

The mission of the Ad Valorem Division of the Oklahoma Tax Commission is to promote an ad valorem property tax system which is fair and equitable to all taxpayers by implementing standard valuation methodology, tax law conformity, and assessment administration compliance.

Oklahoma Ad Valorem

FORUM

Director's Notes:

Happy New Year from the Ad Valorem Division.

We're looking forward to a good year in 2008. After the terrible ice storm earlier in December, it's hard to recall that last year this time, we had the "Big Chill" of 2007 which featured some intense weather and resulted in the cancellation of our New Assessor Orientation and our 4-C meeting for the first time ever because of the slick roads, snow, and ice. Cimarron County had over 20 inches of snow last year with helicopters feeding trapped cattle up in the canyon area around Kenton.

January is always a busy time of year in the ad valorem system, particularly the county visits as county assessors and deputies are out in the cities and towns across the state. The statutory requirement for county visits dates back to statehood and seems almost antiquated in the world of the internet and year-round homestead exemption filings, but I've always felt that the visits are a good positive experience for the county assessor, their staff and taxpayers. It gives the taxpayers an opportunity to meet with the county assessors and deputies in their community.

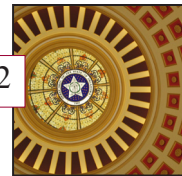
The Ad Valorem Division is working on a number of items. We have the Personal Property Schedule at the Oklahoma Tax Commission printers. We expect to mail that out in the next week or so. The Ad Valorem Division will also send out the 2008 schedule on gas/fluid pipe shortly. It will reflect trended numbers for the next year based on Marshall Valuation information. We're also wrapping up inspections on five-year exemption, preparing for the legislative impact studies, and starting our equalization study for 2008.

Our review of public service valuation process continues. We are planning a capitalization rate conference on March 27 and 28, 2008. We'll be sending out a notice on the meeting shortly.

One of the resolutions that we'd like accomplished for the year would be continued progress on the implementation of the farm implement stamp program after the class held at our last annual conference in Tulsa. If you did not attend that session, look for it on the conference CD or call us for a copy of the presentation by Wade Patterson and Gala Bowman.

The Ad Valorem Division has sent out our letters of improvement for 2008. If your county received one, please review it carefully. It is our hope that the letter will clarify areas of concern before those issues become compliance problems. So please look at these letters in the spirit in which they are offered, a way to address possible compliance issues early in the process.

As we move forward into 2008, we're looking forward to the continued good working relations with the State Auditor and Inspector and Center for Local Government Technology, Cooperative Extension, the County Assessors' Association, and Oklahoma Association of Tax Representatives. [Continued on page 2...](#)



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A good solid relationship between these groups helps everyone in the ad valorem system and provides better service for state taxpayers.

Thanks to everyone and Happy New Year.

Jeff Spelman, CAE, Director, Ad Valorem Division

P.S. I lost a personal friend and former co-worker last week. Zach D. Taylor was the long-time director of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, working for many years with Cleveland, Oklahoma, Logan, and Canadian Counties as well as the cities in those counties. He was a wonderful example of everything that is good about public service: bright, open-minded, fair, and blessed with a marvelous ability to look with great clarity to long-range solutions to big problems that brought people together. He was an ideal role model for all of us who work for the public and a reminder of the reasons why many of us got in the public sector in the first place.



Why Are We Mapping...Are We Mapping...Why Do We Care?

Title 68, Article 28, §2821 titled, “Physical Inspection of Real Property - Recording of Information” gives you reasons to map. It says in part D, “In order to conduct the visual inspections of real property during the four-year cycle, each county assessor shall acquire and maintain cadastral maps and a parcel identification system. The standards for the cadastral maps and the parcel identification system shall be uniform for each county of the state and shall be in such form as developed by the Ad Valorem Task Force.”

The statute closes with “Each county assessor shall ensure that the office is equipped with adequate drafting facilities, tools, equipment and supplies in order to produce or update maps, sketches or drawings necessary to support the proper administration of the ad valorem tax and such other tools or equipment as may be required to perform duties imposed by law for the discovery and valuation of taxable property.”

Notice, there was nothing about making pretty plat books or wall maps for sale. Parcel mapping is supposed to be a tool to assist with the valuation process. Do you use it in the following ways?

- Price out ag land
- Track the visual inspection progress
- Establish neighborhood boundaries
- Track sales and new improvements
- Calculate land in flood planes and place it on for lower valuation rates
- Ensure school and fire district and city codes of your tabular parcel data

Chances are that if you have not finished and are not maintaining the parcel mapping for your county, you probably are not very active in the other aspects of setting value on non-sold properties.

If you need our assistance, please do not hesitate to call. Just keep in mind that it may take longer to get to you.

Remember: Again, usually, the only thing holding us back is ourselves. (I may use this for all of 2008!)





