

*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:

Last week's CODA meeting was certainly well attended or maybe it was just that we had a small sized room. We were packed in like sardines, but we enjoyed talking to lots of county assessors and deputies at the meeting. I was glad to see Leon Hurt back and looking well and sorry to see Denise Heavner at her last meeting. It is always difficult to replace good leaders like Denise who stepped up and served as President of the County Assessors Association.

We had a good discussion on the real estate market, the legislative report by Jim Kelley, the five-year exemption, the equalization study, and other topics.

President Wade Patterson and the County Assessors Association officers group did an excellent job in making the meeting a success. Wade has done a good job in keeping the lines of communication open so everyone can hear all sides of the various issues.

### **Meeting Hand-outs**

We handed out copies of the Ad Valorem Tax Laws at the meeting to save on postage. If your county did not get your copy or if you want a CD, check with Cynthia Heath.

### **Travel Concerns**

As everyone is aware, Oklahoma state government will be watching our travel budget very carefully in the future. As I told the County Assessors Association, we are committed to provide as much necessary service to county assessors as we can, but it is important we travel efficiently. We ask for your patience with our field analysts as they work to accomplish all their duties during the next year under a reduced travel budget. We'll be working on several ways to travel smarter, so we may be later in responding or have to look for other solutions to solve problems. I appreciate your understanding.

### **Legislature Convenes:**

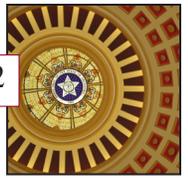
The 2009 Oklahoma Legislature has convened. We've seen several ad valorem bills already under consideration. There are a number of bills on the Five-Year Exemption, changes to the cap and other exemptions.

For those of you that missed the CODA meeting, we appreciated everyone's help on some of the surveys that Kenny Chuculate has compiled for the legislative session. Thanks for the help in getting good estimates to the Legislature.

### **Public Service Capitalization Rate Study**

We're looking forward to the Public Service Capitalization Rate Conference on March 26 and 27. This is

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our second year in a row to have a cap rate conference. We hope that the conference will be as beneficial as last year.

We've posted new forms for public service out on the web.

### Geographic Information Council Day at the Capitol

GIS Day at the Capitol is scheduled for March 11. Any county interested in showing off their mapping program at the Capitol be sure and sign up. Call Troy Frazier or Wade Patterson, the GIS representative, if you have any questions.

### District Meetings

Mark your calendars. We have a complete schedule now of the 2009 district meeting dates. Notice that by agreement the County Assessors Association has worked with the Oklahoma Tax Commission to set district meetings earlier so they won't interfere with the last week of the Legislative session. Many assessors who are involved on the legislative committees requested the change.

- Northwest: May 1<sup>st</sup> (Kingfisher County)
- Southwest: May 8<sup>th</sup> (Garvin County)
- Southeast: May 15<sup>th</sup> (McCurtain County)
- Northeast: May 22<sup>nd</sup> (Mayes County)

We appreciate the hard work and conscientious effort of all county assessors and deputies out there working to improve the Oklahoma ad valorem system and make it better than it was given to us for taxpayers everywhere. It is sometimes easy to focus on negative aspects, but we need to remember the progress that has been made in the ad valorem system over the last several years.

Jeff Spelman, CAE  
Director, Ad Valorem Division

*P.S. "The video game 'Guitar Hero' has an interesting name. It doesn't involve any actual guitars or any act of actual heroism, but its parent company Red Octane has sold 23 million units for \$1.6 billion dollars. I'd prefer real guitars and real heroes." By Stanley T. Cimarron, Ad Valorem Philosopher with apologies to Scott Warren who claims he is a Guitar Hero aficionado.*



As you have probably heard, we are once again tightening our belts. Since our travel budget is being cut, I will be spending less time visiting counties. This is not because I do not like you anymore. It is just the way of things.

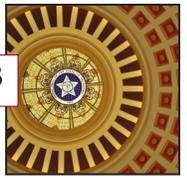
There are 17 counties that I have not seen in 3+ years. I will try my hardest to visit these counties this year. Outside of that, I will only be coming for a visit if you specifically ask me to for a specific problem or set of problems.

We are still offering four or five regional training sessions this year. Two of these sessions will be at the CLGT lab in Stillwater with ArcGIS. One will be in Altus at the technology center in April with ArcGIS. We will try to offer MIMS regional training somewhere in the northeast part of the State. If you want to host a regional training class for ArcGIS or MIMS, let me know!

(In the interests of being a "greener", leaner agency, we are recycling the following quote. It is from the February, 2001, "Mapping Minute".)

