



# Oklahoma Ad Valorem

# FORUM

## Director's Notes:

I'm sure everyone has seen the famous Iditarod Sled race on Extreme TV, and I heard last week a motivation talk by Martin Buser, a four time winner of a grueling 1900 mile sled race from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. It's not for the faint of heart, just like the assessment process. Buser told us that the race used to take 21 days, now with intensity, special diet, and modern insanity the race takes 9 days. (The best thing about the short time schedule, he said, is it cuts down the time for racer hallucinations when they get tired.) The race goes on day and night, 24 hours a day with only a few required rest periods for the dogs. The racers don't get much sleep during the time the dogs rest since they are feeding them and acting as veterinarians.

He ran the race several times before he broke into the winners circle. His transition into the top ranks came when one night the temperature reached 63 degrees below zero. Then it really got cold as the wind whipped up to fierce blizzard conditions. All of the other racers halted for shelter but he pushed on through the storm for twenty-six hours straight without rest, leading his lead dog Blondie by hand and feeling his way in the blinding snow for the race course markers on the trail. That moved him from sixth place to second, but more importantly, it showed him what he could really do and what it took to win. The next year he won in 8 days, 22 hours, and 2 minutes.

Martin was a great speaker. I'd love to have him at Tulsa next year, (we can't afford that one...especially if he brought his dogs) but my real new hero is Blondie (Female dogs like assessors are just tougher than males. Many of his lead dogs are female). This female athlete runs up to twelve hours at high speed in terrible conditions and burns 11,000 calories a day! During one tough race, Butcher's sled hit a hidden tree stump, he was thrown over the top of the sled, tangled in the lead reins, and knocked unconscious on a frozen river. If the dogs had gone on and left him, he is sure he would have frozen to death, but Blondie stopped the team and when he regained consciousness and cut himself out of the tangle of leather reins, the dogs were waiting impatiently for him. That Blondie is something.

We always enjoy seeing everyone at the County Assessors Association Convention. It is a good event and we always seem to have plenty to discuss.

I'd also like to refer you to our new Oklahoma Tax Commission Web Site. It has been totally redesigned and updated. It features Quick Click, a reference area to taxpayer topics as well as Quick Tax which contains news going on in the tax area. This web site

*Continued on page 2...*

### A Look Ahead...

- November 7-10, Unit IV, Income Approach, Norman
- November 11, Veterans Day
- November 16-18, Unit X, Convenience Stores, Roman Nose Lodge
- November 24, Thanksgiving Day
- November 30 – December 2, Unit V, Business Personal Property, Norman



Continued from page 1 “Director’s Notes”...

reflects some research on getting taxpayers to the site that they need as quickly as possible. The Oklahoma Tax Commission worked on the site for over a year, trying to improve ease of navigation. We’re updating some of the ad valorem areas right now.

We’re proud of the Veterans Administration’s recognition of one of our own. Kenny Chuculate was recognized by Phillip Driskill and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Norman Lamb for his help in the implementation of the Veterans Exemption for 100% disabled veterans of their homestead property. It has been a complicated program, but working together I think that it will be a success (Jerry Kirton, former A&E for the Ad Valorem Division was also recognized for his efforts on the sales tax and excise veteran exemption.)

Sincerely,

Jeff Spelman, CAE  
Ad Valorem Division

P.S. “A lesson in problem solving. A glacier moves with irresistible force. There’s no way you can stop it. Solution: Don’t try to stand in front a glacier and stop it. Outrun it.” Feel free to apply this to life.



At the Tulsa school and during my county visits, we sometimes talk about sharing data with cities and other agencies.

As I write this, I just returned from attending a GIS coordination meeting for Canadian County. Ronnie Funck, with the help of his mapper, Amy Brandley, has been organizing meetings between several Canadian County agencies, several in-county cities, and others. This meeting had representatives from a couple of county agencies, several cities, a tribal government, the local COG, and the State.

They had told me that they were doing this, but this is the first one I attended. Ronnie’s basic concept is to make sure that everyone is creating mapping data that can be used by everyone else. This way, they can be responsible for their own data but know that it can be used with everyone else’s data.

