

## NEW FACE

Lisa VanVliet is our most familiar, new face. She has been working in our office on and off since 2002. She has graced us with her presence during the time when she is not traveling around the world. Towards the end of 2005, she returned to us with intent to stay around and finish her degree. She took the opportunity to really shine, she did such a good job, she received the job as Real Estate Coordinator. A good combination of being strict and laid back makes her a joy for everyone to work with. Her youth and energy is an asset in our office, and we hope to have her around for many more years.

BY: CINDY JESTER



## FAMILIAR FACE

Mary Chandler is our featured familiar face for this quarter. She first started as a temporary employee working in Personal Property in January 2003. In April of the same year, she was hired as a full time employee. She transferred to the Commercial Personal Property Department in June 2003. Her duties include data entry, helping business owners fill out their forms, taking phone calls, and helping with leased vehicles as well as many other tasks. Mary considers the best part of her job is being able to work with the public.



Mary has an Associate degree in Science. She spends her free time reading mysteries, doing water aerobics, traveling throughout the country, watching reality TV shows, and spending time with her family.

She has three children: Jason, Joshua, and Amanda. She has a total of nine grandchildren; Jason has four boys, Amanda has one boy and two girls, and Joshua has two boys.

In addition to being a loved mother and grandmother, she is an important part of our office and we are thankful to have her here.

BY: JENNY WIER

## BEST PRACTICES WORK GROUP

Recently, three staff members in our office have been appointed to state coordinated work groups to discuss assessment issues. The idea for the groups originated in 2002, and a lot of careful planning and thought went into their formation. These "Best Practices" groups' responsibilities are to discuss issues pertinent to all assessors' offices and advise on procedures and methods to accomplish efficient assessment practices. The groups each have seven appointed members with only a single member from a particular county on a group. This allows for diverse opinions on issues and sharing of ideas and solutions. The groups are sponsored by the Assessment Coordination Department in Little Rock. This state department oversees all the assessors' offices in Arkansas and audits the quality of assessments.

William Stephenson represents our office on the "Education Advisory Group." Cindy Jester received appointment to the "Mapping, CAMA and Records Management Group." And, Dan Cypert is appointed to the "Procedural Audit and Sales Ratio Study Advisory Group." It is a great opportunity for counties to have meaningful input on common issues affecting our performance abilities in a very direct way. Being able to hear ideas and share views with other assessment professionals is a great way to learn more about our industry and helps create perspective on many issues.

The "Education Advisory Group" met August 15<sup>th</sup> in Little Rock. The schedule for assessment certification classes was the main topic of discussion. There was a general recognition of a need for more classes to be offered to keep up with the growing educational needs in the assessors' offices, and for training to be coordinated with the assessment calendar. Proper education and training is essential for our staffs in order to keep up with growth in technology and to provide service to our customers.

BY: WILLIAM STEPHENSON

"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

October 1, 2006



## FROM THE ASSESSOR

Lee Ann Kizzar

You may notice that this newsletter was published a little later than usual this quarter. The reason is that many of those involved in putting it together have also been involved in other ventures. Lisa VanVliet and Cindy Jester will host the NWA GIS User Group meeting Oct. 3. They have assembled an excellent program for the day. William Stephenson has been very involved with the Education Best Practices Group. They will help guide improvements to the education programs for assessors and their employees in the state of Arkansas.

A main emphasis of mine is education. I've tried to provide opportunities for all staff members to improve their skills and education level so that they may serve the public in the best possible way. Many have responded by initiating educational opportunities on their own. The Spanish class mentioned elsewhere was a staff idea. It's very important that we are able to serve all taxpayers in Washington County, and this class was another step in that direction.

## ACCOMMODATING THE HISPANIC POPULATION

Nine employees from our office had the privilege of participating in a beginner's class for learning Spanish this summer. Ms. Tanya Evans, a Fayetteville High School instructor, taught an eight-week course that consisted of one 90-minute class per week. For each class Evans instructed on the basic grammar and pronunciation of the language. At the end of each class, Evans would tell the class a story and would ask the students questions in Spanish using what we had learned each day in the story. We had to participate in each story by answering her questions in Spanish.



