

# Thousand Islands Central School District to Collect Taxes Through Lock Box

The Thousand Islands Central School District is announcing that, starting this year, tax payers will have the opportunity to mail their school tax payments to a lock box system run by JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A. The lock box system is remittance processing. Those payments will now be mailed to a Syracuse Post Office box that the district has opened up, instead of being sent directly to the school. The remittance address will be printed on each tax bill. During this transition year, the Board of Education still wanted to offer the option, to taxpayers, to hand deliver their payments to the school tax collector in the district office.

Payments that are run through the lock box facility will have the checks scanned, imaged, and reconciled, with deposits made to the school's account at the end of each and every business day. That payment data will be collected for each remittance and then transmitted daily to the district for uploading to the tax collection software.

With the district having over 6,000 parcels of taxable properties, staffing is obviously the greatest single expense, followed by postage and printing costs for sending out the tax bills. After the bills are sent out, getting the money into the bank where it is secure and can begin to earn interest or be used to pay bills is paramount. As in most districts, the tax collector collects cash from taxpayers, issues receipts, prepares deposit slips for monies collected, and deposits the money into the bank. As was reinforced by the recent NYS Comptroller's audit, it is important that someone outside the tax office reconcile all deposits and receipts. To that end, the lock box system is assisting the district in not only getting the money into the bank as quickly as possible which ensures no monies are lost and maximizes interest of the fund available, but ensures a sound system of checks and balances.

The district is also upgrading its tax collection software. A tax payer will now be able to go on-line to review the tax payment history of a parcel. This streamlining should eliminate the need to personally contact the school tax collector. Confirmation, from the tax collector, of paid taxes has typically required a printout to be mailed to the requestor.