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Arapahoe County Treasurer meets with Sorrel Ranch Metro District to offer residents solutions for payment of back taxes

District's bondholders agree to payment extension, but reject Treasurer's proposal to waive interest penalty

Arapahoe County Treasurer Doug Milliken recently met with the Sorrel Ranch Metropolitan District Board to offer solutions for Aurora residents notified in September that they were responsible for paying two years in outstanding taxes due to a 2004 clerical error in the Assessor's Office.

The Sorrel Ranch Board agreed to bring the Treasurer's proposal, which would allow an extra year for payment of the taxes without any interest penalty, to their bondholders for consideration. It was understood by the Board, the Treasurer and the residents in attendance that this agreement was contingent upon approval of the bondholders for Sorrel Ranch.

The bondholders agreed to the year extension, which would give residents until Oct. 31, 2010 to pay the back taxes, but rejected the idea of the no interest being assessed. Under Colorado law the taxing district has the right to collect interest on overdue taxes.

The Sorrel Ranch Metropolitan District has instructed the Treasurer's Office to require a 4 percent penalty for any payments made after Nov. 30, 2009. By law the Treasurer must comply with this request.

"While we deeply regret the stress this situation has caused Sorrel Ranch residents, unfortunately our hands are tied and we must comply with the District's request," Milliken said. "We hope that by offering an extension until Oct. 31, 2010 that we are able to offer a little relief to property owners during this very difficult situation."

About 100 property owners in Sorrel Ranch, a subdivision in eastern Aurora, were notified in September that they owed two years of back taxes due to a 2004 clerical mistake made in the Assessor's Office. At that time, about 100 properties were not included within the Sorrel Ranch Metropolitan District, which meant the properties were not assessed the full amount of property taxes and Sorrel Ranch Metropolitan District did not receive the full amount of revenue owed.

Once Sorrel Ranch Metropolitan District notified Arapahoe County about the shortfall, the Treasurer's Office issued amended tax notices on Sept. 15 to Sorrel Ranch property owners for 2007 and 2008 taxes owed. State law allows the District to require the Treasurer's Office to collect up to two years of back taxes. Any taxes owed prior to 2007 have been waived.

Property owners with questions are encouraged to call the Treasurer's Office at 303-795-4550.

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