



THE ASSESSMENT FILES

COUNTY ASSESSORS ASSOCIATION OF OKLAHOMA

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APRIL/MAY 2005

News From the President

Hello Assessors and Deputies,

Even though everyone is very busy right now, I hope you have been able to enjoy the spring weather. Some days are still like winter and we have even had a few days like summer, but we have mostly had those wonderful cool nights and sunny days. In my advancing years, I have taken up gardening and I was thrilled to see my perennials popping up this year!

The officers met in April with Jeff and his staff at the OTC to talk about the August school. I do appreciate the way our school is set up with so many different class choices. I went last August to Boston for the IAAO Annual Conference. They, too, have great class choices and I sometimes wanted to be in two places at once. The association is planning the usual bingo, dance and bowling. We have also decided to have a 'free night' on Thursday so you can go to a movie or go shopping or whatever.

I asked Todd to include a new committee list, since there are a few changes. Also, I want to welcome Carey Parrish as the new Nowata County Assessor. I hope she knows that she can always call on a fellow assessor for help.

HB1715 is still out there. Our legislative and pipeline committees are trying to get our concerns about this bill out there to the members of the legislature. By the time you get this newsletter we will know if it has passed out of the Senate or not.

I plan to go to all the district meetings this year. (Two more to go!) It is always great to see a new area of Oklahoma — and to visit with all of you!

See you then,

Denise Heavner

Inside this issue:

President's News	1
Ad Valorem Update, Pt.1	2
Ad Valorem Update, Pt.2	3
Reporter's Notes	4
Committee Membership List	5
Photos	6 to 9

Ad Valorem Update (April)

The redbuds are in bloom! I think that they're prettier this year than at any time I can remember. Now let's hope that we don't have too much stormy weather to go with the arrival of Spring. April and May, as always, have been pretty busy thus far. We've had lots of activity this year with the Oklahoma Legislature, as well as in the various counties, and the Ad Valorem Division staff is looking forward to the rest of the District meetings.

Well, I had a great experience last month. All my life, I've always wondered about Harvard. How smart or dumb are those people? What kind of place is it? Last month, I attended a property tax seminar in Cambridge, Massachusetts, right across the street from Harvard. The Lincoln Land Institute is a property tax "think tank." They sponsor several seminars each year and invite different states to attend on their nickel. (Does a one-day seminar entitle someone to say that they attended, but didn't graduate from, Harvard?) I felt like I got to visit the dugout of the Red Sox. Lots of the big guys: Cook County (Chicago) Assessor, the Boston Assessor, the New York City Assistant Assessor, and several experts on Proposition 13. Much of the discussion was about the various caps and freezes that have shaped the property tax landscape in the last ten to fifteen years and the challenge of keeping the system fair and equitable.

I was more impressed with Harvard than Harvard was with me. Lots of old ivy. Statues of famous scholars. Smart-looking college students everywhere and I was amazed with how friendly and polite they were. I don't feel any smarter particularly, but I can't wait to drop my Harvard experience into future conversations.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at the rest of the district meetings this month and enjoyed seeing everyone at the first two district meetings. The remaining meetings are as follows:

May 20: NW District (Chair: Lennet Pisacka - Dewey County)
May 27: SW District (Chair: Ronnie Funck - Canadian County)

We appreciate all you do for your taxpayers and all the hard work of county assessors and deputies everywhere. It's a tough job, but ad valorem is an extremely important part of local government in Oklahoma. We're all working to pass the system on better than it was given to us.

Jeff Spelman, CAE Director Ad Valorem Division

P.S. Is it really necessary for the clerk to give you a receipt for a doughnut? Couldn't that be a paperless transaction? About the only use for a receipt for a doughnut would be if a friend asked you, "Did you really eat that doughnut?" And you'd say, "I've got the documentation right here." Anton Caddo, Ad Valorem Philosopher (Attended Harvard, but didn't graduate).

Ad Valorem Update (May)

Ad Valorem Division Road Tour 2005

The traditional road tour for the Ad Valorem Division has begun from Sequoyah County to Pittsburg County to Dewey County to Canadian County with a Tulsa County trip on the side. That's a lot of miles (913 to be exact, but who's counting). We're attending the Annual District and OATR meeting over the next few weeks. As I've often said in the past, it is really a pleasure to get to travel around Oklahoma and see what is going on in each county we visit.

We had a great time in Roland in Sequoyah County at the first District meeting (Thanks to Jack O'Neal and Greg Wilson for their hard work). It's only a few minutes from the Arkansas border, definitely in a high growth area in the heart of the traditional Cherokee Nation. We followed that up the next week with a visit to Pittsburg County, including Jim Kelley's great idea of holding the meeting in Krebs, home of some of the best Italian food on the planet. Mike Kemp, the President of the Oklahoma Association of Tax Representatives invited us to their spring meeting in Tulsa, and we always appreciate an opportunity to discuss their issues and concerns. The OATR membership has lots of experience and knowledge in the process. We also heard an excellent presentation from Claudia San Pedro, the new Office of State Finance Director designate on the Oklahoma State Budget process.

The Legislative session is winding down. There are still several significant bills still under consideration. In the next few weeks, there will be some additional discussion as the legislative session concludes. We'll get everyone up to date on new legislation after the session is over. The Ad Valorem Division will be sending out reminders on the abstract submission dates later this month. Abstracts are due on June 15. Statutes are strict on the deadline so please let us know. We'll be sending a bulletin reminder out shortly. State Board of Equalization (SBOE) has scheduled June 20 for its regular meeting which should give everyone time to complete their abstracts. Check those dates for any change as we get closer to the date.

