

Column from Sen. Matt Bartle for
Week of June 20, 2005

THOUSANDS OF EASTERN JACKSON COUNTY RESIDENTS HAVE UNCLAIMED STATE PROPERTY

It has been said that there are “no free lunches.” It would be especially wise to keep this saying in mind if you’re ever offered anything free from the government. Generally, government promises new programs and new entitlements and fails to mention the small print. Lost in the details is the fact that the funding for these new programs comes directly from the pockets of the taxpayers.

Having said all that, I think I’ve found an exception to this general rule. Missouri’s Unclaimed Property Division, administered by State Treasurer Sarah Steelman’s office, is trying to give away over \$5 million dollars to people in Eastern Jackson County’s 8th Senatorial District. This amounts to thousands of individuals or their heirs in our area alone who have property waiting to be claimed. Many businesses also have unclaimed property held by the State.

This isn’t a gimmick, and there are no strings attached. By law, the State Treasurer’s office is required to collect and maintain property that is unclaimed by Missouri citizens.

Here’s how it works. Suppose you switched banks and left some money in a savings account or valuables in a safety deposit box. Or, perhaps you were owed some money by an insurance company or even by the government, but they can’t find you. After five years, these funds are turned over to the Treasurer’s office where they are held until the rightful owner can claim them.

Similarly, if you have property that you own but you’ve not claimed, it will be sold at auction and the proceeds will be kept in an account under your name.

Perhaps you don’t remember losing any property and you’re pretty sure you don’t have any funds remaining in old bank accounts. You still might be owed some money by the state if you are the legal heir of someone who has unclaimed property. Even if you do not see your name or a family member’s name on the site, but you do see someone you know, please take time to tell them. You could be the bearer of good news.

I would encourage everyone reading this column to take a quick look at the list of names of people who have money held by the Unclaimed Property Division by logging onto: www.showmemoney.com. If you don’t have a computer, you can write to: Treasurer’s Office at P.O. Box 1004, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1004.

If you’d like help searching for your name feel free to e-mail or call my office toll-free at the number provided below and someone will help you do a search.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.state.mo.us or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

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