

Olympia Fields Says Goodbye To Village Property Tax

August 30, 1989|By David Elsner.

It's a first and probably a last.

Olympia Fields' decision to eliminate the village's portion of residents' property tax bills isn't likely to be duplicated elsewhere in the south suburbs, officials said Tuesday.

"No one else is talking about it," said Karen Jaworski, staff assistant at the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, a clearing house for 38 municipalities. "This is probably it."

"Not that I've heard of," added Palos Heights Mayor Gerald Bennett, who heads the 19-member Southwest Council of Local Governments.

Although a handful of communities in the Chicago metropolitan area, including sales-tax-rich Schaumburg and Oak Brook, have never had to impose a real estate tax, posh Olympia Fields is believed to be the first to have rescinded one.

The Olympia Fields Village Board voted unanimously Monday night to do away with its tax levy of \$290,000, representing a saving of \$252, or about 6 percent, on the average residential tax bill of \$4,200. The bulk of the taxes goes to schools, Cook County, parks and other taxing bodies.

"I haven't heard from any other government official" about the action, Mayor Richard Halpin said Tuesday. "The silence has been deafening. That's kind of interesting, isn't it?" He offered the opinion that the action had made him more popular within his own community of 4,200 than with mayors and trustees in other towns feeling the pressure of tax protest.

Halpin said the village plans to make up the lost money from other sources: \$125,000 from the increase in the state income tax; an estimated \$75,000 in increased sales taxes from two medium-sized strip shopping centers; and joining with neighboring villages to share services and costs for public works and a police dispatch center. The village already shares fire protection service with Matteson.

"We'll also save money by running the village as a business and not wasting money," asserted Halpin, who is a part-time mayor but a full-time stockbroker.

The board's vote affects 1989 taxes, which are payable in 1990. But Halpin said he intends for the action to remain permanent.

"We really don't have to take action again," he said. "All we have to do is not institute a new levy."

Olympia Fields set to cancel part of property tax

Chicago Sun-Times August 27, 1989

Olympia Fields trustees are expected to vote tomorrow to drop the local portion of the south suburb's real estate taxes, saving each homeowner an estimated \$252 a year.

Village President Richard Halpin said the affluent suburb is able to eliminate the levy because of money it receives in state sales tax from two large shopping centers, Olympia Square, at Vollmer and Governors Highway, and Olympia Corners, at Lincoln Highway and Western.

Provisions of the state income tax increase and efficient operation of village government also are allowing the suburb of 4,300 to eliminate the tax, Halpin said.

"If you don't have to tax, why do it?" said the mayor.

Olympia Fields votes to abolish village tax

Chicago Sun-Times August 29, 1989 Tim Gerber

The Olympia Fields Village Board of Trustees voted unanimously Monday night to drop the village portion of the south suburb's real estate taxes, saving each homeowner an average of \$252 a year.

"Why shouldn't we give our taxpayers a break," said village President Richard Halpin. "If we have enough revenue from other sources, which we do, then there is no reason to put a extra burden on residents here."

He said the village can afford to eliminate the levy mainly because of money it receives in state sales tax from two large shopping centers, Olympia Square, at Vollmer and Governors Highway, and Olympia Corners, at Lincoln Highway and Western.

Eliminating the suburb's portion of the ...

Although no other community appears ready to eliminate its municipal tax levy, some are poised to return some of the windfall from the two-year state income tax hike back to taxpayers.

Orland Park's Village Board strongly suggested this week that it would rebate to taxpayers two-thirds of the village's expected \$1 million windfall over the next two years. The rest would pay for road, drainage and park programs that under normal circumstances would be financed with bonds, with the cost ultimately passed on to taxpayers.

In Glenwood, Mayor Fred Delaney said Tuesday he plans to recommend using the extra \$600,000 due from the income tax over the next two years to chop a percentage point or two from the village's 5 percent utility tax, which he called ``the most nefarious as far as our people are concerned`` and a detriment to commercial development. That tax generates about \$400,000 a year for the village.

Oak Lawn trustees-confronted at times at their meetings with raucous tax protests-decided even before the legislature passed the tax increase in June that they would rebate 65 percent of any extra state aid to homeowners.