

701—80.9(427C,441) Forest and fruit-tree reservations.

80.9(1) *Determination of eligibility for exemption.* Property for which an application for exemption as a forest or fruit-tree reservation has been filed shall be inspected by the assessor or county conservation board. The county board of supervisors designates whether all inspections in the county are to be made by the assessor, including any city assessor, or by the county conservation board. When appropriate, aerial photographs may be used in place of an on-site inspection of the property. The assessment or exemption of the property is to be based upon criteria established by the state conservation commission and findings obtained by the inspection of the property or the examination of aerial photographs of the property.

80.9(2) *Application for exemption.*

a. An application for exemption must be filed with the appropriate assessor between January 1 and February 1, inclusive, of the assessment year for which the exemption is first claimed. If the inspection of the property is to be made by the county conservation board, the assessor shall forward the application to the board for its recommendation. Once the application has been accepted, the exemption is applicable to the current and subsequent assessment years and no further application shall be required so long as the property remains eligible for the exemption.

b. If February 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, an application for exemption may be filed the following Monday.

c. An application shall be considered to be timely filed if postmarked on or before February 1 or the following Monday if February 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

80.9(3) *Notification to property owner.* If the property is to be inspected by the county conservation board, the board shall make every effort to submit its recommendation to the assessor in sufficient time for the assessor to notify the claimant by April 1. The assessor shall notify the claimant by April 1 of the disposition of the application for exemption. If because of the date on which an application is filed a determination of eligibility for the exemption cannot be made in sufficient time for notification to be made by April 1, the assessor shall assess the property and notify the property owner of the inability to act on the application. The notification shall contain the actual value and classification of the property and a statement of the claimant's right of appeal to the local board of review.

80.9(4) *Appeal of eligibility determination.* If a property for which a claim for exemption as a forest or fruit-tree reservation is assessed for taxation, the property owner may appeal the assessment to the board of review under Iowa Code section 441.37.

80.9(5) *Valuation of property.* For each assessment year for which property is exempt as a forest or fruit-tree reservation, the assessor shall determine the actual value and classification that would apply to the property were it assessed for taxation that year. In any year for which the actual value or classification of property so determined is changed, the assessor shall notify the property owner pursuant to Iowa Code sections 441.23, 441.26 and 441.28.

80.9(6) *Recapture tax.*

a. Assessment of property. If the county conservation board or the assessor determines a property has ceased to meet the eligibility criteria established by the state conservation commission, the property shall be assessed for taxation and subject to the recapture tax. The property shall be subject to taxes levied against the assessment made as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the property ceased to qualify for exemption. In addition, the property shall be subject to the tax which would have been levied against the assessment made as of January 1 of each of the five preceding calendar years for which the property received an exemption.

b. Assessment procedure. If the determination that a property has ceased to be eligible for exemption is made by the assessor by April 15, the assessor shall notify the property owner of the assessment as of January 1 of the year in which the determination is made in accordance with Iowa Code sections 441.23, 441.26, and 441.28. The assessment of the property for any of the five preceding years and for the current year, if timely notice by April 15 cannot be given, shall be by means of an omitted assessment as provided in Iowa Code section 443.6 (*Talley v. Brown*, 146 Iowa 360, 125 N.W. 243(1910)). Appeal of the omitted assessment may be taken pursuant to Iowa Code sections 443.7 and 443.8.

c. Computation of tax. The county auditor shall compute the tax liability for each year for which an assessment has been made pursuant to subrule 80.9(6), paragraph “b.” The tax liability shall be the amount of tax that would have been levied against each year’s assessment had the property not received the exemption. In computing the tax, the valuations established by the assessor shall be adjusted to reflect any equalization order or assessment limitation percentage applicable to each year’s assessment.

d. Entry on tax list. The tax liability levied against assessments made as of January 1 of any year preceding the calendar year in which the property ceased to qualify for exemption shall be entered on the tax list for taxes levied against all assessments made as of January 1 of the year immediately preceding the calendar year in which the property ceased to qualify for exemption. However, if those taxes have already been certified to the county treasurer, the recapture taxes shall be entered on the tax list for taxes levied against assessments made as of January 1 of the year in which the property ceased to qualify for exemption. The tax against the assessment made as of January 1 of the year in which the property ceased to qualify for exemption shall be levied at the time taxes are levied against all assessments made as of that date.

e. Delinquencies. Recapture taxes shall not become delinquent until the time when all other unpaid taxes entered on the same tax list become delinquent.

f. Exceptions to recapture tax.

(1) Fruit-tree or forest reservations. Property which has received an exemption as a fruit-tree or forest reservation is not subject to the recapture tax if the property is maintained as a fruit-tree or forest reservation for at least five full calendar years following the last calendar year for which the property was exempt as a fruit-tree or forest reservation.

(2) Property which has been owned by the same person or the person’s direct descendants or antecedents for at least ten years prior to the time the property ceases to qualify for exemption shall not be subject to the recapture tax.

(3) Property described in subparagraphs 80.9(6)“f”(1) and 80.9(6)“f”(2) is subject to assessment as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the property ceases to qualify for exemption.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 427C as amended by 2001 Iowa Acts, House File 736, and Iowa Code section 441.22.

[ARC 7726B, IAB 4/22/09, effective 5/27/09; ARC 3805C, IAB 5/9/18, effective 6/13/18]