

The Assessment Files

Volume 11

October 2007



To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven.

Johannes A. Gaertner

From the President's Desk...

Hello,

I hope everyone enjoyed the Fall Conference last week. Thanks to you, the turnout was great.

This will be my last letter as President. Todd, Wade, Ronnie and Monica will do a great job. They are all hard working and believe in the same values we believe in.

Thank you all for your help, support and encouraging words throughout this past year.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as President.

God Bless You All,

Cathy Hokit

Stephens County Assessor

President, County Assessors Association

chokit@texhoma.net

***Our own heart, and not other men's opinions, forms
our true honor.***

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Vice President's News

Hello to all,

As we churn through the tax roll process, I am reminded that what once looked like a mountain when we began the procedure is now looking more like a molehill as we again perform the day-to-day functions that go into rolling out a county tax roll. In other words, if we look at just the big picture and don't focus on the small processes that make up the big picture, then yes, the task does seem quite daunting. However, when each of us pulls together and does our respective "small part" then bigger things can come about.

My father brought that concept to life last weekend when I arrived back at my house after the Fall Conference. I had purchased a new cooktop for my wife as our old cooktop was not heating properly and one or two of the burners were not working at all. However, I had procrastinated in getting it installed because it needed to be changed over from electric to gas, which meant running gas lines from the basement into the kitchen. I knew that it would be a "full day project" and decided to wait until I had a free Saturday. Those of you who know me know that there are very few of those available in a Mathes calendar year. What's a free Saturday?

Well, when I came home on Friday afternoon from the conference my first thought was to put my feet up and relax with my kids whom I hadn't seen in three days. But to my surprise, I arrived home to a kitchen that was torn apart and gas lines running through the floor from the basement below. My choice was to either complain about not getting to do what *I wanted to do* or to just jump in and help my 69-year-old father finish the project (which was barely ¼ done). Needless to say, I am grateful that the cooktop has now been properly installed and the cleanup is over, even though it took us until after my children's bedtime that night. The "mountain" became a "molehill" by just jumping in and doing the job. My wife is very happy with her new cooktop and I am thankful to my dad for re-teaching me that important life lesson.

Speaking of last week, was the 2007 Fall Conference a good time, or what? I really enjoyed my time visiting with those of you that I did get a chance to talk to and each of the daily sessions provided a great combination of both laughter and learning. Has anyone tried the new data collection techniques taught by Doug and Gary yet?

I deeply appreciate the confidence you have placed in me as your president-elect for 2008. I promise to do my best to further the Assessors Association and will allow for the continued growth of – in my opinion – the finest organization in our state. Please let me know if there are any committees that you would be interested in serving on for next year. There will be a few openings coming up. I am also open to any new ideas or suggestions that you might have for bettering the Assessors Association.

A famous scientist once said, "Minds are like parachutes. They only function when they are open." Let that be our philosophy as we move from 2007 into 2008.

Respectfully yours,

Todd Mathes

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The Ad Valorem Division

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at the County Assessors' Association Convention next week. The convention is always a good meeting, well attended with lots of participation, and it's during a great time of the year in Oklahoma with Halloween and lots of fall activities.

October is always hectic in the county assessors' offices with tax bills on the street or in the final process of preparation. Tax season is stressful, but it is a great opportunity for the county assessors' offices to assist taxpayers and solve problems.

We enjoyed our visit last week with Washita County Assessor, Janie Bellah, Kiowa County Assessor, Letitia Stockton, and Greer County Assessor, Donna Giddens when we dropped in on them on the way to a meeting. (Donna even came up with some Halloween brownies.) Southwest Oklahoma looks good with lots of economic activity going on and some good rain this year.

The Ad Valorem Division also has lots of activity this fall. We just completed a successful two-day Equity Rate and Valuation Conference attended by a number of public service companies as well as some county assessors and school and career tech representatives. Several company representatives made presentations on issues related to public service valuation. We thought it would be a good idea to begin some of the discussion early in the process before things get so busy during April and May during the crush of completing public service valuations for the State Board of Equalization meeting in June.

In another area of activity, our equalization studies have been completed for the year. Joe Hapgood and his staff have finished up the last county studies. We appreciate the assistance of counties in helping our staff complete those, and I know that our super star field analysts have traveled lots of miles to finish up this important work for the State Board of Equalization meeting in December.

We expect to have a CAMA update completed shortly and that will be distributed for the state system counties before the first of the year. Glen Blood tells me the update should go smoothly and provide the new drawing and picture utility as well as a few corrections/enhancements.