Also, our annual conference planning is in progress. Denise Heavner and some of her officers met with our staff. We'll see everyone at the district meetings. Have a good month. We appreciate all you do for your taxpayers and all the hard work of county assessors and deputies everywhere. It's a tough job, but ad valorem is an extremely important part of local government in Oklahoma. We're all working to pass the system on better than it was given to us.

Sincerely,
Jeff Spelman, CAE Director Ad Valorem Division

P.S. "If your spouse asks if you love football more than you love them, it is best not to answer: 'Pro or College?'" Anwar Caddo's latest quote courtesy of Florida State football coach Bobby Bowden.

Reporter's Notes

The Assessors Association would like to invite everyone to a retirement party next month for Sequoyah County Assessor Jack O'Neal. Jack is retiring after serving six years as Sequoyah County's assessor. There will be an open house and retirement reception for Jack on June 9th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Sequoyah County Assessor's Office in Sallisaw. Also, I just wanted to let Jack and his staff know that they did an excellent job of hosting the NE District meeting the first week of May. Kudos to Greg Wilson and the rest of the office personnel for stepping up to the task and two thumbs up for the excellent "door" prizes. Those of you who were there know what I'm talking about...the rest of you just need to look at the photos on page five of this newsletter. By the way, "Kenny, can I borrow a hundred bucks or so?"

The Wagoner County Assessor's Office has a Hewlett Packard Designjet 750C+ plotter for sale for \$200. I'm told it works just fine. If your county is interested, call Wagoner County at (918) 485-4911 and ask for Mike Hickman.

A quick reminder that a few seats still remain for the upcoming IAAO course to be held August 22-26 in Tulsa. Course 300, Fundamentals of Mass Appraisal, will be limited to the first 35 students. The class will be conducted at the AmeriSuites Hotel near 71st and Yale and will be instructed by IAAO's Marion Johnson, CAE.

That's all for now.

Your Reporter,
Todd Mathes



May Birthday

Linda Kelly (Ottawa)	May 15
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June Birthdays

Randy Wintz (Lincoln)	June 4
Donna Giddens (Greer)	June 7
Wayne Spears (Pawnee)	June 8
Sonya Booher (Alfalfa)	June 14
Roger Ballard (Haskell)	June 16
Tom Porton (McCurtain)	June 21
Letitia Stockton (Kiowa)	June 24

"The pessimist may be right in the long run, but the optimist has a better time during the trip."

County Assessors Association of Oklahoma

Denise Heavner, President; Ralph Wilson, Vice-President; Cathy Hokit, Treasurer; Todd Mathes, Reporter

2004-2005 Committee Membership List

Accreditation

Donna Giddens, Chairperson
Charlotte Hamilton
Leonard Sullivan
Jackie Gooch
Letitia Stockton

Ag/School Land

Wade Patterson, Chairperson
Janie Bellah
Scotty Cosby
Lennet Pisacka

Audit

Kathi Mask, Chairperson
Cathy Carlisle
Gail Hedgcoth
Debbie Collins
Teresa Tallon

Fees

Jim Kelley, Chairperson
Jackie Gooch
Cathy Hokit
Ken Yazel

Forms

Monica Schmidt, Chairperson
Debbie Gentry
Jackie Gooch
Mike Reynolds
Teresa Tallon

Legislative

Jim Kelley, Chairperson
Ken Yazel
Gail Hedgcoth
Debbie Collins
Wade Patterson

Memoriam

Mary Moore, Chairperson
Cherry Hefley

Nomination

Karen Perkins, Chairperson
Jim Kelley-Southeast
Wayne Spears-At-Large
Lennet Pisacka-Northwest
Ron Funck-Southwest
Jack O'Neal-Northeast

4-C

Debbie Gentry, Chairperson
Kathi Mask
Debbie Collins
Jim Kelley
Wayne Spears

Rules

Debbie Collins, Chairperson
Linda Kelly
Todd Mathes
Teresa Tallon

Public Service/

Petroleum/

Pipeline

Karen Perkins, Chairperson
Monica Schmidt
Jim Kelley
Glenda Kirk
Rosemary Neely

Resolution

Donna Giddens, Chairperson
Evelyn Bradley
Cathy Hokit
Sharon Lane
Letitia Stockton

Executive Committee

Executive Officers
and
Jim Kelley-SE Dist
Lennet Pisacka-NW Dist
Ron Funck-SW Dist
Jack O'Neal-NE Dist
Debbie Collins-Past Pres

Board of Directors

Executive Officers
and
Karen Perkins-2 yr.
Wayne Spears-2 yr.
Debbie Croasdale-1 yr.
Donna Giddens-1 yr.

Committee members are appointed following the Assessors Association Annual Fall Conference. Association by-laws limit committees to five members. Exceptions include special interim committees. The Association welcomes input from its membership and encourages active participation. All committee meetings are open to Association members. Please contact the committee chairperson for information regarding meeting dates and times.



State Association president Denise Heavner speaks at the NE District meeting



Native American drummers perform at the NE District meeting



A Native American dancer performs



Native American ladies in customary tribal attire



NE District members enjoy the Native American dance performance



OTC's Kenny Chucolate with his "door prize" moments before "donating" it to Adair County deputy Tracy Sims



SE District chairman Jim Kelley



Pete's Place in Krebs, Oklahoma



Members of the Tax Commission and of the SE District relax at the Mask residence



Recognition is given by Han Shu Warr at the SE District Assessor's meeting