If the city is mapping sewer lines and the assessor is mapping parcels, they will line up. Right now, most of the cities and county agencies in Canadian County are just starting their mapping projects. By trying to cooperate early on, they should be able to get more done without creating any duplication of effort.

My hat goes off to Ronnie and Canadian County. If anyone would be interested in trying to do something similar, let me know. I will do all I can to help you. Or give Ronnie a call. I’m sure that he would be glad to help you re-create what they are trying to do there.

**Remember:** *The only way to ensure failure is by not trying!*

## USDVA Surviving Spouse Letter Discussed

The U.S.D.V.A. has sent qualification letters to surviving spouses of disabled veterans. This letter has been issued to all persons entitled to receive Dependency Indemnity Compensation (D.I.C.) from the V.A.

This letter is the surviving spouse’s qualification for the AdValorem tax exemption pursuant to the Oklahoma Constitution, Article 10, Section 8E. The letter should have the U.S.D.V.A. seal embossed over the signature block, similar to the veteran’s qualification letter.

All administrative procedures will be the same as the veteran’s application process. If you have any questions, please call the Ad Valorem Division at (405) 521-3178.





## Property Tax News From Around The Country



### Louisiana...

Assessors in the New Orleans area, along with those responsible for collecting taxes, have had a series of meetings in recent weeks with Elizabeth Guglielmo, Chairman of the Louisiana Tax Commission, to work out procedures dealing with hurricane damage, assessments, and taxes.

Among the ideas that have gained wide support from the group are the following:

- 1). All properties damaged by hurricanes should be reassessed immediately, not just property that has flooded, as current law holds.
- 2). Homeowners forced out of their houses by storm damage should be allowed to continue enjoying a homestead exemption – a privilege that now requires that a property be “owned and occupied” – providing they sign a statement swearing they intend to reoccupy the property when it’s livable. Homeowners would still be limited to a single exemption.
- 3). The dates that the tax rolls in affected parishes will be open for inspection, the review period and the dates that bills will be mailed out should all be pushed back to give assessors time to take stock of the damage. A drop-dead date may be set, but one hasn’t been agreed upon yet.
- 4). Taxpayers who own damaged properties should be given the opportunity to request that they pay taxes in installments. Such a provision exists under current law, but the Dec. 31 deadline to apply would be extended.



### Nevada...

Another attempt to revive a failed measure to restructure Nevada’s property-tax code after California’s controversial model was kicked off recently in Reno.

The initiative would roll back property values to 2003-2004 levels and a 1-percent tax would be assessed. Taxes couldn’t grow more than 2 percent per year. When a property is sold, it would be reappraised and taxed at 1 percent of full cash value.

The group pushing the initiative petition must gather 83,184 valid signatures by June 30, 2006 to get the measure on the ballot.

This year, the Nevada Legislature passed its own property-tax relief measure in an effort to head off such a Proposition 13-style initiative. The legislative change caps property-tax increases for most homeowners at 3 percent and 8 percent for commercial properties.



### North Dakota...

A recent North Dakota attorney general’s opinion paves the way for cities to divert sales tax money to school districts. For Fargo and other cities, which rely mostly on property taxes to pay for education, the ruling could set the groundwork for a major overhaul in how residents pay for schools.

Allowing schools to have a portion of the sales tax means they wouldn’t have to depend so heavily on property taxes, said Sen. Tim Mathern, D-Fargo, who requested the opinion.

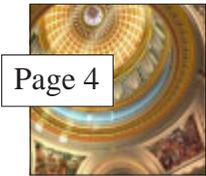
According to Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem’s opinion, a city governed by a home rule charter may grant sales tax revenue to a school district as long as its charter and ordinances authorize it.

Stenehjem’s opinion goes one step further and states that with certain restrictions, a city may use sales tax money to establish property tax exemptions.

Mathern said one idea would be to set aside some sales tax money and give it to property tax payers – a rebate of sorts. But there would be limits on the city.

