

NEW SPRINGDALE LOCATION

Some of you may already be aware that the Springdale office with the Arkansas State Revenue, Washington County Assessor, and Washington County Tax Collector offices have moved. This location has been a huge convenience to people needing to tag their vehicle because it is "one stop shopping" with expanded hours in each department.

At the new location the three offices share one building instead of just a suite in a retail building where the parking lot is shared with other tenants. Not only does that create more parking spots for customers, it is also easier to maneuver through the parking area. Unlike the other location, there are easy alternatives for exit routes.

The office is located at the intersection of Springdale Ave. and Carley Rd. one block south of Sunset Ave. Carley Rd. runs south in to the city of Johnson and goes north in to Sunset Ave at a traffic light. Springdale Ave runs east and west from Carley Rd. to Gutensohn Rd., which also meets Sunset Ave. at a traffic light. This makes it easier for customers needing to turn on to Sunset. Now, they will have two options to go when turning left on to Sunset during busy times of the day.

The building layout is more professional with more space, has more windows for natural light, and each department has more storage space and room to grow. There are signs on the walls telling customers where each office is located in the building. The Arkansas State Revenue office along with moving to a new location and new building also increased its staff. Now, in addition to all the conveniences afforded by the location, customers can also enjoy a shorter wait for service.

BY: REBECCA CARMINE



GIS INTERNS

There are two students from the University of Arkansas completing their Geoscience internship requirements through the Washington County Assessor's Office. Geological Sciences is broadly divided into physical geography, which deals with the earth's surface, and human geography, which includes economic, political and social geography concerning changes brought about by man. This science is a technique for examining and relating phenomena as it is distributed on the earth.

Jeremy Hayes is majoring in Geosciences, with an emphasis in Cartography and a minor in Anthropology. He plans to use his degree in the forestry field studying the activity and control of forest fires. He attended high school in Ozark, which he considers his home base. He is also part of the University of Arkansas cheer squad as the mascot "Boss Hog."

Matt Reece is working on a Master's Degree in Geoscience. He was majoring in Pre-Law at Arkansas State when he took a class called Intro to GIS. This class changed his life. He decided to pursue Geoscience studies in Graduate School at the University of Arkansas. He is doing his internship at Washington County Assessor's Office thru Dr. Paradise at the University of Arkansas.

Matt attended Jonesboro High School with his brother. During Spring Break, he visited his parents at Mountain Home, where they spend their leisure time. He likes to fish and his biggest catch to date was a 30-pound catfish. After Grad School, he plans to move to Hawaii to perform research on volcano activity.

GIS is a cutting edge technology that has improved Washington County's service to the public. These students are qualified in the latest developments in this field, which helps enable us to continue to stay up to date with the changes in technology.

BY: NANNETTE BHAUMIK

Credits

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Thank you to all of the writers!!



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

May 1, 2007



FROM THE ASSESSOR

Lee Ann Kizzar

One of my recurring challenges is to find new ways to make the Washington County Assessor's Office function more efficiently while still improving our product. One of the most important assets is my staff, and it's my job to encourage and support them.

This newsletter is the first issue that has resulted from an expanded group of participants in the office. I didn't know there were so many talented writers on staff! With over 30 people employed here, inter-departmental cooperation is essential, and this provides an opportunity for people from each department to work together for a common goal.

Another important process is the discovery of commercial personal property. The goal this year has been to incorporate GIS into that process. This requires cooperation between those two departments. Preliminary results are very promising.

This is also the year we complete our reappraisal cycle. That means two things. New values for real estate will be established, and the next project will be planned and set in motion. It's another opportunity for improvement!

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Two employees of the Assessor's Office were recipients of the employee of the year award. Lisa VanVliet received the real estate plaque and Misti Kinney received the personal property plaque. Both are outstanding workers who go beyond their jobs, and both are enormous assets to the office.

Misti started working for the Assessor's Office in 2003. She has been the lead in commercial personal property since 2005. Lea Rochester, Assistant Assessor-Personal Property, said that Misti was her choice because Misti can do anything she decides to do, and will do whatever it



Left: Lisa VanVliet, Right: Misti Kinney

takes to finish any task that is set before her. Lea called Misti her right arm. Misti has finished the IAAO courses for a level four appraisal certification, taken the Dale Carnegie Leadership course, and participated in a workplace Spanish class. She takes care of customers, both in person and on the phone, handles exemption forms, processes requests for refunds, performs back year corrections and change slips, supervises a staff of four, compares the annual motor carriers report with local assessments to insure that trucks are not double assessed, and can do everything in personal property.

