



Harris County Appraisal District News Release

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March 28, 2017

Harris County Appraisal District Releases Upgraded iPhone App

Houston — The Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD) today unveiled its upgraded iPhone app that provides information and services to property owners.

The new app allows property owners to file a homestead exemption or over-65 exemption, retrieve an iFile number or look up district phone numbers or directions to the HCAD offices.

“The new app has much more functionality than our previous homestead exemption app,” said Roland Altinger, chief appraiser. “This upgrade is another example of how we are continuing to make it easier and more convenient for property owners to work with the appraisal district.”

The district has improved the exemption process in the new app by enabling the app to offer an over-65 exemption, prior year exemptions and a percentage of ownership if several individuals own a property jointly. The new app now has more information available for the property owner on the status of their exemption application. The district also has added a new bar code scanner in the app to verify the property owner’s identity and address. State law requires the address on the driver’s license to match the address in HCAD’s records to grant an exemption. A Texas driver’s license is required for the exemptions and to retrieve an iFile number, which is needed to file a protest.

The property owner’s name and address on the driver’s license must match the property address in the HCAD computer system in order to comply with state tax laws for exemptions and retrieving iFile numbers.

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“The new app lets the property owner scan their driver’s license and if the identification matches, it will provide an iFile number automatically,” Altinger said. “Since we get thousands of requests for iFile numbers each year during April and May when people are filing their protests, this will be a tremendous time saver for the property owner and the district.”

The new app also provides information about the district and can provide immediate updates, changes, and alerts or emergency closings. Searching for the address or phone numbers automatically triggers elements on the phone, which would then load maps for directions or prompt the phone to dial a number.

The new HCAD app is available to download for free through the Apple App Store, but it requires an iPhone 4 or beyond or an iPad 3 or beyond. The district is also working on an Android app that it expects to roll out in a few weeks.

Key Quotes

“With more people of all ages working from their phones, we wanted to offer property owners a handy way to access our information and use our services,” said Roland Altinger, chief appraiser. “This app is another step we are taking to improve our services to younger property owners and work with all property tax payers in the most convenient way.”

“With the upgrade of this app, HCAD is continuing its leadership in using innovative technology in property assessment,” said Roland Altinger, chief appraiser. “HCAD was the first appraisal district in the country to offer electronic protest filing with its iFile program. We then followed up with iSettle so that a property owner can resolve their protest in the comfort of their home or office and then developed the first iPhone app for filing homestead exemptions in December 2015. This new, upgraded app provides more information and service options to the property owners of Harris County.”

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“HCAD typically gets an average of 150,000 applications for homestead and over-65 exemptions each year, so this new app will speed up the approval process and give the property owner a way to view the status of their submission,” said Roland Altinger, chief appraiser. “HCAD staff will only have to look into applications that the system did not approve. Once any issues are resolved, the property owner will receive a confirmation email letting them know the exemption has been granted.”

About HCAD

The Harris County Appraisal District is a political subdivision of the State of Texas established in 1980 for the purpose of discovering and appraising property for ad valorem tax purposes for each taxing unit within the boundaries of the district. The district has more than 1.8 million parcels of property to assess each year with a total market value of approximately \$556 billion. The appraisal district in Harris County is the largest in Texas, serving approximately 500 taxing units, and one of the largest appraisal districts in the United States. For further information, visit www.hcad.org.

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