

## GIS: MAKING BIG NEWS AT THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The Assessor's office is continually moving forward, especially in the GIS department. Aerial photographs, which were taken in 2004, are now available in true color and at a much higher resolution than before. Not only are beautiful pictures available, but an array of digital real estate parcel information is on hand as well: boundaries, ownership information, streets, driveways, and much more. Any one of our real estate employees would be glad to print information to suit your needs. An 8x10 black and white GIS map costs \$0.10 and color maps are \$1.00. We would like to encourage the public to come in our office and check it out!

Recent changes are bringing other exciting modifications. We have outsourced building footprints, which are depictions of building perimeters. Building footprints for the entire county are expected to arrive in the near future and will be an additional layer on G.I.S. We have also contracted for new aerial photography for the current year. The 2005 photography has already been completed, and the pictures are expected to arrive later this year. Our imagery contractor is working with another high-tech firm who makes software for change detection. This will aid our appraisers in detecting new construction in the coming years. Furthermore, for those of you who are signed up to access our records online, our GIS data should be available at no additional cost within six months! We look forward to assisting you in any way we can.

BY: BESSIE HALLADAY

## NEW FACE

Please welcome the newest and youngest member of the Assessor's office, Kassandra Reashel Doyle. Kassie began working here in September 2004 on a temporary basis. In December 2004, she became an official county employee. Before accepting the position in the Assessor's Office, Kassie led a very interesting life. As a 2004 graduate from Lincoln High, Kas-



sie had the privilege of being involved in school both academically and athletically. She was captain of the varsity basketball and softball teams and graduated as an honor student. Now that Kassie works as a Deputy Assessor, she changes our property ownership record and answers phone calls regarding real estate. One of Kassie's most important job duties is helping customers who come into our office for both real estate and personal property. If you are ever in our office and want to see a helpful, friendly face, Kassie is the right girl for the job.

BY: SMIRNA PALACIOS

## FAMILIAR FACE

The Personal Property Team Leader, Lea Rochester, is certainly a familiar face to the Personal Property Department of the Assessor's Office. She has had experience in every aspect of the Personal Property Department.

Since 1998, she has raised the ranks. She began working at the front counter, then became a Phone Assessor, then moved up to Commercial Personal Property Deputy Assessor, and is now the Team Leader of the entire Personal Property Department. She has a level two appraiser credential and is currently enrolled in Dale Carnegie training. Customers appreciate her pleasant nature, listening skills, and extensive knowledge of Personal Property.



She lives in West Fork with her loving husband, Greg, and her daughter, Rachael. Her son, Justin, is a 2004 West Fork High School graduate. In her spare time, she enjoys attending garage sales and auctions in search for dragonfly pins.

Her experience throughout the department has made her a valuable resource for the Assessor's Office. We hope to have her around for several years to come.

BY: NANNETTE BHAUMIK

"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

March 1, 2005



## FROM THE ASSESSOR

Lee Ann Kizzar

The Washington County Assessor's office will be the first in our state and among the forerunners in the nation to use new software from Pictometry International Corporation and HouseDiff, created by Hitachi Software Global Technology. Pictometry's software will help in determining changes on real estate, such as additions and demolitions as well as helping the new construction discovery process. This software will enable us to view an improvement to real property from multiple angles simultaneously and will greatly improve our current aerial photography. The images will be higher resolution views of buildings, highways, landmarks and virtually any other feature in our county. HouseDiff technology will allow us to view current aerial imagery with Pictometry imagery, which will aid in detecting changes to existing structures.

This area is experiencing tremendous growth. When you consider that much of our terrain is mountainous, and rough, locating new construction and development by the old method of driving around is expensive and inaccurate. Pictometry will help us stay current with changes and maintain assessment accuracy and enhance our ability to give the highest quality service to our customers.

## THE NEW COMMERCIAL PERSONAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

We are proud to tell you about a new expansion in our office. Due to the growing population in Washington County, many new businesses are coming into the area; in order to keep up we needed to grow.

For several months, construction has taken place on the northwest side of our office. This has created a larger, more efficient Commercial Personal Property Department. A sign is hanging outside the main Assessor's Office doors, routing business owners and people needing to assess lease vehicles to the new entrance at suite 210. Upon entering, you will greet a Commercial Personal Property Deputy Assessor who accepts forms, helps to complete them, and answers any questions. There is now a department set aside predominately for data entry. This enables us to have personnel dedicated to processing and completing assessments. Auditors have been sent to look for new and closed businesses, to keep a detailed list of Washington County businesses.



Separation from the personal property counter will make assessing businesses faster and more convenient for the business owner. Business assessments received at any of our offices in Fayetteville, Springdale, or Lincoln, whether by fax or mail, will be processed within the Fayetteville Office. Then, copies will be mailed to the owners as previously done. Assessing non-business vehicles, excluding lease vehicles, will still be handled in the same way. These changes have improved overall efficiency.

BY: LEA ROCHESTER

## THE QUORUM COURT

The Washington County Quorum Court is a very important part of our county government. These elected officials meet monthly and are presided over by our County Judge. This governing body makes decisions that affect Washington County residents in very immediate and direct ways.

Amendment 55, which became effective January 1, 1977 made the Quorum Court the legislative body for the county. The court is comprised of 13 Justices Of The Peace (JP's) who represent particular districts in Washington County. The districts are determined by population and are divided equally. These district boundaries may adjust to accommodate population growth to maintain this equality of representation. Our JP's have the responsibility of deciding how many county employees are needed and the compensation for the positions. They may also fill a vacancy in an elected office.

The Quorum Court is integral in providing a variety of services in county operations. But more importantly, our Quorum Court has the duty of appropriating public funds for county expenses. They may levy taxes and fees in three categories: sales tax, charges for services rendered, including fees, fines, and licenses, and the ad valorem property tax. They make sure that necessary services are provided to everyone. There is a listing of all the Justices Of The Peace and how to contact them on the Washington County web site at [www.co.Washington.ar.us](http://www.co.Washington.ar.us) under the elected officials category. Your JP is a very good resource for information about our county government. Also, it's your way of addressing concerns in your district with someone who can really make a difference.

Our Quorum Court members are very dedicated and provide an invaluable service to us. It's easy to see how important their decisions are in our daily lives. The Quorum Court gives everyone a voice in our government at a local level.

BY: WILLIAM STEPHENSON

## INTERESTING FACT

The World's Championship Duck Calling Contest is held annually in Stuttgart, AR.

BY: FARRIS JACKSON

## CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING CLASSES

In December, many of the employees of the Assessor's Office attended customer service training in order to gain valuable customer service skills so that we may better assist our customers. Rebecca Elliot, Ed.D, an associate of Executive Learning Strategies conducted the training.

We learned about communicating more effectively through body language, listening skills, and paraphrasing. We also learned about positive and negative language. Dr. Elliot went through the steps of problem solving and handling difficult situations. She taught us the procedure of stating the problem, identifying limitations, and agreeing on a solution.



We learned how to better relate with co-workers, the internal customers, and people assessing, the external customers. It is easy to forget that we need to help our internal customers, as well as our external customers. The Assessor's Office is often hectic, especially at the beginning of the year. By working together, we can more efficiently handle the assessment needs of the residents of Washington County. This makes the assessment process smoother and more time efficient for external customers and creates less job related stress for internal customers.

We enjoyed attending the training classes. We were able to play games for educational purposes, learn more about fellow co-workers, and expand our understanding of customer services. We spent the entire day as a group. We even had lunch provided so that our time together learning was not interrupted.

BY: REBECCA ESTES