

## CAMA

The Washington County Assessor's Office is proactive on ways to better serve our customers. Several of our staff went through training on software support and assessment report management. Arkansas CAMA Technology, Inc., who provides the standardized appraisal and assessment software for several Arkansas counties, presented the training session. This training equips assessors and staff on how CAMA software calculates assessments and how data entry to these fields affects the calculations.

These data entry fields are:

*Ownership* – recent owner changes, revenue amounts and Amendment 79 status

*Site Data* – land descriptions and location information

*Cost* – descriptions of house and improvements, outbuildings, square footage, price per square foot and the condition of structures.

*Value* – new and old appraisal values, along with the dates and findings of assessment visits.

This knowledge goes beyond data entry and broadens the awareness of how data input effects taxable status and credit qualifications. The passage of Amendment 79 forced standardization and guidelines to the process. Reports allow assessor offices to track assessments and enhance the management of property appraisals.

The counties were shown how to review assessments for accuracy by selecting different types of reports.

- Status of Land and Buildings
- Updated Assessments
- Verify Calculations
- Amendment 79 Credits to Parcels
- Cost Values
- Appraised Values
- Impact Analysis
- Missed Entries

Periodic review of assessments were recommended:

- Prior to sending of taxpayer's notices
- Prior to abstracts
- Prior to new tax year

This training allows for better performance and management of data fields.

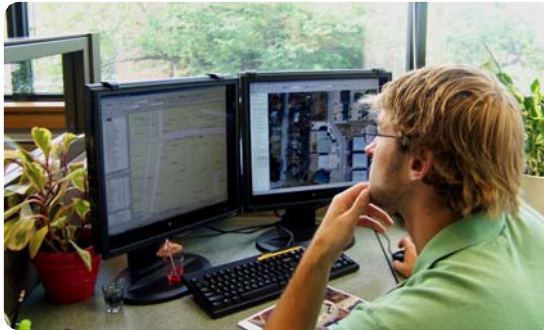
Insuring the best quality and service for our customers.

BY: **NANNETTE BHAUMIK**

## GIS CLASS

In the beginning of my employment with Washington County, I was introduced to the Washington County maps. It is amazing to me how easy it is to go from one parcel to another with so many different functions being used. As the field assessor for Commercial Personal Property, the imagery has helped me considerably.

In early May, I had the opportunity to take an Intro to GIS. (Geographic Information Systems) class at the University of Arkansas in Ozark Hall. It was a very intensive 20-hour class that covered everything from how to use the basic software to creating very extensive maps. The instructors taught us how to do queries for information inside G.I.S. For example, with a few clicks you can query every commercial coded parcel in the county. We also learned that by using the identify tool you can look at specific attributes about the property. For example, if you click on a parcel you can see who owns it, how much it is valued at, the street name, number etc.



With this information, the Assessor's Office is able to use G.I.S. for quality control and discovering new businesses. This training has allowed me to use a combination of my existing knowledge of fieldwork with my new understanding of G.I.S. to more fairly and accurately assess new businesses.

BY: **BENJAMIN ZOELLICK**

### Credits

Executive Editor.....Cindy Jester  
Managing Editor.....Lisa VanVliet  
Supporting Editor.....William Stephenson  
Assistant Managing Editors.....Ben Zoellick, Stephanie Brizzi  
Photography.....Stephanie Brizzi

**\*\*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

August 1, 2007



### FROM THE ASSESSOR

*Lee Ann Kizzar*

Many of you know that my husband and I were involved in an auto accident in early May. It happened in the blink of an eye on a route I had driven hundreds of times. I don't know why it happened, but I've learned many lessons.

- 1) You just never know how many people truly care about you until there's a crisis.
- 2) Don't take anything for granted.
- 3) Fayetteville has some of the very best firemen, paramedics, and medical personnel that there are.
- 4) Make sure you have good insurance.
- 5) If you have done your job in hiring and training your staff, the office will run without you!

Steve and I are eternally grateful to all of those who helped us, or called or sent notes. We'll never be able to repay the kindness, but hope that we can be there when someone else needs help.

## 2007 REAPPRAISAL YEAR

You might see them walking around in your neighborhood, peering across your yard, eyes scanning back and forth as they jot down notes about their discoveries. You might see them take a step back and try to see how many stories your house really is. You might say that these individuals are in search of something; something called value.

Every three years, Washington County undergoes a reappraisal cycle of its over 95,000 parcels. Contracted appraisers arm themselves with the latest in appraisal technology, and methodically comb over the county in search of new construction, demolitions and undocumented changes. They also consider the physical aspect of the buildings, are they new or old? How do they compare to other buildings of the same age and/or make? How is the land being used? Are they using the land for pasture or as a putting range? Also, how does the property itself compare with others similar to it across the county and country?

