

# Blazing The Tax Reduction Trail

By Kitty Merrill

He's not just the founder of his own company; Paul Henry could be called the father of an entire industry.

Henry bought his home in Greenport in 1985. "I saw the taxes going up year after year, it was killing me," he explained. Henry went to town hall to complain and was basically shown the door. Town officials, Henry said, "Put me in business because they weren't doing the right thing." He was quick to note attitudes have changed and a tax grievance is now "a fundamental thing."

But back in the 1980s, nobody knew there was a grievance process. It was, Henry said, "the best kept

secret in town hall."

Henry set about learning, then implementing, the process for grieving his own property taxes. He received a 25 percent reduction. Soon, friends and neighbors wanted in, and in 1990, Henry founded Tax Reduction Services. "Not only was our business born, but an industry was born," he pointed out. No other company did the work TRS began.

Since its founding TRS has saved Long Islanders over \$1 billion. It's not a conspiracy to overcharge homeowners, Henry emphasized. Rather, over time tax rolls aren't properly maintained. TRS and town assessors both want the same thing: an equitable assessment for property owners.



Independent / Courtesy TRS

## The Tax Reduction Services team.

In Suffolk County, tax grievances must be filed by the third Tuesday in May. If a homeowner is looking to grieve his taxes, the first step in the process is submitting an application to TRS. If it looks like the property has been over-assessed, TRS reps will take the homeowner through the process, "doing all the footwork," Henry explained.

Most grievances are denied at the outset. An appeals process can ensue. TRS will review sales data in the neighborhood and if the process moves forward, argue the case in court.

If the assessment is reduced a refund could be issued or the reduction applied to the next tax bill. For example, the successful grievance of a May tax bill will show up on the subsequent December bill.

TRS only makes money if the process is successful and the client gets a reduction. "We are on the same side as our clients," Henry assured. No reduction means no fee.

To learn more about Tax Reduction Services, visit their website, [taxreductionservices.com](http://taxreductionservices.com).