*Remember: Everything will be done in its due time. The State just takes longer!*



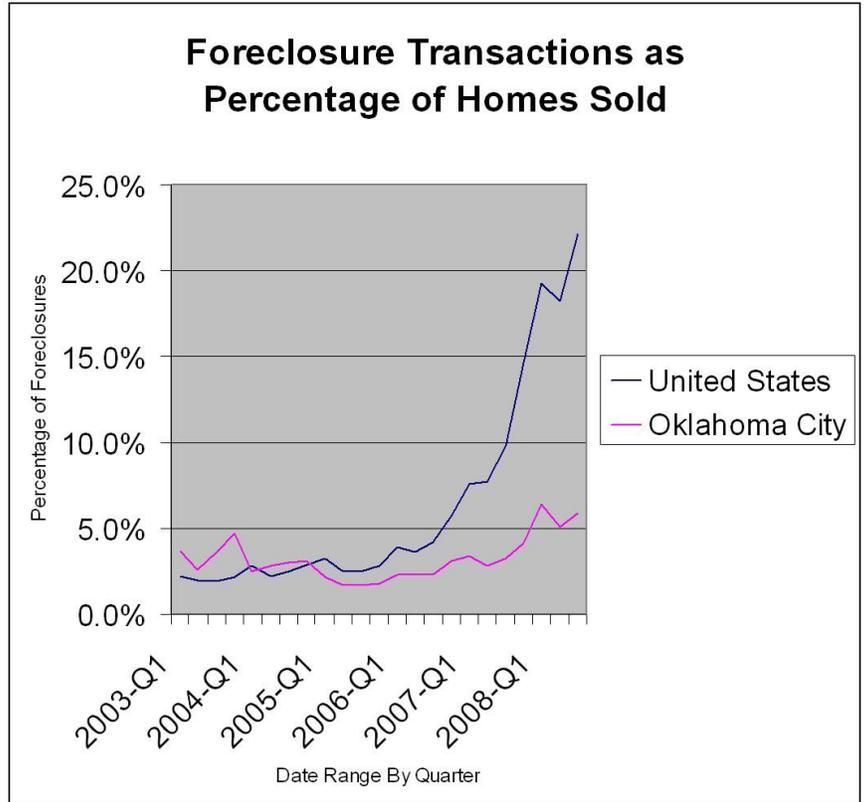


## Oklahoma Markets Weather Storm Thus Far

According to Zillow real estate market reports recently released for the fourth quarter 2008, U.S. home values continued to slide for the eighth consecutive quarter, declining 9.7 percent from a year ago and falling 17.5 percent since the market peak in 2006.

Additionally, one in five homes sold in the past 12 months was a foreclosure, and one in six of all homeowners have negative equity.

Oklahoma markets have fared substantially better. The Oklahoma City MSA reflected a 0.2% increase from one year ago, while the Tulsa MSA reflected steady prices, with no change over the previous year.



Foreclosure percentages in Oklahoma are also substantially lower than national averages, as evidenced by the accompanying graph.

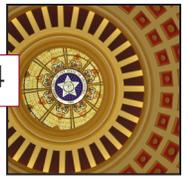
Zillow Real Estate Market Reports track 161 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) throughout the U.S., identifying market trends including, five and 10-year annualized change, homes selling for a loss, negative equity, short sales and foreclosure transactions.

<i>Year Over Year Home Price Index Change Fourth Quarter 2007 To Fourth Quarter 2008</i>	
<b>AREA:</b>	<b>PERCENT CHANGE IN MARKET:</b>
United States	-9.7%
Oklahoma City, OK MSA	0.2%
Tulsa, OK MSA	0.0%
<i>Source: Zillow House Price Index</i>	

### Receive the “Forum” by Email:

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





## Prices Remain Stable for 2008

### Assessor's Office Watching Values for 2009

(News release February 5, 2009)

"While the news regarding the housing market in Oklahoma from national magazines remains optimistic, the assessor's office continues to monitor home values each month to accurately reflect any changes either up or down to ensure county residents are paying the lowest property taxes possible," said Oklahoma County Assessor Leonard Sullivan.

Oklahoma City and Tulsa remain among the nation's Top 25 strongest housing markets despite the slowdown and recent price weakening according to Forbes.com. Forbes is predicting home values to drop 1.1 percent in Tulsa and 2.9 percent in Oklahoma City in 2009.

