive these property tax rebates mistakenly regard them as a form of income tax refund.

State assistance can be obtained by calling the Individual Tax Division of the Michigan Department of Treasury at 467-3330. Treasury personnel will refer the caller to the department's nearest district office for personal assistance.

Senior citizens can call the Michigan Office of Services to the Aged at 517-373-8239, which also will refer the caller to a home-bound agency for personal assistance.

Voluntary organizations, Community Action Program offices, local senior citizen

organizations and city hall taxpayer service offices in many communities also offer tax form preparation help.

The 1973 property tax relief law reduced the tax burden on people who pay more than a certain percentage of their household income in property taxes. For most, that cutoff is 3.5 percent of household income. They are entitled to a rebate of 60 percent of the residential property taxes they pay above that amount.

For senior citizens, the rebate is 100 percent of the excess, and for senior citizens who receive less than \$6,000 per year, the basic 3.5 percent cutoff point is lowered on a sliding scale according to the amount of income.

Most Michigan citizens claim their rebates when they file their annual income tax returns. For those who do not have to pay the state income tax, a special application form can be obtained from the State Department of the Treasury.

It is important that senior citizens and others who do not have to file income tax returns realize that they can file early—in December—and get their rebates in time to use it toward payment of their local property taxes, Milliken said. The eligible claimant must report the year's total income and the amount of the property tax. For those whose only source of income is social security, the year's total income figure can be obtained from the December check.

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The program begins Dec. 4 and continues through Dec. 23. Hours are 5:30 to 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Ride service ends at 8 p.m. Dec. 22 and 23 only.

In addition to holiday shopping, persons can enjoy the 14th annual carnival from

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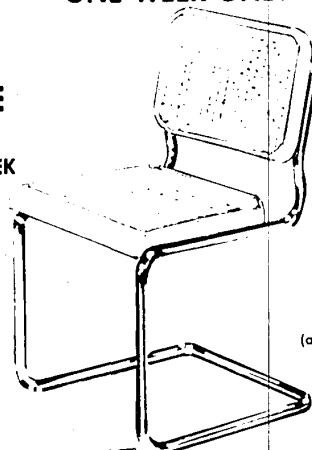


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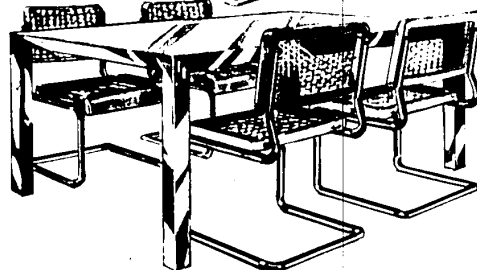
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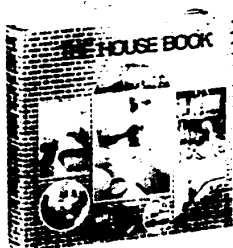
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