The Ad Valorem Division has completed all of our inspections of the five-year exemption properties in the forty-five plus counties with projects. Doug Brydon and Patti Heath have been busy visiting a number of manufacturing applicants across the state. As we will discuss at the convention, the five-year exemption continues to be a very popular program, and we rely on county assessors and their deputies to provide the necessary information we need to complete the applications. We've prepared our initial projections on the amount of that program in time for the next Legislative session.

Finally, President Cathy Hokit will join the illustrious "Past President's Club" later this month. On behalf of the Ad Valorem Division, we'd like to express our

appreciation to Cathy. She's worked very hard this year as President of the County Assessors' Association and has logged probably several thousand miles. Unless you've served as an office in the County Assessors' Association or watched it from the Ad Valorem Division perspective, it's hard to realize how much work and travel the leadership positions require. We'll miss her energy and pleasant, positive attitude. She did a super job as a solid representative for the county assessors and deputies.

Thank you for all your help this year. 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
jspelman@tax.ok.gov

P.S. "The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses—behind the lines, in the gym and out there on the road—long before I dance under those lights." Stanley T. Cimarron, Ad Valorem Philosopher. Quote borrowed from Muhammad Ali, the famous boxer.

Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know that you trust him. Booker T. Washington

County Training Program

Keep an eye on the Training Schedule on the County Training Program website: www.agecon.okstate.edu/ctp. The training calendar for January through April, 2008 will be posted within the next couple of weeks once some meeting dates are finalized. Once again, the County Training Program invites all County Assessors to participate in CTP classes. These classes can be used to fulfill part of your continuing education requirements. You can register on line at the web site, and there is no charge for the courses.

Judy Rudin
<mailto:judy.rudin@okstate.edu>

ATAP (Assessor Training and Accreditation Program)

Dear County Assessors and Deputies,

Please see our class schedule below:

Course	Date		Time	City	Hotel	Location
	Beg	End				
Unit 4 (Income Approach)	11/6/2007	11/9/2007	1:00 Tues 8:30 4:30 W, Th 8:30 12:00 Fr	Roman Nose	Roman Nose Lodge 580-623-7281	Roman Nose Lodge 580-623-7281
Unit 5 (Business Personal Property)	11/27/2007	11/29/2007	8:30 - 4:30 Tu, W 8:30 - 12:00 Th	OKC	Four Points Sheraton 6300 East Terminal Dr. Okla. City, OK 405-681-3500	Four Points Sheraton 6300 East Terminal Dr. Okla. City, OK 405-681-3500
Unit 6 (Cadastral Mapping)	12/11/2007	12/14/2007	1:00 Tues 8:30 - 4:30 W,Th 8:30 - 12:00 Fri	Lake Murray	Lake Murray State Lodge 1-800-257-0322	Lake Murray State Lodge 1-800-257-0322
Unit 7 (Ag Land Valuation)	1/10/2008	1/11/2008	8:30 - 4:30Th 8:30 - 12:00 Fr	OKC	Four Points Sheraton 6300 East Terminal Dr. Okla. City, OK 405-681-3500	Four Points Sheraton 6300 East Terminal Dr. Okla. City, OK 405-681-3500

You may enroll at: 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.

Doug & Gary

***The impersonal hand of government
can never replace the helping hand of a neighbor.***
Hubert H. Humphrey

November Birthdays

*Birthstone: topaz
Meaning: friendship & fidelity
Flower: chrysanthemum*

**J.C. Brooks (Jackson)
Kim Cain (Carter)**

**November 2
November 18**

Reporter's Corner

The fall conference is now a part of history and as I look back I still can't believe yet another year is nearly gone. The conference was well attended and it was great to see everyone and share some new ideas and thoughts concerning our jobs. One of the things we failed to mention at the conference was taking the time to put together some type of reception for your local legislators. We started this last year and every one our legislators showed up. I know a number of other counties did the same thing. It goes a long way to be able to put a face with a name and start a relationship with those elected officials. It takes a little time and effort on our part but the results can far outweigh that effort. Every year we are faced with legislation that could be potentially detrimental to the various entities, which benefit from ad valorem tax dollars. The information we are able to provide to the legislators on those issues allows them to make more informed decisions on the issues at hand.

I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving in a couple of weeks.

Reporter,

Ronnie Funck

funckr@canadiancounty.org

“Price is what you pay, value is what you get.” Warren Buffett

Please send your comments, suggestions, and submissions including photos from your office or event to Amy Brandley, brandleya@canadiancounty.org, (405) 262-1070 x260

Assessors' Fall Conference

Photos by Doug Warr



