

TWO NOTICES FROM THE COUNTY - WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Submitted by Carolyn Holmsten, Goodhue County Finance Director

Each spring the county sends property owners two separate pieces of information. Because they arrive about the same time property owners are often confused about the purpose of each of the documents.

The item most people focus on is the Property Tax Statement. There are three factors that affect the information on this statement:

1. The estimated market value of your property
2. The classification of your property
3. The amount your local governments (town, city, county, school, etc.) spend to provide services to their community

Your property tax statements will show the estimated market value of your property AS OF JANUARY 2, 2006. It will also show the main use of the property (residential homestead, agricultural, commercial/industrial, etc.) This classification determines the rate of taxation and how much of the public jurisdiction's levy will be applied to your property; in other words the amount of taxes you will have to pay in the spring and fall of the year. The columns of numbers show the actual amount of taxes you are to pay for owning your property.

Once you receive the property tax statements you are responsible for the amount of taxes assessed. There is no such thing as negotiating to reduce your taxes due as all the governmental units have determined their current budgets based on what you will be paying them and the overall value of the property in the taxing district. Taxes can be paid via the enclosed envelope, in person at the Government Center, 509 W 5th St, Room 204, or they can be paid on-line at www.co.goodhue.mn.us/residents/Propertyinfo.

The other mailing you receive from the county is the Valuation Notice. This is informing the taxpayer what the estimated market value of their property is as of JANUARY 2, 2007 along with the classification and homestead status. It is the value on this document that is used to determine how much you will be paying in taxes a year from now.

If you feel the value of the property shown on the statement or the classification of the use of the property is not correct, now is the time to contact the Assessor's office. Questions can be addressed by the county appraisal staff who will further explain how your values were determined. Should you still not agree with the value assigned to your property you can then attend what is called an annual "Board of Appeals and Equalization" meeting. Townships and cities are all required to hold a meeting where property owners can request the board members change either their value or classification (not the amount of taxes due this spring). The Board has the authority to make a change, leave as is, or pass the decision on to the County Board of Appeals and Equalization. This County's meeting will be held on June 12, 2007 at 9:00 am in the County Board room. This board also has the authority to change a property value or classification.

Once all board meetings are held and decisions finalized, the values of all county property will be used to spread the levies established next fall and winter by the boards of the various taxing entities. These will in turn show up on the Property Tax Statements you receive from the county in the spring of 2008.

Yes, it is an on-going cycle with two different activities happening at the same time. The first includes an amount of money due the county now and the second reflects the value of your property which will establish the amount of money due a year from now.

Please take time to visit the County website at www.co.goodhue.mn.us/departments/assessor and review the dates for the upcoming valuation meetings. Again, feel free to call or stop in to get your questions answered, or call ahead to let us know you are interested in attending your local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting. Prior notice for attendance is not required but certainly will assist in having information available for the board to discuss.

Both the Auditor/Treasurer's office (tax statements- 385.3032) and Assessor/s office (property values - 385.3006) are here to serve you, our customers. Please feel free to contact us with your questions and concerns.