

The Assessment Files

Volume 2

January 2007

From the President's Desk...

I can hardly believe it is the end of January already. This year has already begun to fly by. I have a daughter that will graduate from high school this year and one from college. After paying for the cap and gown yesterday it makes me realize that May will be here before we can turn around.

I was looking forward to the New Assessor's Orientation last week, but I was happy Jeff postponed it. I was little afraid to get out on the road myself. We had a lot of ice, like some of the rest of you guys. Our schools were closed for the entire week. I didn't think the ice would ever melt off of the trees.

I attended the new legislative orientation at the ACCO building a few weeks ago. Dave Herbert did a good job explaining how county government works. We presented each one with a notebook that described each county office and how each operates. You could tell by some of the looks and comments they had no idea what we do and how the funds are distributed or where all the sources of revenue come from. So please get to know and educate your legislators, it is very important.

Please remember to get Wade a short bio and a picture of you for the new directories, we would like to get those finished as soon as possible. They are handy tools; I use my just about everyday.

Please keep Jim Kelley in your prayers he is having back surgery today, Jan. 24th. A cyst was found on a nerve, it wasn't as bad as Jim thought it might be, he may get to go home today. He isn't supposed to drive for about 5 to 10 days. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Also, Scotty Crosby's 41-year-old son was in a car accident a week ago, he is in very critical condition at the OU medical center. He is on a respirator, his lungs and feet were crushed, and he already has had surgery on one foot. He is listed as critical, but stable. He had no internal damage. He is married and has 3 small children. Say a prayer for Scotty and her family.

Lavinda Smith's daughter-in-law is still not doing well, she had a tough time last night. Remember her family also. [Editors note: Lavinda's daughter-in-law passed away February 1st, please see "Special Note" below]

Teresa Tallon is doing well; she went out assessing and her pick line was taken out last week, but she is still taking chemo pills. Let's remember to count our blessings also. Hope to see you all at the CODA conference in February.

God Bless,

Cathy Hokit

Stephens County Assessor
President, County Assessors' Association
chokit@texhoma.net

Special Note

Harmon County Assessor Lavinda Smith's daughter-in-law passed away on Thursday, February 1st. She was 33 years old and left her husband and a 9-year-old daughter. Please remember Lavinda and her family in your prayers.

A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words. Anonymous

February Birthdays

Birthstone: Amethyst Meaning: Sincerity
Flower: violet, primrose

Janie Bellah (Washita)	February 5
Karen Perkins (Ellis)	February 14
Nancy Hill (Atoka)	February 18
Cynthia Holtwick (Creek)	February 22
Carey Parrish (Nowata)	February 26
Glenda Kirk (Roger Mills)	February 26
Ken Yazel (Tulsa)	February 27
Linda Jordan (Latimer)	February 28

The Ad Valorem Division

Happy New Year from the Ad Valorem Division

We're not going to need any help in recalling how 2007 started out, are we?

This "Big Chill" weather has been absolutely unbelievable. The Ad Valorem Division offices got off lightly compared to some parts of the state, but it has been really tough. We had to cancel our New Assessor Orientation and our 4-C meeting for the first time ever because of the slick roads, snow, and ice. Cathy Hokit and I have talked several times during the run-up to decide to go to Plan B. I hope that everyone in Pittsburg County is surviving after being on the national news a couple of times with the worst ice storm since that one in 2000. Things have been just as bad in McIntosh and other counties in the same area.

This was also a pretty tough couple of weeks for my hometown of Boise City in Cimarron County. Patty Hiner, Cimarron County Assessor, was kind enough to get the Boise City News editor to email me a few pictures of the storm. Not only did they have major power outages and stranded people, but also Patty reported 20 inches of snow on the courthouse lawn and helicopters dropping hay to trapped cattle up in the canyon area around Kenton. It sounds like it was as tough as the famous blizzard in the late 1950s. I hope that this round of weather will let up in the next week or so.

January is always a busy time of year in the ad valorem system. Many county assessors and deputies are out visiting the cities and towns across the state. I've always felt that the visits are a good positive experience for the county assessor, their staff, and taxpayers. As I said last year, it's a credit to the system that statutes require visiting with the public and providing assistance. Our legislative survey on new home construction is proceeding fairly well. We appreciate everyone's assistance and Cathy Hokit's help in getting the ball rolling.