Pictured from left to right: (Back) William Stephenson, Shonia Hawkins, Lisa VanVliet, Lea Rochester, Mary Chandler. (Front) Misty Kinney, Cindy Jester (Not Pictured) Dan Cypert, Lindsey West

Also, to capture our attention, we played a game called Tengo! The Spanish word tengo means "I have." Tengo is played much like Bingo except the usual Bingo numbers are replaced with words and numbers from the Spanish language that we had learned either that day or in a previous class. Anyone who won the Tengo game also won a prize which ranged from a sucker to cheese dip to dinner for two at a local restaurant. Dinner for two was the grand prize and was reserved for the final Tengo game at our last class.

For our final exam, we had to tell Evans a story in Spanish. Also, we got to play one last game of Tengo! I believe in the eight weeks Evans spent teaching our class she inspired all of us to continue to learn and to become more proficient at the Spanish language.

BY: LINDSAY WEST

## AIRPLANES

One challenge our office faces is assessing airplanes. The State of Arkansas' Assessment Coordination Department, or ACD, provides a list of aircraft owned by businesses and individuals that are registered with the Federal Aviation Administration or FAA. The list includes the name and address of the owner, type, serial number, and value of the aircraft. The ACD provides the market value for the aircraft, and the FAA supplies information such as names and addresses of the owners, type, and serial number of the aircraft. Even though the FAA list provides a lot of valuable information, it is not always accurate.

In the event that an aircraft is destroyed the owner may retain the tail number for use on another aircraft. In this case the owner will still remain on the FAA list as having an aircraft. Also, the FAA is not always notified immediately when an aircraft is sold. Because of these reasons, starting January 1, 2007 our office will require a copy of the bill of sale in order to add or remove any aircraft from your assessment.

Another useful list provided to the assessor's office comes from local airports. They provide a list of hangers rented to individuals and businesses for storage of aircraft. These lists usually include the owner's name, phone number, and a tail number for the aircraft.

Even though it is still the individual taxpayer's responsibility to assess, using such lists allows the Assessor's Office to discover property in the county and notify the owner so that they can assess all of their property. Since the assessment and tax rate is the same whether the plane is assessed on a commercial or personal account, the Assessor's Office uses a commercial personal property format in assessing the aircraft. By doing so, the owner will receive an assessment form in the mail every January reminding them to assess by the deadline date of May 31<sup>st</sup>.

BY: REBECCA CARMINE

### Interesting Fact!

The word "Arkansas" came from the Quapaw Indians, through French explorers. The explorers met a group of Native Americans, known as the Ugakhpah, which means "people who live downstream". These Native Americans later known as the Quapaw, who were also called the Arkansaw. This name became used to describe where the Native Americans lived.

## ASSESSABLE ITEMS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT

There have been times when taxpayers will come into our office and ask if a particular item that they have is assessable. This article will hopefully address frequently asked questions and help inform the public about assessable personal property that is not being reported.

One of the most asked questions is about non-running vehicles.

Question: "I have this old truck that is broken-down; I don't have to assess it, do I?"



Answer: If you own a vehicle and it does not run, or you just aren't tagging it, it is still assessable. To remove it from your assessment, you must sell it, give it away or turn it over to a salvage yard.

When reporting their vehicles, we ask if there is anything else to add.

Question: "No, that's it, you don't assess old farm tractors, do you?"  
Answer: "Yes, all farm equipment is assessable, even though it may never leave your property. This also includes 4-wheelers, old boats, home made utility trailers, and anything motorized or anything that can be pulled behind a vehicle."



Sometimes a business owner may ask:

Question: I don't have to report this freezer do I? Isn't it already being assessed under my real estate?"

Answer: That would depend on what kind of freezer it is. If it is a walk-in freezer, that is not moveable, then we would have it listed with real estate, but if it were a large freestanding unit that could be taken with you if you moved, then it would be assessable under personal property. We would simply check our real estate records to verify how to assess it. The same would apply to similar items.



These are just some of the questions that we answer from day to day. There are more that we just don't have the room to cover at this time. If you have any questions regarding the assessability of an item, please feel free to call us at 444-1520 or come by our office.

BY: LEA ROCHESTER