# Fort Lauderdale Joins Forces with Broward County Tax Appraiser to Crackdown on Property Tax Cheats
### *Tightened enforcement nets $1.6 million in back taxes*

Aiming to restore the value of the tax roll and collect back taxes, the City of Fort Lauderdale has joined the Broward County Tax Appraiser to crackdown on property tax fraud.

In March 2012, the City assigned Fort Lauderdale Police Department Detective Anthony Windes to bolster the Broward County Tax Appraiser's team of investigators.  City officials say the cooperative effort is a great success.

"Since the commencement of the program, Detective Windes' work has resulted in the collection of over $1.6 million in back taxes, of which approximately $336,000 was returned to the City of Fort Lauderdale," City Manager Lee Feldman said.  "Approximately $28,875,000 in value has been restored to the tax roll, which is expected to generate $118,945 in new revenue for the City next year."

Property tax fraud can result in reduced services and higher tax rates for homeowners, Feldman said.  He said the team of city and county investigators is using a combination of high tech data mining tools and effective detective work to combat the problem and save taxpayer dollars.

The crackdown led to an arrest on Tuesday.  Windes arrested a Weston man on five counts of perjury.  An investigation revealed that James Clodfelter had filed false written statements in a petition to the Value Adjustment Board in an attempt to obtain a reduction in the value of five properties located in Fort Lauderdale.

Windes said the scheme aimed to reduce property values and position Clodfelter to accept substantial fees from unknowing homeowners.  Clodfelter had filed petitions falsely claiming to be the owner or authorized agent of the properties.

Windes warned that tax fraud culprits will have difficulty avoiding detection because the investigative team utilizes new data-mining tools to cross-check property records against an array of other records, including marriage licenses, voter registration, auto tags, water bills, death notices and other unnamed sources for information.