We're expecting a busy year in the legislative area. Several legislative measures are in the process of development. We may have to call on everyone again to provide assistance with surveys or other information.

It is New Year's Resolution time again. I hope everyone makes some good ones and keeps some of the best. According to Kimberly Powell, a newspaper columnist, the top five of the ten New Year's resolutions are:

- 1) Spend more time with family and friends.
- 2) Get more fit.
- 3) Win the battle of the bulge.
- 4) Quit smoking.
- 5) Enjoy life more.

Others on the list included getting out of debt, getting organized, and learning something new, but my favorite New Year's Resolution of all time is still writer Paul Greenburg's resolution written in 2006: "If you believe you can damage things, remember that you can also repair wrongs, heal hurts, settle quarrels, and forget grudges." To me, that's one of the best of the whole group.

As we move forward into 2007, we're looking forward to the continued good working relations with the State Auditor and Inspector (SA&I) and Center for Local Government Technology (CLGT), Cooperative Extension, the County Assessors'

Association, and Oklahoma Association of Tax Representatives (OATR). A good solid relationship between these groups helps everyone in the ad valorem system and provides better service for state taxpayers.

Thanks to everyone, and Happy New Year. We're looking forward to seeing everyone at the next CODA meeting or in the meantime at William Mack's reception.

Jeff Spelman, CAE
Director, Ad Valorem Division
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P.S. "One beneficial thing about the storm of 2007: In only a few short years, it will become a legendary storm that your kids can make their children miserable with by constantly talking about how tough things were back in 2007 when things were so bad many people didn't even have a decent plasma TV in every room in their house." Anwar Caddo, Ad Valorem Philosopher

A great leader's courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position. John Maxwell

Legislative News

Dear Assessors,

The list of the bills I listed [see below] is a rush job that I put together. I have not proofed or edited any of the comments. It will however give you some idea as to what we are facing. It appears to be another tough year with exemptions being proposed.

I should be able to give you complete update at the CODA conference.

On a personal note, I had back surgery January 24th (yesterday). I am pretty much confined to the recliner for the next ten days. Everything went well, in fact, better than expected. I should make a complete recovery.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the CODA conference. If anyone needs to talk to me, please ask the office to forward your call to me or just dial me direct at 918-429-2518.