Currently, land is appreciating in value, meaning it often gains in value every year. Market value trends are always changing, hence the need for a three-year county-wide reappraisal cycle. The state of Arkansas has each county on either a three or a five-year reappraisal cycle depending upon the size of the county and its number of parcels. Woodruff County contains just a little bit over 10,000 parcels, while Pulaski County has over 160,000 parcels. Woodruff County is on a five-year cycle, while Pulaski is on a three-year cycle. These reappraisal cycles help keep counties current on real estate values and ensure consistency within the state.

Washington County's reappraisal year occurs in 2007. Thanks to our hard-working appraisers, values have been collected and entered into the CAMA (Computer Automated Mass Appraisal system) system. New values will reflect on the 2007 tax bills, sent out in the spring of 2008.

Notices of revaluation were mailed to all property owners this summer. The notices reveal the old appraised value and the new appraised value, along with old and new assessed values. To the right, is an example of what you will see on your notice. The appraised value is our appraisers best interpretation of a market value. They use

this to determine the assessed value, which is used for calculating taxes. Due to new legislation, all 2006 sales will go to full market value.

The notices were sent in waves; each area of the county received their notices at different times. This allowed our appraisers to dedicate more time to each person when they called and dramatically reduced the amount of busy phone lines that our taxpayers would have to endure. ACT had numerous phone lines dedicated to addressing each person's questions and concerns. Those phone lines were only open during the reappraisal cycle.

One of our concerns is how to protect the taxpayer against increasing taxes. In between appraisal years, taxable assessed values may rise as much as ten percent. Homeowners who live in their home are eligible for the Homestead Credit. This credit gives you up to a \$350 tax reduction on your real estate taxes on your primary place of residence. It also limits your assessed value to a five percent increase. Additionally, if you are 65 years of age or older, or if you are 100% disabled per a qualifying agency, like Social Security, you can apply for additional benefits by showing us proof of your age and/or disability. Upon proof, we can place a "freeze" on your taxable assessed value. This value is locked in unless you make any improvement or name changes to your residence.

On the back of the notices, there are directions on how to appeal the new value if you don't agree with it. There are also guidelines on how to sign up for the Homestead Credit if you aren't already receiving it on your primary place of residence.

Once notices are mailed, phone calls are answered, and the year winds down; appraisers stay busy maintaining thousands of property appraisals. Their pencils tap against their desks as they input the new data and wonder what new discoveries they might find of value for the next reappraisal cycle.

BY: SITA NANTHAVONG

EXAMPLE:

	Previous Appraised Value	Previous Assessed Value	Taxable Value 2007	New Appraised Value	Full Assessed Value
TOTAL	144,750	28,950	30,397	178,900	35,760

## THE BASKETBALL GAME

A new activity for the Assessor's Office was initiated this spring. A friendly inter-office basketball game was set for the 11<sup>th</sup> of May at 6:00pm in the Fayetteville Boys & Girls Club. Alisha Bhaumik, a summer student employee, acted as scorekeeper and Ron Fink, of the Public Defender's Office, was referee.

The Assessor's team consisted of Laura Brothers - manager, Amber Bailey, Will Creyer, Jeremy Hayes, Lauren Jenneman, Dawn Jenkins, Whitney Jones, Matt Reece, and Ben Zoellick.

The Prosecutor's team was made up of Hunter Ardemagni, Charles Duell, Matt Durrett, Brian Lamb, Amy Lindsey, Dustin Roberts, Sarah Suttle, John Threet; Chris Williams - manager/player and Tyler Wilson.

At game time, I wondered if the Assessors could win. The Prosecutors, with shirts saying "ASSESS THIS", were more organized with more players. Our referee lost his whistle, but brought a plastic flute to keep things light.



My concerns about a possible positive outcome disappeared as play began. The Assessor's players came together as a team. The play was fast with the rebounds going to the Assessor's office. The first quarter's score was 4 to 15, Assessors ahead. In the second quarter, the Prosecutors improved their defense and the Assessors slowed down. The quarter ended at 16 to 26, Assessors leading. During the third quarter, physical contact increased. The referee was wishing he had that whistle. The third ended 31 to 39, Assessor's maintaining. The fourth quarter continued with increased physical contact. The game was called at a tie.

Final score 43 to 43, 1 minute and 16 seconds on the clock. It was a well-played game that both offices enjoyed.

BY: JIM DUNCAN