



Ad Val Advisor

The Newsletter
for Wyoming
Property Tax
Appraisers

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♦ Hardware and CAMA ♦ Info. on Fall Classes ♦ CAMA Project Plan ♦ and More...

Ad Valorem Tax Division Newsletter

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From the Director

As the day of TerraScan's first excursion into the pilot counties rapidly approaches, I must confess to a few butterflies about the project that we are undertaking. Did we select the right company? Are we (DOR) up to the task of implementing a project of this magnitude? Will it work? Will we all be speaking with one another after the smoke clears? If I am feeling this way, I can only imagine what you, the County Assessors and your staffs, must be thinking!

The fact is that we are all about to make a dramatic move outside of our comfort zones. The old CAMA systems may be antiquated and held together with chewing gum and bailing wire, but like an old pair of dog-eared slippers that your wife finally throws out when you're not looking, they are still comfortable and functional. Trying to get such a

widely diverse, independent-thinking group of people to all get on board and row in the same direction will not be easy.

So I ask all of you for your patience and perseverance in the upcoming months. I truly believe that about this time next year we are all going to be patting each other on the back and crowing about what a fine CAMA system we have and how we all set aside our differences and pulled together for the good of the State of Wyoming!

Edmund Schmidt
Director
Department of Revenue

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Hardware & CAMA

As the new CAMA project rolls forward, everyone is beginning to talk about the computer hardware that will be installed at each county location. The complete inventory of each office's needs were completed a couple of months ago by Geir Solvang. This research culminated into a definitive count of servers, pen pads, thin clients and printers. This is the count that the Division asked the Assessor to sign off on.

During the past month, Jim Felton, the new CAMA Project Coordinator, has been working closely with TerraScan to create the mechanism for placing each county's hardware order. This has been done to ensure: 1) Each county gets the equipment agreed upon; 2) The title of

ownership of the equipment is transferred to the county; 3) A complete inventory of the receivables are identified and recorded by the Division and; 4) TerraScan gets paid for the equipment received and installed in a timely manner.

The ordering of equipment is very direct. Based on the time period each county is to be installed, Jim Felton will place an order for the agreed upon hardware to TerraScan. TerraScan compares this request to the contract and a detailed invoice is returned to Jim for his final review. Once Jim has verified the invoice for accuracy, he gives his approval to TerraScan and the equipment is ordered. TerraScan will place the order with the computer manufacturer directly.

Delivery for the workstations, thin clients and printers will be shipped directly to the County Assessor. Servers and pen pads will be shipped to TerraScan so that the CAMA software can be installed at their facility in Lincoln, Nebraska. This equipment will arrive in the county to coincide with the arrival of the hardware installation team. Staff members from TerraScan (a.k.a. Automated Systems) will install all of the hardware at the county site. Due to special circumstances, the need may arise to modify this installation procedure somewhat, but those situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Prior to each county hardware delivery, the Assessor will be required to read and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the terms and use of the equipment. The MOU will clarify any expectations

regarding the use and future upkeep of the equipment.

Note, the hardware for Albany County has already been ordered and is proceeding through the system. Here we go!

David Chapman
Local Assessed Manager
Ad Valorem Tax Division

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Ad Valorem Fall Classes

Attention all county staff members attending the Residential Appraisal Workshop this fall! The following is a list of required items to bring to the class.

1. Marshall & Swift Residential Cost Handbook.
2. Calculator
3. 100' Tape measure
4. Note pad.

Failure to bring the above items will not allow you to participate in the class.

Jack and I look forward to seeing all of you during the months of September and October. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Jack @ (307) 777-5313, or me @ (307) 777-5431.

Jeffery B. Moore
Appraiser
Ad Valorem Tax Division

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Ag Land Update

Its that time of year again for the Ag Land Valuation Study data collection. We have received current commodity prices from Wyoming Ag Statistics. Next month, we will get the interest rates from the Farm Credit Services out of Omaha. Shortly thereafter, the Ag Research

Committee will meet to discuss the draft version of the study. So, stay tuned for when the study will be completed and available.

Robert Eicher
I.T. Specialist
Ad Valorem Tax Division

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CAMA Project Plan

For those of you who have not seen the CAMA project plan, it can be viewed and downloaded at <http://wydor.taxesifter.com>. It contains all the planned start and finish dates of each individual task in the pilot counties (Albany and Uinta), as well as tentative roll-out dates for the remaining jurisdictions. The tentative schedule should be considered a roadmap that gives everyone an idea of what needs to be done, and approximately how long it will take. Plans of this kind are referred to as "living" plans where the schedule is constantly adjusted based on the rate of progress and the occurrence of unforeseen events. Questions about the project plan should be directed to Jim Felton.

Geir Solvang
Appraiser
Ad Valorem Tax Division

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Special Districts Update

As you know, the status of special districts in the State has changed recently with revisions to the relevant statutes. In Thermopolis at the WCAA Convention, I spoke about some of the methods the Department of Revenue is using to comply. One of the projects we started in October 2002 was a complete inventory and scanning of all documents within each

special district file for every County. This project has been time-consuming and is now nearly complete. Thus far, we have discovered that there are over 6,000 documents and maps; however, they are not evenly distributed among the special district files. In fact, many districts have incomplete information. Once the initial phase of this project is complete, we will be able to provide all of the Counties with a list of those districts that have incomplete information in their files.



At the end of July and the beginning of August, we sent letters to Assessors, Clerks, County Commissioners, and special districts regarding the statute changes. There were two different letters, one sent to County officials, and one geared toward the special districts. Both letters were very similar and provided the same statutory references and information. We have received a lot of feedback from the districts, both positive and somewhat negative. Thus far, we have received additional maps and documents from a handful of districts. We are encouraged about the progress of receiving additional information from the districts.

