

COUNTY OF RICHLAND
OFFICE OF COUNTY TREASURER



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THE 5% THAT RUIN IT FOR EVERYONE ELSE
Treasurer opens a third phase to find tax cheaters in Richland County

(Columbia, SC) Next Monday, March 1st, the Richland County Treasurer's Office is sending letters – a lot of letters. In the third phase of enforcing delinquent taxes, the Treasurer's Office is sending notices to businesses that have not paid their taxes in previous years (prior to the current bills due). 1,457 delinquent notifications totaling \$4.83 million will be sent next week.

"There are a huge number of families and businesses that we help everyday who are struggling to pay their taxes," Treasurer David A. Adams said. "It is not fair that our honest taxpayers are bearing a higher tax burden because of those who try to cheat the system. This will be a new effort to find the tax cheaters who take money from us all."

The first phase of catching tax cheaters began in 2005 when Treasurer Adams teamed up with Sheriff Leon Lott in a first-of-its-kind program to catch car tax evaders. The program has brought in millions of dollars from thousands of delinquent tax bills in just over five years.

The second phase of the program was the collection of delinquent taxes on mobile homes. In 2007, Adams became the first Richland County Treasurer to enforce taxes on mobile home personal property – bringing in over \$800,000 the first year and forcing hundreds of properties that had not paid taxes before to pay their fair share.

The third phase will begin with warning letters going to businesses that haven't paid taxes in a year or more. The businesses will have 30 days to contact the Treasurer's Office to arrange for payments. After 30 days, the businesses found to still be in operation that still have not paid their taxes will be published by the Treasurer through local media outlets. The final step will be transmitting the Treasurer's findings to the County and City business license offices that are tasked with issuing fines and revoking business licenses.

"The Treasurer's Office doesn't legally enforce business taxes going delinquent. However, using this new program to better communicate with the business licensing departments will help find folks who have found ways to slip through the cracks before," Adams stated.

"95% of our businesses will not be affected by this – they are the leaders in our community who set the best example," Adams concluded. "We fully expect that 80% of these businesses are no longer in operation and have continued to be billed after they cease to exist. Still, for the 5% of folks out there who have been intentionally defrauding the system – they have one last chance to work with us."

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