

STATE SENATOR

Matt Bartle

8th District



GUIDE FOR SENIOR HOMEOWNERS

Filing Opens for Homestead Preservation Credit Program Helps Seniors and the Disabled Retain Home Ownership

Enacted by Senate legislation adopted in 2004, the **Missouri Homestead Preservation Act** allows qualified senior citizens and disabled individuals a credit on their real estate property tax if those taxes increase at least 2.5 percent in a non-reassessment (even-numbered) year or at least 5 percent in a reassessment (odd-numbered) year.

The **Homestead Preservation Credit** is based on amounts above the 2.5 or 5 percent base increases. The actual credit appears on the following year's tax bill.



Important Homestead Preservation Credit Dates

April 1 to October 2: Period applications must be postmarked between.

December 15: Revenue department sends list of verified owners to county collectors.

January 31: Revenue department calculates appropriation and sends to House and Senate.

July 31: Credit limit is set based on funding.

August 31: Revenue department sends list of eligible owners and amount of credit to county collectors.

October: Funds are deposited by the state with county collectors.

October/November: Credit reflected on approved applicants' tax bills.

**** Those who filed for the Homestead Preservation Credit in 2005 will not need to refile in 2006. However, they will need to refile each year after 2006. ****

Applying for the Homestead Preservation Credit

Application forms and instructions can be obtained by contacting Senator Bartle's office.

Write:

State Capitol, Room 431
201 West Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Call: (888) 711-9278

E-mail: matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Missouri Department of Revenue's website. The main content is a form titled "2006 APPLICATION FOR HOMESTEAD PRESERVATION CREDIT". The form includes fields for applicant information (name, age, social security, marital status), property details (address, telephone number), and a section for "QUALIFICATIONS (check the appropriate box)". The qualifications section has three options: A. 65 years of age or older, B. 100% Disabled Veterans, and C. 100% Disabled (with a note to attach a copy of the letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs). There are also checkboxes for "If disability credit eligibility due to being disabled, verification of disability is required" and "If you are required to file a Federal Return?". The form is labeled "FORM HPC (REV. 8-2006)" and includes a "Reset Form" and "Print Form" button.

Application forms can also be obtained online at www.dor.mo.gov/tax/personal/homestead or by calling (800) 877-6881 (automated order line) or (573) 751-3505.

Mailing must be postmarked by or before October 2.

PROGRAM UPDATE:

A new provision opens eligibility to taxpayers who have their homes titled in a trust. Improvements increasing a home's value by more than 5 percent no longer prohibit program enrollment if those improvements were made to accommodate the needs of a disabled resident.

The program application process has been simplified by moving back the credit calculation period by one year, in turn eliminating the need for the county assessor's involvement. Starting in 2006, taxpayers will simply attach copies of their paid property tax bills to the application and mail it directly to the state's revenue department.



Can You Use "Circuit Breaker" Tax/Rent Relief?



The **Missouri Property Tax Credit** ("Circuit Breaker") is available to qualifying senior citizens, 100-percent disabled individuals and for many who are not eligible for the Homestead credit. The credit is for a portion of real estate taxes or rent paid for the year up to a maximum of \$750.

Total household income cannot exceed \$25,000 for single applicants or \$27,000 for married applicants. The credit is based on the amount of real estate taxes or rent paid on the home occupied during the credit-claim period.

Circuit Breaker application forms can be obtained from Senator Bartle's office (contact information listed above) or by calling the Department of Revenue's automated form order line at (800) 877-6881.

Answers to questions about applying for the credit can be found online at <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/personal/ptc/> or by calling the state's revenue department at (816) 889-2920 or (573) 751-3505.

Homestead Preservation Credit Eligibility Guidelines

Here is a checklist of eligibility criteria. Other factors may affect your personal situation.

In general:

- Must be 65 or older (by 1/1/06), or 100-percent disabled (if married, one spouse must be 65 or older, and the other must be at least 60).
- Your maximum gross household income cannot exceed \$72,380 per application.
- All real estate taxes must have been paid for current year and previous two years.
- The property (home and up to five acres) must be owned and occupied by the tax-credit applicant.
- You can't file for the **Missouri Property Tax Credit (MO-PTC "Circuit Breaker"** program) for the same tax period (see below).



Seniors who do not meet **Homestead Preservation Credit** eligibility requirements should check to see if they are eligible for the **Circuit Breaker** program, which affords financial assistance to seniors who own or rent.

See page 2 for more information on the Circuit Breaker Program.

Banning Billboards for Smut Shops

The State of Missouri is a beautiful place. With winter over, the landscape has awakened and is clothed in multicolored shades of springtime foliage. However, a drive down I-70 or Highway 50 reveals a serious blight on our otherwise beautiful scenery. Across the state, highways are dotted with large billboards advertising adult businesses.

Much of Missouri's economy is based on tourism and other family-friendly activities. The rash of seedy billboards along our major thoroughfares gives a negative impression of our state.

In 2004, I was able to pass legislation outlawing these billboards within one mile of a state highway. Under SB 870, adult businesses are able to display two signs — one showing the business name and hours of operation and the other denoting that it is off limits to minors.



Although this measure bans all new adult billboards in Missouri, existing billboards have until August 28, 2007, until they must be removed. We reluctantly added this phase-in to strengthen our hand in the constitutional battle that the pornography industry has mounted.

Three years might sound like a long time, but relief could come sooner than expected. Some billboard companies have informally stated that they will not allow porn shops to renew their current contracts when they expire. The sooner these eyesores are eliminated, the better.

Currently we are fighting the pornography industry in court as they try to have this law thrown out. I am committed to winning this battle and restoring Missouri's family-friendly image.

Property Rights:

Ensuring Homeowners Come Before Strip Malls

Last summer the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that government can legally seize the home of a private citizen so that developers can use the land to build new businesses. In the case, a lady from Connecticut was forced to move from a home that had been in her family



for more than a century, and where she had been born in 1918, to make way for a fancy commercial development in her community.

The silver lining in this troubling ruling by the Court is that individual states are free to write their laws in such a way as to increase the protection of individual property rights.

Although eminent domain is sometimes necessary for legitimate purposes, such as acquiring rights-of-way for highways or locating public utilities, taking the land of homeowners for a strip mall (as has happened in St. Louis for an as-yet unbuilt development) is an abuse that

needs to be stopped.

I am committed to passing legislation that protects homeowners, farmers, church properties and small businesses from cities and municipalities that abuse their power of eminent domain. The Senate will soon take up a bill to address this important issue.



Contact Senator Matt Bartle

If you have questions or comments on any issue involving Missouri government, feel free to contact my office. My office is Room 431 of the State Capitol, and the phone number is (888) 711-9278. Visit me online at www.senate.mo.gov/bartle or www.senatormattbartle.org or e-mail matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov.

State Senator Matt Bartle

201 W. Capitol Ave., Room 431
Jefferson City, MO 65101

PRESORTED STANDARD
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Jefferson City, MO 65101
Permit No. 220