



# Ad Val Advisor

The Newsletter  
for Wyoming  
Property Tax  
Appraisers

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♦ Bi-Levels in RealWare

♦ MS Access: Part II (continued)

**Property Tax Division Newsletter**

Contact: Geir Solvang

Herschler Building

122 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street

Cheyenne, WY 82002-0110

**Director**

Edmund J. Schmidt

**Staff**

Wade Hall, Administrator

David Chapman, Technical Services Manager

Ken Uhrich, Appraisal Services Manager

Phone (307) 777-5200

FAX (307) 777-7527

Internet Address:

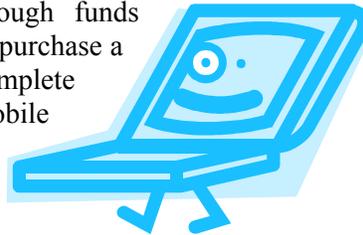
<http://revenue.state.wy.us>

## From the Administrator

People who know me fairly well tell me that I can be pretty "tight" with a dollar. They're probably right, though I prefer the term "frugal." My parents taught me from an early age that if I was frugal with my money, I would have some available for that "rainy day" or to buy that thing that I really wanted. Well, not surprisingly, my frugality has extended to my management of the Property Tax Division. Here at the Division we have been pretty aggressive over the past couple of years about managing costs. While frugality is sometimes not well-rewarded in governmental accounting and budgeting, it still makes sense. For one thing, I believe the taxpayers should get the biggest bang for their buck. For another, as in our own households, saving money means that there may be some

resources to do something not originally contemplated or thought to be feasible. I am about to tell you about one of those cases.

Thanks to our cost savings here at the Division—made possible by both Division staff efforts and the Assessors' efforts at controlling legacy computer costs—we have saved enough funds to purchase a complete mobile



computer training "lab." Better yet, we were able to purchase the equipment and software *now*, rather than later—it's already here being unpacked, configured, and loaded with the software. We had been, up until now, "borrowing" the Colorado CustomWare equipment that we had used for the "hands-on" computer classes offered in the last few months. We very much appreciate CCI's willingness to allow this use of their equipment, but we knew it could not be a long-term arrangement.

Having our own equipment will offer several big advantages. First, we will have available twelve "beefy" laptops capable of running RealWare, SPSS, and the full suite of Microsoft applications (including Access), all of which will be loaded on the machines. A companion server (also beefy) was purchased that will be capable of running RealWare. To top it all off, the lab will be outfitted with a wireless network to simplify both setup and operation. The lab will be a dandy.

The second nice thing about our new lab is that the Division will not be dependent on someone else's schedule to use the equipment. The equipment is ours—dedicated for training use, so availability should be much more flexible.

Third, and a big advantage for the Assessors, will be that—because the Division has control of the logistics of the equipment—offering classes in locales other than Cheyenne should be much more practical. Before, we were pretty much "saddled" with having classes in close proximity (i.e., Cheyenne) to CCI in Fort Collins in order to use their equipment. We will be much more able to "take our show on the road" from here on out.

I don't see anything wrong with trying to get the best value for our dollars—especially, as in this case, when it translates into being able to do something very positive for the counties in terms of training and assistance. To that end, I will continue practicing my "frugal" ways.

Wade W. Hall  
Administrator  
Property Tax Division

# Bi-Levels in RealWare

The Appraisal Services Group was recently asked why there are three (3) Bi-Level choices in the BltAs drop down box in the improvement detail screen. The options are; Bi-Level, Bi-Level 1 Story and Bi-Level 2 Story. We visited with CCI Support to find out which Bi-Level is the appropriate one for Wyoming users, and why there are three choices in the system.

**The correct BltAs for a Bi-Level is just the Bi-Level (2).** This may be confusing as the current Marshall & Swift book refers to 2 Story Bi-Level, but the cost for the drop down BltAs code for the Bi-Level 2 Story (4) is pulling the cost from the 2 Story cost tables.

