



**Cheryl E. Johnson, PCC**  
**Assessor and Collector of Taxes**

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**Unclaimed Property Tax Refunds**

According to a recent search of Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar's Unclaimed Property Website (ClaimItTexas.org), there are "...more than 25 million properties...about \$4 billion in missing money waiting to be claimed" and it is "never too late to make a claim." The Comptroller is making it easier than ever to find lost items and Galveston County Tax Assessor Collector Cheryl E. Johnson decided to do the same.

"Our two-tier process will begin with uncashed refund checks and will be followed by property tax refunds we have been unable to determine who to send the funds to," she stated. According to Texas law, it is the tax collector's job to determine who is paid a refund. "Often," Johnson stated, "we receive duplicate payments and when neither payor makes a claim after multiple attempts, it falls on our shoulders to determine who the rightful owner actually is or to simply send or escheat the funds to the State which makes it much harder for the rightful owner to claim the funds. We are taking one additional step with a newly released webpage listing."

About two years ago, Johnson and her team began a mission to identify the proper owner on hundreds of duplicate payments dating back to the 2004 tax year. "After months of research and decision making, we were left with 255 refunds totaling just over \$144,000. We were preparing to escheat them then decided to make this last ditch effort to lower that number," she said.

Phase One rolled out last weekend with over 600 uncashed refund checks totaling nearly \$162,000 that have either been returned or remain uncashed. Only the property address (or legal description) will be posted along with the year the refund was generated. Current and former owners of the listed properties simply need to search the listing by visiting the GCTO website at [www.galcotax.com](http://www.galcotax.com) and clicking on the UNCLAIMED REFUNDS button.

If you own or owned a property on this list the year the refund occurred, email [Refunds@co.galveston.tx.us](mailto:Refunds@co.galveston.tx.us). Proper identification and proof of ownership (i.e. copy of deed, deed of trust, will, utility bill, voter registration certificate, Texas drivers license or ID or other document that includes the address of the property for the year shown) is required for the refund to be reissued. Those without access to the internet may obtain a listing of the properties at any GCTO office along with an Application for Unclaimed Refund form that may be dropped off at any GCTO location or mailed to: GCTO UNCLAIMED REFUNDS, 722 Moody, Galveston, Texas 77550.

**Only written requests in the form of application or email with proper documents attached will be accepted.** The 2015 tax season is underway and responses will not be immediate. Someone will contact you within a couple of weeks to confirm the status of your claim.

We truly look forward to clearing our books and paying YOU instead of you paying US!

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