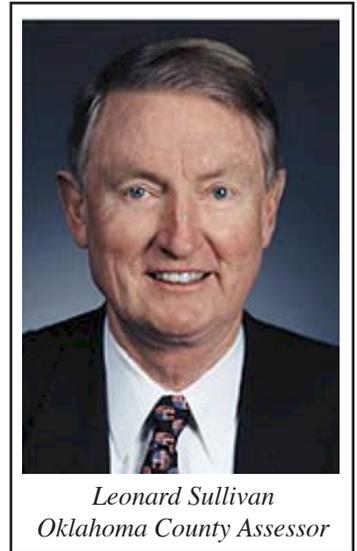
"It's important to remember the assessor's office is required to set the market value of all property each year. That market value is set based on actual sales and other factors from the previous year, so we are always reflecting actual market value data, not predicting future market values," Sullivan said.

"Property values increase or decrease in Oklahoma County depending on market prices of similar properties. Those values are reflected the following year. The market values are set on January 1st of each year, based on the previous year's data," Sullivan said.

"The market value is different than the taxable market value. The taxable market value is limited to a maximum increase per year of 5 percent a year when market forces indicate increases and when they drop, they are reflected as well. The 5 percent limit has saved Oklahoma County residents close to \$500 million in lower property taxes since it went into effect. Despite the possibility market values may drop the taxable market value may still be increasing to catch up with the market," Sullivan said.

Real estate often increases in value over time and is considered a wise investment. The law requires the assessor to reach the goal of the taxable market value being equal to the market value. That may take years to realize because the limit on assessment increases is helping property owners save millions on property taxes until the two figures slowly catch up with each other.

"The growth of values in Oklahoma County has helped promote the idea of reducing the maximum 5% limit on assessments approved by voters back in 1996. This year another effort to reduce the limit will occur, and county officers from around Oklahoma will support legislation to accomplish that goal while still preserving adequate funding for local schools, libraries, law enforcement and other essential mandated county services," Sullivan said.



Leonard Sullivan  
Oklahoma County Assessor

## Assessors' District Meetings Set

Mark your calendar for the spring district meetings of the County Assessors Association which have been set by the district chairs.

**May 1:** NW District Meeting (Eloise McCully, Kingfisher County)

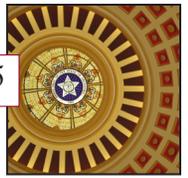
**May 8:** SW District Meeting (Evelyn Bradley, Garvin County)

**May 15:** SE District Meeting (Stan Lyles, McCurtain County)

**May 22:** NE District Meeting (Lisa Melchior, Mayes County)

Watch for more information which will be forthcoming in April.





## Updated Information Available Online

The following forms and guide have been updated recently and are available online at [www.tax.ok.gov](http://www.tax.ok.gov) for your convenience. Go to the "AdValorem" page, then click on "forms" and "general ad valorem forms" to locate the following:

- Manufactured Home Quick Reference Guide Update
- **Form 994** - Application for Property Valuation Limitation and Additional Homestead Exemption
- **Form 998** - Application for 100% Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption
- **Form 998-A** - Application for 100% Disabled Veterans Household Personal Property Tax Exemption
- **Form 901-F** - Freeport Exemption Declaration



The mission of IAAO is to promote innovation and excellence in property appraisal, property tax policy and administration through professional development, education, research, and technical assistance.



## IAAO Chapter Plans Educational Opportunities

The Oklahoma Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers met on February 11, 2009, at the Biltmore Hotel. President Mike Morrison chaired the meeting.

The Chapter discussed upcoming IAAO training opportunities. For more information, contact Doug Warr or Gary Snyder with CLGT.

- Course 101 will be held in Norman, Oklahoma at the Hilton Garden Inn from July 6 - 10, 2009. Marion Johnson will be the instructor.
- Advanced Income Approach to Valuation II will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas, from March 9 - 13, 2009. Rick Stuart will be the instructor.

The Chapter voted to bring a one-day workshop to Oklahoma. The subject chosen will be "House Construction Design Systems". Doug Warr will contact IAAO to get started with preparations for that class.

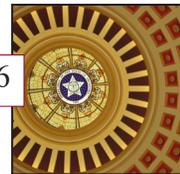
The IAAO Annual Conference will be held September 13 - 15, 2009, at the Galt House Hotel and Suites in Louisville, Kentucky. This is an outstanding educational opportunity well worth the time and effort to attend.

IAAO is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Commemorative pins of the milestone may be purchased for \$8. During the 75th anniversary conference, each state chapter may bring a display booth demonstrating chapter accomplishments and promoting the state's resources. The Oklahoma Chapter will be participating in that opportunity.

Often it is said that IAAO is an international family sharing a common bond as professional associates. The Chapter demonstrated its family ties by making a donation to an IAAO assessor from another state who is suffering an extreme hardship.

The next chapter meeting will be in conjunction with the Annual Educational Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. All are encouraged to attend and learn more about the organization and how it can benefit the assessors' offices.





## February “4C” Meeting

The County Computer Coordination Committee met on February 10, 2009, at the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City for its monthly meeting.