“A home rule city may establish exemptions from real estate taxes to be funded by sales tax revenues if it does so in connection with a permissible utility, business or enterprise, or for the reasonable support of the poor under the authority of a state statute,” the opinion stated.





Continued from page 3 “Property Tax News”...



## Wisconsin...

Winning ticket or not, the powerball jackpot is good news for Wisconsin property owners. That’s because property tax relief goes up with the jackpot. About 35 cents from the sale of each powerball ticket kicks back to property owners.

Wisconsin got \$135 million powerball dollars of relief last year, translating to around \$93 per property owner.



## And Elsewhere Around The World...

South Korea’s property tax is the second highest among advanced economies, reaching nearly 12 percent of total tax revenue, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Its property taxes accounted for 11.8 percent of its total tax revenue in 2003, the second highest among the 30 OECD member economies, just behind the U.S. with 12.1 percent. Korea’s figure is more than twice the OECD average of 5.6 percent.

The United Kingdom ranked second with Korea at 11.8 percent, followed by Japan with 10.3 percent, Canada with 10 percent and Australia at 9.5%.

For purposes of this analysis, the study included taxes levied on holdings or transactions of real estate and financial assets, as well as gift and inheritance taxes.

## Oklahoma Association of Realtors Second Quarter Statistics

LOCAL BOARD	APRIL 2005		MAY 2005		JUNE 2005		2ND QUARTER TOTAL 2005	
	Homes Sold	Average Price	Homes Sold	Average Price	Homes Sold	Average Price	Homes Sold	Average Price
Ada	45	\$86,300	37	\$88,043	49	\$317,106	131	\$163,816
Altus	20	\$76,512	16	\$83,042	22	\$99,698	58	\$86,417
Bartlesville	74	\$114,274	72	\$96,921	95	\$107,915	241	\$106,370
Cushing	12	\$77,708	22	\$75,122	16	\$71,756	50	\$74,862
Duncan	52	\$89,233	58	\$77,882			110	\$83,558
Edmond	299	\$203,343	369	\$218,333	400	\$218,126	1,068	\$213,267
Enid	86	\$88,921	90	\$87,627	99	\$91,953	275	\$89,500
Lawton	161	\$100,647	147	\$98,417	167	\$97,235	475	\$98,766
Muskogee	103	\$80,090	71	\$85,209	90	\$72,185	264	\$79,161
Norman*	175	\$142,115	277	\$197,729	221	\$146,338	673	\$162,061
North Central	38	\$69,854	34	\$87,952	50	\$101,229	122	\$86,345
NE Oklahoma	88	\$121,261	104	\$125,219	123	\$135,160	315	\$127,213
OKC Metro**	1,710	\$131,591	1,935	\$136,610	1,967	\$139,157	5,612	\$135,786
Shawnee	79	\$88,862	78	\$77,531	88	\$87,546	245	\$84,580
SE Oklahoma	60	\$90,880	107	\$115,007	47	\$89,754	214	\$98,547
Southern Okla.	37	\$110,239	40	\$99,762	46	\$103,298	123	\$104,433
Stillwater	108	\$127,418	70	\$114,192	99	\$147,902	277	\$129,837
Texoma	44	\$102,370	46	\$140,363	58	\$88,907	148	\$110,547
Greater Tulsa	1,102	\$131,959	1,477	\$139,443	1613	\$142,659	4,192	\$138,020
Western Okla.	16	\$132,721	37	\$107,938	26	\$88,140	79	\$116,266
Woodward	12	\$90,687	13	\$121,846	14	\$88,486	39	\$100,340
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,321</b>	<b>\$2,256,785</b>	<b>5,100</b>	<b>\$2,374,188</b>	<b>5,290</b>	<b>\$2,454,550</b>	<b>14,711</b>	<b>\$113,795</b>

For more historical home price information, visit <http://www.oklahomarealtors.com/mlsstatistics/>

## Receive The “Forum” By Email:

To receive the “Ad Valorem Forum” by email, please forward your email address to Cyndi Heath at [cheath@oktax.state.ok.us](mailto:cheath@oktax.state.ok.us).