William Stephenson, Assistant Assessor-Real Estate, chose Lisa because of her willingness to do whatever is needed, enthusiastically, without a complaint. One of her strengths is meeting and greeting people at conferences and promoting Washington County. Lisa is the Real Estate Coordinator, a position she took on in 2006. She started working for the assessor's office in 2002, working winters while attending college in Australia. She now works full time and attends the University of Arkansas from which she will graduate with a degree in anthropology this year. She helps customers both on the phone and in person, supervises a staff of six, checks splits for errors, processes map corrections for GIS, does research on parcel boundaries, sorts and distributes deeds and maintains work flow in the office.

BY: MARY CHANDLER

INTEGRATING GIS & CAMA CONFERENCE

The 11th Annual Integrating GIS & CAMA Conference was held March 4-7, in Las Vegas, Nevada. This yearly conference fosters the collaboration between Geographic Information Systems, a mapping application, and Computer Automated Mass Appraisal, a real estate ownership/appraisal application. Five people from our office were able to attend; Lee Ann Kizzar, Dan Cypert, William Stephenson, Lisa VanVliet, and Cindy Jester. These people were chosen to attend based on their extensive knowledge in CAMA or GIS. This team of people works well together achieving fine-tuned integrating results.

Keynote Speaker, Jack Dangermond, the founder of ESRI, kicked off the three-day event with a presentation entitled "The New Face of GIS." He spoke about his visions for GIS in assessment and new features that we can look forward to utilizing. After his presentation I was given the opportunity to personally meet this GIS legend. After nervously speaking to Mr. Dangermond for a few minutes, I headed over to the exhibit hall to see the different applications that vendors were offering.

Nearly 30 different vendors had set up exhibits. Companies from all different states, and even different countries, came to show others what they have accomplished and to learn from their peers on both the GIS and CAMA side. Although I could not visit with all of the vendors right away, there was plenty of time throughout the conference set aside to spend with them.

Once the break was over, it was time to decide which presentation to attend. Each session had three tracks to choose from. The management track was put together for administrators who are overseeing the integration of GIS and CAMA. The modeling track showed the methods used to create mathematical models for the appraisal of property. The last track was systems & data integration, which was set up to show case studies using technology in our industry. Each session had a different speaker with a different topic. The different tracks allowed attendees to always find something that interested them and they could learn from.

The conference had over 500 attendees, including industry leaders and decision makers.

We were all eager to understand technology that can allow us to get more accomplished efficiently. Integrating GIS and CAMA enables us to hold higher standards for accuracy and serve our taxpayers. We were all very glad we were able to attend and meet others who help us overcome our challenges and help them conquer theirs.

BY: CINDY JESTER

DISCOVERY TOOLS

One of the basic functions of the Assessor's Office is discovery. The discovery process defined by IAAO (International Association of Assessing Officers) as: "The process whereby the Assessor identifies all taxable property in the jurisdiction and ensures that it is included on the assessment roll." Essentially this means to find new property, and changes to existing property. This can be a time consuming and labor intensive process. Identifying new property or changes to property requires physical inspections by an appraiser. Finding these changes can be difficult, so the best way to improve discovery efficiency is to find better ways of locating the properties.

Municipalities in Washington County provide the Assessor's Office with building permits for all construction activity in their respective jurisdictions. The lien date for property values in Arkansas is January 1st; so once a year immediately following the lien date an appraiser must "run the permits" to discover the changes that need to be made to the assessment roll for the current tax year. Being familiar with Washington County makes this process easier. But, our GIS (Geographic Information System) department created a way to improve efficiency beyond having knowledge of the area. A building permit layer was created in the mapping system, whereby maps could be printed indicating the parcels with new construction. By dividing the county into sections it was easy to balance areas by the number of building permits and driving distances. Each of the four appraisers along with a data collection assistant was provided a "map book" of a particular area of the county. Using these newly created maps, over 2000 properties with building permits were reviewed in just two weeks. This is a prime example of how proper tools can be utilized to improve efficiency.

BY: WILLIAM STEPHENSON