Troy Frazier announced he would be giving a demonstration of the Picture Maintenance Utility Program at the CODA meeting. Preparations are being made to put the program in some test counties with Pittsburg County being the first. Jim Kelley is getting a new server for his back-up system, but he will be ready for the pictures to be tested in his county.

Glen Blood has a program to fix the personal property issue where the name comes up missing once in a while. He explained that Bill Wadsworth is working on coordination of drawings and the F9 screen. Due to budget constraints, the OTC staff will not be available to bring updates to the counties unless already the area. It can be done by telephone communication and may be available on the website, also. Counties are encouraged to contact Glen for assistance.

Scott Warren reported there is a temporary hold on some updates. There is an issue with Report Writer wherein some are using UI instead of UT. Counties that have a lot of changes to make must wait until the tax roll is created to put them on. Some are using the value override screen in CAMA. Then, when a report is run, the numbers are not what are expected. The AA system has a screen which asks “value now or later”. The answer may be to put the improvement in CAMA but have it placed in a future value file. CCAP suggests a committee meet to go over all possibilities which might be encountered and create a procedure for all to follow. This committee will meet at the CCAP office in Stillwater.

It has been discovered some vendors are using CAMA space for dumping data. It has also been discovered in the AA program’s ASCII file. Vendors are not authorized to do this and are being advised to cease this practice. When discovered, the data is being removed. The OTC is documenting its findings to make a distribution list so others will know what needs to be removed.

The last of the old computer servers has failed. It is operational except it fails when a back-up is run. A county is experiencing a laptop that is missing some drives. It was mentioned that flash drives take up a drive letter and sometimes printers take up a drive, also.

Recently five counties have switched to Landmark: Comanche, Wagoner, Payne, Logan and Texas. That leaves four counties on the TerraScan system.

The next 4C meeting will be March 10, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in the AdValorem Division office in Oklahoma City.

## Focus on Greer County

Texas Governor, Sam Houston, signed an act which created Greer County from a portion of Young County, Texas. A land dispute ensued between Texas and Oklahoma which stemmed from a surveyor’s error that mistakenly identified the main channel of the Red River. The dispute was settled by the U. S. Supreme Court and Greer County passed from Texas to Oklahoma in 1896. The county was named for John Alexander Greer, a veteran of the Texas war for independence from Mexico.

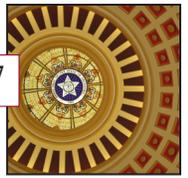
Cowboys were impressed with the tall grass around what is now Mangum and found it an outstanding place to graze cattle on the way to market. Cattle that wouldn’t make it to market were left behind to graze while cowboys stayed nearby in “dugouts” they made in the ground. Great ranches soon sprung up in the area.

The county seat, Mangum, founded in 1884, was named for another Texas war veteran, Captain Aaron S. Mangum, from Atlanta, Georgia. The land was given to Mr. Mangum as a grant from Texas for services rendered to the state during the Mexican War.

Early days in Mangum consisted of a hotel made of a dugout and a tent. A general store served as trading

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post where Indians traded government provided clothing for eatables and ammunition. Unsolded cans were flattened and used for covering the outside of the store, so cowboys called the town “Tin City”.

Mangum citizens undertook a downtown revitalization project which resulted in new businesses, thus increasing the tax base for the entire community. The project provided improvements to parks including a skate park, climbing wall and special areas for tots to play. Future goals include a mural project in recognition of past events in the community and an economic project to assist new businesses that want to locate within the district.

In 1935, Quartz Mountain Park was originally established as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp under the direction of the National Park Service. The park had the benefit of planning by a full corps of men technically trained in all phases of park activity and developments. Today, the popular tourist attraction features a 6,260 lake acres and 4,284 park acres, a resort lodge, Performing Arts complex, camping areas, nature center, water activities and a host of other amenities.

Located in Mangum, Oklahoma, the Old Greer County Museum was established to preserve history and facts about people, places and things that represented this area before Statehood, and provide a lasting memorial for those brave pioneers who carved a home out of an untamed wilderness.

The City of Mangum hosts a variety of local annual events.

- Junior Livestock Show
- Rattlesnake Derby & Flea Market
- Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute
- Antique Car Show
- Fall Arts Institute Workshops
- Greer County Christmas



*The historic Greer County Courthouse is the center of town. The entire square is surrounded by a unique WPA stone wall with corner fountain structures. In the front lawn is a granite plaque with a brief history of the struggle of the Greer County “empire.”*



## Greer County Demographics

**Population:** 6,061

**Area:** 638 square miles

**2008 Real Property Assessed Valuation:** \$20,014,357

**2008 Personal Property Assessed Valuation:** \$3,160,577

