

AMENDMENT 79 REMINDER

Have you purchased a home recently, or are you currently building a new home? If you are a homeowner, and use that home as your primary place of residence, you may be entitled to the Amendment 79 tax credit. This can mean up to a \$300 tax credit on your real estate taxes. There is an additional benefit if you are 100% disabled by Social Security standards or are at least 65 years old. This includes the tax credit as well as a "freezing" of your assessed value on your home and house lot. The assessed value won't increase due to a countywide reappraisal unless there are substantial improvements/additions to your property. If there are new additions to your home, we will revalue your property and apply the "freeze" to your new value. This "freeze" does not apply to outbuildings or additional acreage. If your assessed value is frozen and your taxes go up, this may be due to an increase in your millage rate. Your taxes are calculated by multiplying your assessed value by your millage rate, which is determined by your school district. Millage rates are not set by our office, but are requested by the school districts and passed by election. It's important to remember the taxing formula when reviewing your bill.

We are applying Amendment 79 credits daily, and have already applied twice as many credits this year than in 2003. If you have any questions concerning the Amendment 79 credit, please feel free to call our office at (479) 444-1500.

BY: AMY HILL

FAMILIAR FACE

Holly Turrentine is the featured familiar face for this quarter. She came to us first as a temporary in February 1999 and became a full time employee in August of that same year. She works in Personal Property and for the past year has been specializing in commercial personal property. This includes data entry, helping business owners fill out their



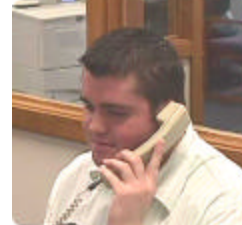
forms, correcting assessments when necessary, taking phone calls, searching for new businesses as well as many other detailed tasks.

Holly enjoys spending time with friends and family, as well as shopping and redecorating her home. She is an avid Razorback football and basketball fan. Holly is also a part-time student, which keeps her extremely busy.

BY: LEA ROCHESTER

NEW FACE

Bradley Ray Dawson began working in the Assessor's office in November, 2003. He moved here from Bakersfield California in June, 2002; the day after he graduated from high school. Brad and his family decided to move here to be close to Brad's sister, who had just gotten married and decided to move to Arkansas to start a new family. Brad has done several things since he moved here. Before learning about the position here as Deputy Assessor, he was a painter and also was a Lube Technician at Landers Auto Park. He finally found a job he really likes and plans to continue working in the Assessor's Office until he finishes his college degree in Respiratory Therapy.



Brad contributes a lot to our office. He maps the legal descriptions on deeds with great skill, diligently helps customers find what they need, and is also trained to help in other areas such as personal property.

BY: CINDY STRICKER

INTERESTING FACTS

🍏 The apple blossom is the official state flower. It was designated in 1901.

BY: LEA ROCHESTER

🐦 The mockingbird is the official state bird. It was designated in 1929.

BY: LAURA BROTHERS

"Thanks for all the assistance in putting this newsletter together. Particularly: William Stephenson's editing, Dan Cypert's photography, and Cindy Stricker 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, 2004



Lee Ann Kizzar

FROM THE ASSESSOR

This June, I had the privilege of representing Washington County at the Summer Assessor's Meeting in Eureka Springs. Assessors from all over the state participated in a joint meeting with the House and Senate Revenue and Tax Committees, and also the Economic and Tax Policy Committee. We discussed assessment policies and procedures with our legislators. This open forum allowed the Assessors to represent their respective counties directly to our lawmakers. We expressed concerns and offered suggestions pertinent to our community. The Assessment Coordination Department conducted several meetings discussing Arkansas' assessment levels, as well as auditing procedures to insure correct values. It was also an opportunity for continuing education. Ten staff members attended a class in bilingual assessing. Office procedures and customer service ideas were also shared, which increases our knowledge so we can serve you better. And that is our most important and rewarding job!

NEW VALUE ON OLD VEHICLES

This year we have a new method for valuing vehicles that are not in the current assessment database. All vehicles manufactured before 1990 are now valued based on their current condition. In order to determine the condition of the vehicle we are asking customers to provide us specific information regarding their vehicle. Once we know the condition of the vehicle, we use a grade of 1-6 to locate the value.

How to determine the grade of your vehicle:

1. Excellent – Restored to the fullest quality in every area. This vehicle is a show vehicle, which is not driven.

2. Fine – Well restored, well maintained showing very minimal wear.

3. Very Good – Original/older restoration showing some wear, a mix of well-done restoration and good operable components.



4. Good – A drivable vehicle needing no or only minor work to be functional. All components may need restoration to be "excellent."



5. Restorable – Needs complete restoration of body, chassis, and interior, but isn't weathered, wrecked or stripped.



6. Parts Vehicle – Not running and is weathered, wrecked, or stripped; useful primarily for parts.

Our valuation scale is based on the "2004 Standard Guide to Cars & Prices." Vehicles will be re-valued yearly with an updated pricing guide.

BY: GERMAN MARTINEZ

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Our biggest responsibility is customer service for the residents of Washington County. This responsibility is focused in the two areas of assessment, personal property and real estate.

Personal property is described as automobiles, motorcycles, trucks, boats, trailers, farm equipment, and livestock. Businesses are required to assess personal property, such as equipment, furniture and inventory used in their operation. Between January 1st and May 31st of each year it is the responsibility of Arkansas property owners to list all their personal property, including newly acquired property in this time period and to make all appropriate changes to their assessment. The Assessor's office will value the property and make sure it is listed in the correct school district. Property assessed after May 31st is subject to a late penalty of 10 percent.

Real property is described as land, homes, other buildings, and permanent fixtures to the land, i.e., swimming pools, patios, etc. Real estate is reassessed during reappraisal, or picked up as new construction annually by our contract appraisers. We also have several staff appraisers to review real property for changes.

It is the property owners' responsibility to report changes and new additions to their real estate, and also to report any purchase of real estate. The Assessor's office receives copies of deeds file in the Circuit Clerk's office to make the appropriate ownership changes to the assessment record. Properties are identified by the legal description and located on parcel maps.

Assessment records are open to the public. Our office hours are 7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. We will gladly assist all walk-in customers in locating parcels, researching values, and investigating ownership. It is our pleasure to serve the property owners of Washington County. We have maps on CD for \$1.00 each and an online subscription service for \$15 monthly or \$150 yearly. These tools are made available so mortgage companies, real estate offices, appraisers or attorneys may research property accurately.

BY: KYM TOCCI

VITAL-LINK STUDENTS

The Assessor's Office has recently participated in a school program called Vital Link. The purpose of this program is to allow the students to go into a place of business and see how the subjects they are learning in class can be applied in the workplace.



Woodland students: Samantha, Joey, and Leslie

The students were invited into our office to take part in the many tasks of the Assessor's Office. They obtained hands-on training in areas such as assessing personal property, deed plotting legal descriptions, splitting parcels, updating property ownership, and applying the Amendment 79 Credit.

The Vital Link students from Woodland Jr. High; Samantha, Joey, and Leslie visited on May 4th & 5th. Khandice, Mallory, and Chris came from Ramay Jr. High on May 18th & 19th.



Ramay students: Khandice, Mallory, and Chris

The Assessor's Office would like to thank Woodland Jr. High & Ramay Jr. High for allowing us to be a part of the Vital Link program. We believe it is important to participate in these programs because it allows us to be directly involved in the community.

BY: BRAD DAWSON