

## AMENDMENT 79

Homeowners in Arkansas are entitled to a property tax credit of up to \$300 on their primary place of residence. If you are 65 or older, or permanently and totally disabled collecting benefits, you are entitled to a freeze on the assessed value of your primary place of residence. This freeze would guarantee that the assessed value on your home could not be increased due to a countywide reappraisal.

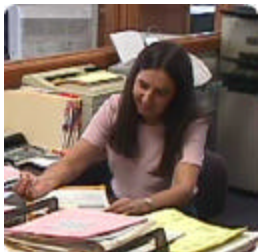
If you qualify for the freeze on the assessed value of your primary residence, proof of age and/or proof of disability must be provided. Proof of disability can be in the form of your Medicare card or a letter from the Social Security Administration. You can apply for both benefits at the Fayetteville, Springdale, or Lincoln offices. You can also download the application at our website [www.co.washington.ar.us/assessor](http://www.co.washington.ar.us/assessor). If you have any questions concerning the Amendment 79 credit, please feel free to call our office at (479) 444-1500 anytime between 7:30am and 4:30pm.

BY: AMY HILL

## FAMILIAR FACE

It is very comforting to see familiar faces and have someone we've known for a long time to help us. That brings to mind Barbara Ryan. Barbara started to work in the assessor's office in January 1988 and is currently our Real Estate Appraiser/Commercial Personal Property Auditor.

Barbara is a state certified level 4 real estate appraiser and is responsible for the business personal property auditing. In the past fifteen years there isn't much that has gone on that she hasn't been involved with. She takes continuing education classes pertinent to the office and those required by the state to stay current on assessment procedures. Barbara also does the public service commission assessments as well as appraising county owned properties to be auctioned to the public.

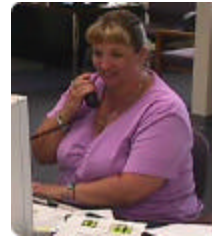


Recently, the duties of commercial personal property auditor have been assigned to Barbara. Those duties include contacting businesses that have failed to assess for the previous year and those whose assessment renditions contain errors. She is also responsible for field discovery of new businesses in the county.

Barbara enjoys solving assessment problems and is an accomplished researcher. She considers the personal contact with the public the most rewarding feature of her job. Barbara is a tremendous asset to the assessor's office and to the residents of Washington County.  
BY: WILLIAM STEPHENSON

## NEW FACE

The newest addition to Real Estate Assessment Team is Kimberly Noel Tocci. Kym's work history is varied and colorful. She was a licensed pharmacy technician, and has worked in Las Vegas hotels as a bonded front desk supervisor and head cashier. She is a Sheriff's Academy graduate and worked as an armed security officer for a private corporation in the Gulf War. She has an AA in Science and has also worked in a mortgage company where she learned about mortgages and has insight in buying houses. Kym has a real knack for customer service and is a terrific addition to the Real Estate Assessment staff. Welcome to the Assessor's Office, Kym!  
BY: PENNY MCDANIEL



## INTERESTING FACT

As we all know, the lands that would become the great state of Arkansas were acquired in 1803 from France as part of the Louisiana Purchase. But did you know that the exploration and survey of the new lands began in Arkansas in a swamp at what are now the corners of Lee, Monroe, and Phillips Counties? 2003 is the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase.  
BY: PAMELA WIKSTROM

**"Thanks for all the assistance in putting this newsletter together. Particularly: Pamela Wikstrom's editing, Dan Cypert's photography, Cindy Stricker for the layout and Nathan Melson's technical advice."**



## Washington County Assessor's Office

"Our mission is to serve Washington County taxpayers by fairly assessing property values, maintaining equity, providing information, and assisting our customers in every capacity within the law."

## ASSESSMENT NEWS

QUARTERLY EDITION  
SEPTEMBER 1, 2003



## FROM THE ASSESSOR

Lee Ann Kizzar

It is my pleasure to bring you this newsletter. I hope that you find it informative.

