

DELINQUENT LAND SALE

Did you ever wonder what happens if taxes are not paid on real estate? If the tax bill isn't paid on time, the delinquency can change from a minor inconvenience to a major problem.

When a tax bill is not paid, the property owner's name is published in the paper. Usually, this serves as notification for the owner. Afterwards, the collector's office attempts to notify the property owner so they can resolve the bill. If the tax bill isn't paid the following year, the collector makes an attempt to notify the property owner for both years' delinquencies. If there is no response, the property is certified to the state. It remains with the state for two years before being placed in an auction. The property is essentially delinquent for five years before it can be sold at auction.

The tax delinquent land auction conducted by the Commissioner of State Lands is open bidding, with the minimum bid starting at the assessed value of the property. The amount paid for the property is the winning bid plus delinquent taxes, accrued interest and penalties. The auction for delinquent lands in Washington County will be held June 14, 2006, at 10:00 am at the Clarion Inn in Fayetteville.

BY: WILLIAM STEPHENSON

NEW FACE

Shonia Hawkins is our newest member in our Springdale office. Shonia started working in our Fayetteville office February 2005 through a temporary agency. Then she was transferred to our Springdale office as a Washington County employee. She is an asset to our Springdale office dealing with customer relations. Many customers recognize her from working at Today's Office.

Shonia is originally from Arkansas, but moved on as a young adult to Maine. She lived in Main for five years. And her desire was a major in Psychology, she attended the University of Maine and graduated successfully with a bachelor's degree in psychology, and also has a degree in child development. Then she moved to Washing-



ton and taught preschool for three years.

In her spare time she enjoys reading, and painting pictures. She also loves spending time with her children. She has two beautiful girls of her own, Laken and Madison. She also has 4 stepchildren and one is going to make her a grandmother.

We really enjoy having her in our Springdale office. She has a great sense of humor and she is great to work with. We are proud that she is part of our team.

BY: LIZ TITTLE

FAMILIAR FACE

Laura Brothers began working in the Washington County Assessor's office as a temporary employee four years ago. She started in the Real Estate Department entering ownership changes on the real estate assessment records. Laura quickly learned to read and map legal descriptions on our maps. She was promoted to an abstractor position, which involves creating new parcel boundaries on the maps and setting up new assessment records.

As an Abstractor, she is responsible for setting up new subdivision parcels and assigning new parcel identification numbers for annexations. She also maintains and makes the parcel boundary and value changes when highway or street expansions take a portion of a parcel. Laura excels in our Geographical Information System mapping program as well as helping with the maintenance of the digital mapping system. Away from work, Laura is a full time Mom to her twelve-year-old son, Jacob who loves school, homework, and video games. She enjoys shopping with her friends and also enjoys spending time with her boyfriend, Johnny. Laura is a huge asset to the Assessor's office and we hope to have her for many more years to come.

BY: STEPHANIE CRUM



"Thanks for all the assistance in putting this newsletter together. Particularly: William Stephenson's editing, Lisa VanVliet's editing assistance, Dan Cypert's photography, and Cindy Jester for the layout."



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

June 1, 2006



FROM THE ASSESSOR

Lee Ann Kizzar

Every quarter as staff prepares this newsletter, I begin to think about what I will write in this space. I'm always the last contributor.

This month, I had prepared a statement about how true the old adage of "It's not what you know, but who you know" is. I was going to talk about how what you know is important, but it is who you know that opens doors and gives you new opportunities. I also planned to mention that it is very important to continue to improve yourself academically, but building relationships was the most important thing you can do to grow as a person. Strong relationships empower us to do mighty things.

Then I read the article on the next page. I'm not sure any of the Hurricane survivors need to be told how to become a stronger person. Their amazing stories of courage, strength, and good old common sense challenge us all to wonder if we would have enough of those traits to do what they did.

Out of tragedy, came fortune. The Washington County Assessor's office now has another unique and valuable member on the team.

HURRICANE

Throughout history many groups of people have been displaced, be it through war or natural disaster. In the aftermath of the Katrina catastrophe over a million people who called southern Louisiana their home were evacuated to nearby Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, and Arkansas. I would like to personally thank everyone for being so kind and opening your hearts to us. We had all witnessed the ravage taken upon Florida in the months prior to Katrina, and we all felt for them, but you simply cannot imagine such an experience until it happens to you. To see the death and destruction first hand is unspeakable. It took me a long time to be able to write these words. As I sit here and tell you my story, it pains me inside. Being a d.j. for the past 14 years, I've met many people and had come to love New Orleans, it's culture and it's people. I know of so many who have nothing to go back to. I was one of the stubborn disbelievers who was able to witness the carnage as I decided to stay and tough it out. Besides, I had no family and nowhere to go. Though I had been in the limelight for the past year d.j.ing on world famous Bourbon Street, I had little funds and no transportation in which to facilitate an evacuation.

