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Tax relief and refunds available for owners of storm damaged property

Port Orchard – Kitsap County Assessor Jim Avery offers a small silver lining for property owners dealing with damage from the storm's aftermath. "If any property is involuntarily damaged or destroyed by a storm, fire or other reason, property taxes can be reduced to reflect the amount of assessed value lost," Avery said.

Avery says that because the storm took place in December, in most cases the 2007 tax refunds will likely be modest. "Since the annual property tax is a bit less than 1% of a property's market value, owners of damaged property can expect to receive a refund of one month's worth of this year's taxes, or about one twelfth of that 1% of property value."

Avery encourages property owners seeking tax adjustments for property damage to first register with the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management at <http://www.kitsapdem.org> or by phone at 360 307-5870. Once registered, the assessor's office will use that information as the starting point to get refunds to taxpayers if appropriate. Due to the anticipated volume, people who have filled out a damage form should hear from the assessor's office within a few weeks. Property owners may also contact the assessor's office directly at their customer service line at 360.337.7160.

The assessor's office presumes that most property owners will complete their repair work after the New Year, and in that case their property tax reduction will also be applied to their 2008 property taxes.

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