We plan to publish quarterly, providing information that you may have not known about our services and people. It is our goal to improve service to our customers wherever and whenever we can. By keeping you informed of the workings of the office, we hope to enable you to take full advantage of our capabilities.

We are also hoping to generate feedback about ways we can serve you better. If you have ideas to share or a question you'd like answered, you may call (479) 444-1500 or e-mail me at [lkizzar@co.washington.ar.us](mailto:lkizzar@co.washington.ar.us).

Several members of our team have worked very hard to make this newsletter a reality, but it was the brainchild of William Stephenson, the Real Estate Team Leader. He is the Editor in Chief, and has gone above and beyond to make it a success. I want to personally thank everyone for all of their efforts.

## REAL ESTATE

Everyone talks about customer service, but what does it really mean? The Washington County Assessor's Office has a very progressive attitude towards customer service. We don't think of the people we serve as taxpayers, but as customers who deserve courteous, fair, efficient, and personal treatment. We are determined to find the solution, find the correct explanation, and provide all the information available to us to serve each individual's needs.

In recent months, we have committed to improving customer service to the residents and taxpayers of Washington County. Our office has implemented a program of training the front line personnel to answer the most commonly asked questions no matter what their area of expertise. We call this "cross training," and it is an attempt to simplify and expedite your experience with the Assessor's office.



*New customer service counter for friendly, comfortable service*

Five staff members recently participated in a customer service training seminar. These training efforts will be ongoing to learn more skills and enhance existing practices. We continue to encourage our team members to exercise every appropriate customer service skill. We welcome comments and treat them as advice to help us do our job better.

*BY: WILLIAM STEPHENSON*



*Customer Service terminals provided for research.*

## PERSONAL PROPERTY

Businesses are required to assess commercial personal property between January 1<sup>st</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The assessment must be done in person, by fax, or mail and signed and dated; businesses cannot assess by telephone. Commercial personal property includes vehicles and all tangible assets that are owned and used by the business. Items purchased for personal use, but also used in the business are assessable. An average inventory must also be assessed.

Commercial Assessment forms are sent out the first of each year to be completed and returned. They must be postmarked by the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Assessments not received by the deadline are subject to a 10% late penalty.

Our commercial department has expanded to meet the growing needs of Washington County. We encourage business owners or their agent to come in, sit down, and ask questions. For information about assessing your business or completing the commercial personal property form, please call our office at (479) 444-1641.

*BY: LEA ROCHESTER*

## INTERESTING FACT

🌿 All metes and bounds legal descriptions in the state of Arkansas use the Fifth Principal Meridian. The Fifth Principal Meridian is true North and South longitude 91 degrees, 03 minutes, 07 seconds west. It forms the borders of many counties in Eastern Arkansas.

*BY: PAMELA WIKSTROM*

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is becoming an important key to the Washington County Assessor's Office. By using GIS, which can be thought of as digital mapping, the Real Estate department is drastically improving. The technology of GIS is allowing the Assessor's office to maintain a more accurate depiction of property boundary lines. This includes being able to digitally locate and view parcels from an aerial photo and relating that information to ownership and value records. GIS will also make public and private research efforts much more efficient.

The Washington County Assessor's Office has been using GIS for roughly six months and is still in the early phases; however, we have made tremendous progress. Our office is involved in the County Assessor's Mapping Program (CAMP) project coordinated by the Arkansas Geographic Information Office and the Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department (ACD). Training, equipment, and support is provided by the Assessor dedicating a person to the CAMP project.

Also, Washington County was named as a reference site for geographical information systems software company called ESRI. They gave additional training and discounted software for this honor.

Both projects are progressing very well. Nearly the entire county has been labeled with parcel points over an aerial photo. To date, 64,402 points have been added. A grid has been developed to denote public land survey section boundaries. Finally, parcel boundaries are being developed using scanned images of our existing maps.

The opportunity for GIS in Washington County is endless. The Assessor's office is coordinating with other offices in Washington County as well as the Cities of Fayetteville and Springdale to enhance the efficiency of our county. GIS is the future of the land records world, and the Washington County Assessor's office is very proud to be stepping forward.

*BY: BESSIE HALLADAY*