When I heard the storm was heading straight for us, I began to make preparations. I stored water, canned goods, and batteries. The storm itself was vicious, but bearable. In my apartment building about 7 families remained behind and we all survived. It was the aftermath that got us. The next morning the skies were clear and blue, but we were surrounded by two feet of water. We all assumed it would recede, but by nightfall, it had risen to about five feet. And that's where it remained for the next five days. In this time I became closer to my neighbors than I had ever been before. Admittedly, I've always been private and reserved, but Katrina seemed to bring the humanist out in all of us. We shared water, food, and spirits, as we watched our city die. We cared for our elderly neighbors as if we were all family. How ironic that it took a disaster like this to come about. We listened to our mayor, Ray Nagin, pleading for help on the radio, just as we heard reports of looting and killing. In this time we became more protective of each other in fear that opportunists would soon be coming for us. In the night you could hear voices in the water and see

an occasional flicker of light. We knew it would be up to us to protect ourselves as the police had not been seen since the night of the storm.

It was days before we saw the first national guard men and even when they did come, they just passed by us on their speed boats. Finally, on the fifth day we realized no one would be coming down to help us, so we gathered the last of our belongings and prepared our elderly and infirmed, and headed for the Super Dome. According to radio reports we could get help there.



Five days after the storm the filthy and contaminated flood waters were still as high as your chest.

When we made it to the Claiborne Street Bridge we saw a number of national guard trucks coming our way. We signaled to them but they just passed us by. Finally, after many attempts

one stopped and told us they could not help, the Dome was full, and hopefully someone would be by to pick us up. We waited most of the day in the hot sun with muck clinging to our bodies. I was shocked to see dead bodies on the bridge that had just been left there to cook in the sun. Just before sundown we were finally picked up. That was the beginning of our new journey. As they evacuated us through the city, we sat speechless at the sight of devastation. Everything seemed so surreal. I wondered what would become of us now, where we would go, and most importantly would we ever be able to return?

They dropped us in an open field in a nearby town named Metairie. Worn faces stretched as far as the eye could see. It felt like being in a third world country amid the dirt, misery and confusion. We remained there for almost two days, unable to bathe or sleep. Those of us who were old enough to understand what was happening still tried to comfort the children in the midst of all the tragedy.

Finally, we were told the buses would be coming to take us away. The original destination was Dallas, then Houston, then not even the driver knew. At the last minute, just before the Texas border, we were rerouted to Arkansas. Fort

Smith was the first place I was able to lay down my head and wash my body. It was a relief to finally put on some clean clothes and eat a hot meal. From Fort Smith it was on to The Arkansas Baptist Assembly in Siloam Springs. Here, they truly made us feel at home. After approximately six weeks, I arrived here in Fayetteville. I must thank the ABA, Arkansas Workforce and the Red Cross for their continuing help, and, I also would like to thank Susan Daniel, at the Workforce Center and William Stephenson, Assistant Assessor of Real Estate at the Washington County Assessor's Office for helping me to begin my new career.

I will never forget my experiences in New Orleans, but thankfully I have survived to have some new experiences here in Fayetteville.

BY: ALEX WHITE

GENERAL REMINDERS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

Every year we send business assessment forms to the business owners. In previous years some assessments would come back with one or several things missing that's needed to complete the assessment. This can be time consuming for both the business owner and our office. In 2005, we stopped accepting forms that are not complete. Below are some suggestions to avoid having an incomplete business assessment.

- ~ Remember to sign and date the assessment
 - ~ All business must also assess their fixed assets (examples chairs, desk, phone, computers, tools, machinery, equipment, and any other non-inventory items)
 - ~ We cannot accept "same as " for inventory, you must write a dollar amount for your average inventory (examples: goods held for sale, supplies, and/or office supplies, and parts, etc.)
 - ~ Sometimes assessments are returned because they failed to list purchase price of assets
 - ~ If you purchase a vehicle or trailer that is new to your business, you must either fax, bring in or attach to your assessment a copy of the registration, title (front and back) and /or bill of sale
- If you do receive your assessment form back, please make the necessary additions or changes, and return your form before May 31st 2006 to avoid a late assessment penalty.

BY: JENNY WIER