

# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ASSESSOR

## Why do we need him?

- Property Taxes pay for 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of county and city services, and almost 100% of school, fire district, port, library, park and PUD operations.
- Someone needs to figure out how much each of us pay for each of these services.
  - All properties carefully mapped so that we know who receives and who must to pay for which service.
    - **Assessor and Auditor do this**
  - Each taxing district determines their need for property taxes.
    - Done by elected officials or the voters.
    - Cannot exceed the legal limits.
    - **Assessor enforces the law**
  - Levy rate (% of value) computed for each district by dividing dollars required by the market value of the district.
    - **Assessor does the math**
  - Share of the district's property taxes collected from each taxpayer is based on the market value of each property.
    - **Assessor determines your share of the property tax**

## So how is this “market value” based share determined?

- The share is always changing
  - Segregations/subdivisions cause the land ownership to change
  - New homes and other site improvements are built
  - Economic forces cause changes in market value
    - **Assessor keeps track of all changes**
- Segs and New Homes are technically challenging but very Objective
- Economic Forces much trickier to keep track of.
  - Limited number of sales each year
  - Real Estate marketplace can be very irrational
  - All properties are different
    - **Assessor must put a value on all property**
- Property Sales are vitally necessary to determine property value
  - Need to make sure we use “good” sales
  - All 112,000 properties must be categorized in ways that can be useful in comparing the 6000 “good” sales to all other properties.
  - Categories that matter the most:
    - Location (85 neighborhoods)
    - Property Type (improved, unimproved, commercial, waterfront, view)
    - Size (parcel size, improvement size)
    - Age & Condition (depreciation)
    - Quality of the improvements and the views
  - Unique influence factors assigned to specific properties if required.

- **Assessor using a CAMA system factors it all together**

### **How often does the Assessor look at my property?**

- Every year your value can change due to one of three reasons
  - Annual Review
    - Neighborhood by neighborhood comparison of assessed value to sale prices
    - Global adjustments to raise or lower the level of assessment
  - New Construction
    - All permitted improvement work is added to the tax roll based on its completion status on July 31<sup>st</sup> each year.
  - 6-year physical inspection/reappraisal
    - Characteristics, categorizations, influences verified
    - Condition changes noted and recorded
    - Unpermitted improvements added to the tax roll

### **My share of the property tax burden is too high. How do I appeal the Assessor's opinion of value?**

- First step is to contact the Assessor to see if the property characteristics are correct in the assessor database.
  - (360) 337-7160
  - [assessor@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:assessor@co.kitsap.wa.us)
  - <http://www.kitsapgov.com/assr/>
- Second, third and fourth opinions are available.
  - County Board of Equalization
  - State Board of Tax Appeals
  - Superior Court
  - **Assessor is not always right!**

### **Help! I can't afford to pay my property tax share. What do I do?**

- Take advantage of an exemption program, if qualified.
  - Senior Citizen/Disabled with less than \$35,000 of family income.
  - Current Use Exemptions
    - Forest Land, Ag land, Open Space
  - Remodel Exemption—Increase in value deferred for 3 years.
  - **Important to remember: All non-exempt taxpayers pay for exemptions.**
- Let your state and local elected official know how you feel.
  - Attend commission and council meetings
  - Correspond with your REPRESENTATIVES in Olympia
  - Sign and distribute Initiatives and/or Referendums
  - Assemble together with others who have similar views
- **Do not blame the Assessor for your property taxes going up!!!!!!!**
  - Budget based property tax system not rate based

**Check out the Assessor's Web Site**

<http://www.kitsapgov.com/assr>