Jim
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Bill #	Author	Comments
HB 1078	R Luttrell	allow employee to take leave of absence to run for public office
HB 1304	R Enns	Public Service Company's buffer strips to be assessed locally
HB 1316	R Renegar	AV reimbursement 1% to 2%
HB 1341	R Piatt	Expands definition of Exempt Mfg
HB 1817	R Dank	Home Rule
HB 1876	R Johonso, Rob	County Officers & DA to rule nonpartisan
HB 2154	R Jett	County Officers & DA to rule nonpartisan
HJR1005	R Murphey	Tabor Bill - can't raise property value w/o vote of the people
HJR1008	R Liebmann	Qualifies for Senior Freeze regardless of income
HJR1009	R Liebmann	Lowers cap 5% to 3% or consumer price index, whichever is lower
HJR1013	R McDaniel, Randy	Lowers Cap 5% to 2.5% & removes income limit on Sr. Freeze
HJR1023	R Wessehoff	Veteran 50% -limits spouse qualifying if not remarried
HJR1026	R Wrothen	Removes Income limit on Sr Freeze and age to 55
HJR1028	R Dank	Remove Income Limit on Sr Freeze
HJR1029	R Dank	Allows Commissioners to lower cap or call for election 5% to 1%
HJR1034	R Morrisette	Lowers Age 60 for Sr Freeze and allows legislature to set income limit
HJR1040	R Tibbs	Lower cap 5% to 2% on Homesteaded Property
SB 0387	S Rabon	False political advertising or statements prohibited
SB 0005	S Lerblance	Raises Ad Valorem reimbursement rate from 1% to 2%
SB 0012	S Leftwich	Home Rule
SB 0044	S Lerblance	implements filing date for freeport exemption application
SB 0054	S Anderson	sets up a task force for study of oil & gas production equipment, corp comm, adm etc, st superintendent, st auditor, the Gov, Senat, Hse will appt an assr, commissioner, 2 from industry, 2 senators, 2 house
SB 0072	S Garrison	deals with property sitting on county line
SB 0101	S Garrison	requires state to reimburse for cost of assistant election board secretary
SB 0134	S Coates	Specifies what counties must do to give notice of regular or special elections
SB 0137	S Coates	Prohibits false political advertising
SB 0138	S Corn	raises the DOC rate to \$ 40.00 per day
SB 0141	S Crain	restricts the days on which special elections can be held
SB 0142	S Crain	allows to commissioners to hire their own attorney
SB 0171	S Justice	requires elected officials to run for higher office
SB 0377	S Laughlin	provides for reimbursement of revenue lot from on State owned land
SB 0379	S Ballenger	allows newly elected officers to be reimbursed for training expenses before actually taking office
SB 0395	S Garrison	Raises Ad Valorem reimbursement rate from 1% to 2%
SB 0416	S Sykes	Makes English the Oklahoma official language & all printed information shall be in English
SB 0444	S Leftwich	Home Rule in Counties over 550,000 population
SB 0477	S Brann	Raises HS from \$ 1,000 to \$ 2,500
SB 0844	S Crain	TIF legislation - sponsored by schools, we should support
SB 1019	S Sykes	Sets forth various requirements for County Elections
SJR0008	S Reynolds	changes cap rate to 3% or rate of inflation, whichever is lower
SJR0018	S Bass	Veteran exemption based on % of disability
SJR0019	S Leftwich	Lowers 5% to 3%
SJR0023	S Jolley	Surviving spouse qualifies for Veteran Exemption if spouse died from service connected death
SJR0024	S Easley	Sr Freeze income limit higher of \$ 50,000 or Hud Average

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. Howard Thurman

ATAP (Assessor Training and Accreditation Program)

Dear County Assessors and Deputies:

We have finalized the Spring 2007 class schedule. You should have already received your ATAP Class Schedule in the mail and can now enroll either on-line or by fax. This schedule includes the basic Accreditation Units and several continuing education classes.

2007 Spring Class Schedule		
Unit 1 (Introduction to the Assessor's Office)	February 6-9	Tulsa
Board of Equalization Training	February 28	OKC
Unit 2 (Real Property Appraisal)	March 6-9	Tulsa
Board of Equalization Training	March 21	Tulsa
Unit 3 (Mass Appraisal)	March 27-30	Tulsa
Unit 5 (Business Personal Property)	April 11-13	McAlester
Oil and Gas I (Valuation)	April 25-27	Robber's Cave
Unit 4 (Income Approach)	April 30-May 3	Tulsa
Unit 7 (Ag Land Valuation)	May 23-24	Western Hills
Unit 6 (Cadastral Mapping)	June 11-14	Tulsa
Mini-Storage Valuation	June 27-28	Stillwater

You may enroll at: <http://clgt.okstate.edu> or fax in your registration at 405-744-7268. If you have any questions you can call us at 405-744-6049 or e-mail us at doug.warr@okstate.edu or gary.snyder@okstate.edu.

We look forward to seeing you in class.

Sincerely,
Doug & Gary

I will permit no man to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him. Booker T. Washington

Reporter's Corner

As a reminder, the legislative session is starting to get into full swing for 2007. I want to encourage everyone to become involved in this process. This is one of the ways we can educate ourselves on some of the bills which emerge which are not for the good of your county or your constituents. We all need to be sensitive to the fact that, while a piece of legislation may not have a significant revenue impact on a larger county, it could have a devastating effect on a smaller county. Many of our legislators look to us to provide input on how proposed legislation impacts county government.

Again if you have input concerning the newsletter, please feel free to email my office. Hope you see everyone at the CODA conference in February.

In closing, I would like to thank William Mack for his untiring support for the Assessor's Group while with the Ad Valorem Division. Best wishes and enjoy your retirement years.

Ronnie Funck
Reporter
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Please send your comments, suggestions, and submissions for the newsletter to Amy Brandley, brandleya@canadiancounty.org, 405.262.1070 x260