Oklahoma County Property Tax Savings \$67 Million in 2007

“Property owners in Oklahoma County saved \$67.4 million in 2007 because of reduced property taxes provided by the 5% cap on assessments. This means since the 5% cap on assessments went into effect in 1997, property owners in Oklahoma County have saved a total of \$410.5 million in reduced property taxes,” said Oklahoma County Assessor Leonard Sullivan.

The assessor’s job is to ensure that every property owner is assessed at the lowest legal assessment by using every property tax saving plan for which they are eligible.

“There is an ‘assessed value’ and a ‘market value’ for each property in the county. The assessed value is used to calculate property taxes. The 5% maximum cap on assessments has reduced the amount of property tax increases. The assessed value may represent an amount based on a figure less than the market value because of the 5% limitation while the market value is updated each year. Because of the property tax savings from the 5% cap, it may take years before a property owner pays taxes based on the market value”, Sullivan said.

Sullivan went on to say “In Oklahoma County, most residential and commercial properties are increasing in value. That’s the reason there are so many infomercials running on television regarding real estate investing. While the national media reports about some areas of the country experiencing a ‘real estate bubble’, Oklahoma County’s real estate market has been experiencing a slow and steady growth in building, property values and property assessed values.”

Focus On Rogers County

In 1802, Major Jean Pierre Chouteau (founder of St. Louis and Kansas City) encouraged a band of Osage Indians to locate to a 25-acre mound along the Verdigris River to hunt and trap animals for trade. The mound became known as “Clermont”, French for “clear mountain”. After the Indian Removal Act of 1803 was passed, Clermont became part of Indian Territory and the Cherokee Nation.

Clermont was moved to its present location, about 7 miles southeast of the mound, in order to reach an extension of the Frisco Railroad. A post office was established there on June 25, 1874. Through a clerical error, the name was listed as Claremore and that spelling stuck.

Most of the first settlers where Cherokees whose adjustment to living in Indian Territory was remarkable. They prospered, organized constitutional governments, established towns and plantations, published a variety of reading materials and established an extensive educational system.

The Rogers family, for whom the county is named, was among the first settlers. Clem Rogers, father of the famous Will Rogers, moved to the county in 1856. His ranch exceed 60,000 acres and his home just outside Oologah is an important historical site. Clem Rogers was a major advocate of Oklahoma statehood and at age 69 was the oldest delegate to the state’s Constitutional Convention in 1907.



Rogers County Courthouse located in Claremore, Oklahoma





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At the turn of the century, Claremore was larger than Tulsa. A major factor in the growth of Claremore was an area known as "Radium Town". In 1903, oil company owner George Eaton drilled into an underground pool of water that smelled of sulfur. A local doctor, W. G. Williams, tested the water and marketed it as a cure. The water, known as "Radium Water", contained impurities that supposedly made it medically useful. Bath house sprang up all over the area of Claremore, one being Mendenhall's Bath House which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

There are many historic homes and other buildings in Claremore, including the old business district. In 2002, Claremore's historic core received a rebuilding grant from the state's Oklahoma Main Street Program. Renovation work on the downtown was completed in 2007.

Among Rogers County's famous citizens are the following:

- Patti Page - singer & entertainer
- Andy Payne - winner of 1928 transcontinental footrace
- Lynn Riggs - playwright
- Will Rogers - entertainer, comedian and actor
- Stuart Roosa - astronaut
- Helen Walton - philanthropist & wife of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton

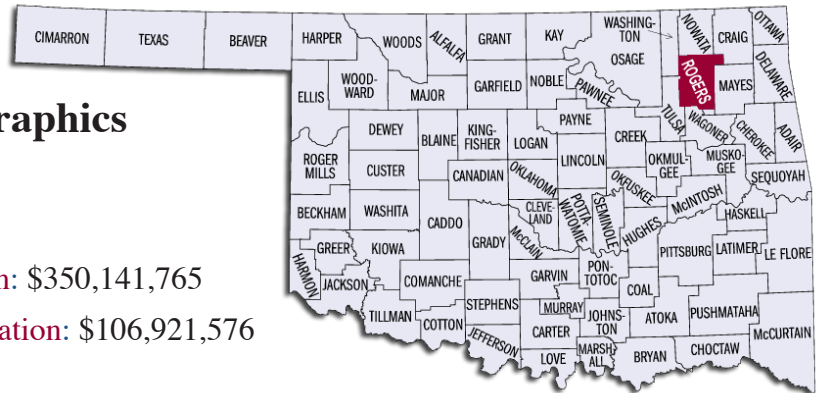
Rogers County Demographics

Population: 79,042

Area: 683 square miles

Real Property Assessed Valuation: \$350,141,765

Personal Property Assessed Valuation: \$106,921,576



Claim For Credit Or Refund Of Property Tax 538-H Form Available Online

Requests will soon be coming to the county assessor's office for Form 538-H, Claim for Credit or Refund of Property Tax for 2007.

The form is available on the AdValorem Division web page as well as on the OTC home page tab captioned "Forms & Publications".

Mark Your Calendar CODA Conference

The County Officers and Deputies Association will host its winter conference February 12 – 14, 2008. The location is the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City.