We are also in the process of modifying our Tax District database to accommodate "Notices of Compliance." There will be three levels of compliance for a district: Compliance, Non-Compliance, and Conditional Compliance. Conditional Compliance is given to a district when they have an adequate map and a legal description that accurately describes their boundary, but they are missing a resolution. Technically, the district can be mapped, but a minor detail keeps them from complete compliance. In the cases where a district is unable to furnish a resolution, a letter signed by a member of their board indicating the actual or approximate date of formation is acceptable. For this year, we will distribute letters to the

districts, but they will be worded to recommend compliance by January 1, 2005. We will be distributing reports of districts that comply and do not comply to the County Assessors, Commissioners, and the State Board of Equalization.

Thank you for your continued support with the special districts. We would not be successful without your help. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sarah Sitterle
GIS Coordinator
Ad Valorem Tax Division



Employee Spotlight

For our fifth issue, we decided to choose Susann Anderson for our Employee Spotlight. Little did we know at that time that she would be leaving Ad Valorem for the enchanted world of retirement by the end of this month. So, without further ado, here is a brief insight into the life and times of one of the Department of Revenue's longest-tenured employees.



Susann began her career in Ad Valorem in 1987 as a Management Information Specialist, although her employment with Revenue began in 1966. When Susann started, she worked as a Coding Clerk, earning a whopping \$230.00 a month, which she says was more than enough to pay for her apartment and car! After that, she became a File Clerk where she filed drivers license applications, and did insurance searches for suspended licenses. Then Susann moved up to working in Financial Responsibility where she was promoted to Work Leader, supervising five employees. While there, she suspended drivers' licenses for drunk drivers, testified in

court, and in her spare time, issued drivers' licenses. After leaving Financial Responsibility, Susann moved over to the Hearing Examiner's Office, where she gave limited driving privileges to drunk drivers whose licenses were suspended. Following her employment at the Hearing Examiner's Office, Susann made the move over to Ad Valorem. Since working for Ad Valorem, Susann was promoted to a Principal Appraiser. When asked what she likes most about her job, Susann replied, "I like working with the Counties the most. They're like family – they treat you like family, and you treat them like family."

Before starting with Revenue, Susann worked on a ranch putting up sheep fence and worked the rodeo bull-dogging chutes in Chugwater. Following her rodeo stint, Susann worked for a jewelry store company for a month.

Susann was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and raised in 43 of the 48 contiguous United States. She mentioned that her dad was a pipe fitter and they moved around frequently. When Susann and her family moved to Chugwater in 1959, it was the first school she attended for two years in a row in her life! After high school, Susann moved to Laramie where she attended the University of Wyoming for a year, and for two years following, took night courses. While attending UW, she majored in Engineering Graphics and Education. Then she was offered a job with Boeing, who would pay for the rest of her schooling, but decided instead to marry and stay in Cheyenne.

Susann wanted to mention George, her wonderful husband of over 36 years, as well as her mother and father in Oklahoma, her five half-brothers, two of whom remain, and oodles of nieces and nephews. In her spare time, Susann enjoys weaving, spinning, oil painting, quilting, sewing, stained glass, and learning to play a mountain dulcimer.

Susann wanted to close her biography with a phrase that is special to her: "Eat Well, Laugh Often, Love Deeply".

Favorite Movie(s): Cleopatra
Mouse Hunt
Shrek

Favorite Food(s): Green Chile
Fried Okra
Margaritas (really!)

Sarah Sitterle
GIS Coordinator
Ad Valorem Tax Division



Upcoming IAAO Courses

9/23/03 – 9/25/03
IAAO Course 151
Standards of Practice &
Professional Ethics,
Casper, WY

10/6/03 – 10/10/03
IAAO Course 400
Assessment Administration,
Casper, WY



Personnel News

*f*rom Susann Anderson

As most of you know by now, the 26th of September will be my last working day for the Department of Revenue.

It is very hard to imagine that I will not be getting up and coming in to this place in just a few days. Of course, when it is snowing and blowing up to your eyeballs, it won't be hard at all – sorry about that!

I just figured it out; I have made the drive to the Department approximately 9,664 times, and I didn't count the trips to A & I in the evenings when some of the program runs went up side down.

With all that said, I am really looking forward to getting a chance to do some weaving and spinning with an old fashion spinning wheel. I might even get a couple of oil paintings finished, along with a few other things.

But, I will still miss all of you. You always made my day with your telephone calls; yes, even the system problem calls. Thank you for allowing me to be a small portion of your lives, and for being a big portion of my life for so very many years.

George and I hope to get out on our motorcycles and do a little touring around the country. So don't be surprised if we stop by sometime!

Susann

*W*orld Headlines - 1973

- Senate Committee Begins Watergate Hearings
- OPEC Imposes Oil Embargo
- The State of Wyoming Hires James R. Felton
- Last US Combat Troops Leave Vietnam
- Elvis Gives Priscilla \$750,000 in Divorce Settlement

As you can see, one of the major events that happened in 1973 was Jim Felton coming on board with the Wyoming State Government. Jim will hit thirty years of service on 10/01/2003!

Three decades is a good chunk of time. To put it in perspective, consider these facts: In 1973, the US median household income was \$10,512, the cost of a first class stamp was \$0.08, the cost of a gallon of regular gas was \$0.39, and the average cost of a new US home was \$35,500.

We've seen a lot of changes in the last thirty years, and one can only imagine the magnitude of transformation Jim has dealt with during his time at the State. Please join us in congratulating Jim on his 30th anniversary!