

VIDEO/PHOTOS: Hulk Hogan wrestles with property taxes, urges fighting back at Estero stop

By JOHN OSBORNE

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ESTERO — About 100 people turned out at Germain Arena in Estero on Saturday to hear Terry Bollea, known as “Hulk Hogan,” talk about putting the smackdown on property taxes.

True to form, the Hulkster didn’t mince words when describing how he felt.

“Times are tough, man – for me, too,” he said. “It’s been a tough couple of years for me, and now I’m dog-paddling back on my feet.”

Bollea’s high-profile divorce from his ex-wife, Linda, was finalized July 28. That process, he said, opened his eyes to high property taxes.

“I had no idea how bad it was,” he said. “I have no home right now, but I’m going to buy another one when I get back on my feet. That’s what this event is all about. Putting a little money back into people’s pockets.”

Bollea appeared from 1 to 5 p.m. as a spokesman for www.GuaranteedLowerPropertyTax.com, the Web site of Saving America Services LLC, a firm that charges \$995 to appeal the amount of property taxes levied on homeowners.

The company promises a refund if a homeowner’s property taxes aren’t lowered by at least \$995 after the appeal process.

Accompanied by fellow professional-wrestling personalities Eric Bischoff and Jimmy “The Mouth of the South” Hart, Bollea said the process is designed to finish off some unfinished business.

“It’s kind of like what (President) Obama wanted to do but couldn’t get done,” he said.

Bollea said Germain Arena was a fitting location for the presentation.

“Lee County is one of the hardest-hit areas in the state of Florida,” he said.

The deadline to appeal property taxes is Sept. 15.

“We’re all in the same boat,” Bollea said. “No one is immune to this. The economy keeps going down, and it’s up to us to be champions . . . and keep getting up. It’s not about how many times you get knocked down, it’s how many time you get back on your feet.”

Bollea said the company he represents could help people do that.

“I bet your bottom dollar that if I took a look at your situation, we can save you money,” he said.

Bollea said a fluctuating housing market doesn’t accurately reflect the amount of property taxes paid.

“Your home isn’t worth what it was 90 days ago,” he said. “If you don’t challenge the numbers, then you’re stuck.”

The crowd Saturday seemed equally divided between wrestling fans and those interested in learning how to lower their property taxes.

Dan Kimball and his son, Dan Kimball Jr., made the trip from Marco Island specifically to see Bollea – and were appropriately rewarded.

Standing near a fancy car in the parking lot of Germain Arena about an hour before the presentation began, the Kimballs said Bollea, Hart and Bischoff approached and introduced themselves.

“Hulk talked to us and shook our hands,” Dan Kimball said. “He was a real down-to-earth guy.”

Kimball Jr. said that alone made the trip worthwhile.

“He’s the only reason we’re down here,” he said.

Sander Steele of Fort Myers said he attended Saturday’s event in an effort to learn how to lower his property taxes.

“I could use some lower property taxes, that’s for sure,” he said.

Still, he added, he didn’t think the \$995 price tag was worth it.

“You’d have to have a \$1 million home for it to be worth it,” he said.

Brent Kopp and his son, Bryce, 16, of San Carlos Park, had separate reasons for wanting to come out Saturday.

Bryce said he was hoping to add to his collection of autographs from professional-wrestling stars.

"I've got Dusty Rhodes and John Cena already, and it's my dream to get all the old champions to sign," he said, holding up the replica championship belt bearing the signatures. "I don't really care about taxes."

Brent Kopp said he wanted to learn how to save money on property taxes, a statement that drew a skeptical look from his son.

"Is that really why you came?" Bryce asked.

Brent Kopp shifted in his seat and smiled.

"That's my story, and I'm sticking to it," he said.

E-mail John Osborne at johnaosborne@hotmail.com.



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