The reason why three (3) choices exist in RealWare is due to a change in Marshall & Swift Bi-Level descriptions since the 1991 Cost Manual. A portion of the description of the Two Story Bi-Level in the 1991 manual reads as follows: *“For Bi-Levels with no finish on the lower level, use the One Story with a basement. For Bi-Levels with a completely finished lower level, use a Two Story cost table”*. CCI has clients that are still using those codes so they could not remove them. The current Marshall & Swift Cost Manual description for Bi-Levels has a portion that reads: *“Enter the cost table with the square footage of the above grade floor area only. For the lower level use the appropriate cost (type and square footage) from the Basement*

*cost table and add for the amount of finish”*.

According to CCI Support this is an example of why the BltAs and/or Occupancy codes do not always match the Marshall & Swift Cost Manual. When Marshall & Swift changes their codes and/or descriptions, CCI normally can not change their internal look-up codes since this would require any client using those codes to change it in their data.

I hope that this will help clear up any questions that all of you may have about the Bi-Levels.

Joyln Stotts  
Principal Appraiser  
Property Tax Division

The screenshot shows the RealWare software interface. The main window is titled "Improvement Details" and displays a form for entering property and improvement information. The "Account #", "Parcel #", and "Building # 1" are visible. The "Blt As" dropdown is set to "Ranch 1 Story". The "Cost" tab is selected, showing a total cost of \$82,970. The interface includes various input fields for occupancy, quality, and other details, as well as a table for listing improvements and their costs.

Account #	Parcel #	MH#	Seq	Acct Type	Bldgs	Bldg ID	Prop Type	Value By	Approach	Appr Ini	Appr Date	Tax Year
R0004291	5182-34-3-22-009			Residential	2	1	Residential	SF	Cost			2006

Occupancy	% Abst	% Lnd	% Cmp	Blt As	Blt As SF	Mob Hm	MhTitle
Single Family Res	100%	10101	100%	Ranch 1 Story	1,080		

User	Basement	SF	Type	Desc	SF	Appliance	#	Plumbing	#
			Porch	End Solid V	190			Bath 3	1
			Porch	Open Slab	782			Total Fixtures	2
			Porch	Slab Roof	24			Rough In	1
			Storage	Wood	96				
			Storage	Wood	120				

Add On Description	Units	\$/Unit	OR?	Actual	RCNLD	\$/ SF	Des %	0%	Func %	-\$	0%	\$/ \$0
RCN		\$0					Ext %	0%	Eco %	-\$	0%	\$0
Phys Depr		\$0					Int %	0%	Othr %	-\$	0%	\$0
RCN-Addons		\$0					Am %	0%				
Landscp		\$0										\$0

Land	Cost	Market	Income	Reconcile
\$35,270	\$82,970	\$0	\$0	\$0

## A 3-Part Introduction to Microsoft's Popular Database Application

### Part II: Working With Microsoft Access

This installment is a continuation of last month's article, "Part II: Working with Microsoft Access." In this continuation we will focus on the introductory technical elements of Query design.

Tables may be the foundation of a database, but for users working with a database that has already been developed and distributed; *queries* are probably the most important object in the database model. As we discussed in Part I, a query uses a standard database language SQL (Structured Query Language) to search for and extract a sample of data based on user defined criteria and parameters. This allows database users to analyze and manipulate their data, which is what really gives the data its value.

In working with MS Access Queries, there are three basic views available: Design View, Datasheet View and SQL View. Access provides two basic methods for creating a query: using a wizard and through design view. As with tables, the Query Wizard asks the user a series of questions and then creates a basic query based upon that user input.

However, creating a query through design view provides the user much more flexibility. Figure 2.1 shows us an example of a query in design view:

Design View is broken down into two separate "panes." The uppermost pane shows the underlying table(s) the query is based on. For example, in this case our query is based on one table: "2005Values." However, a query can be based on many tables as long as those tables are related in some way. The lower of the two panes, often referred to as the *design grid* is where the query is actually built. In the design grid, the user specifies which fields the query should display and any criteria, parameters or sorting used to limit those results. For example, in this

query we have indicated that we want to see all "ACCOUNTNO's," except for those beginning with the letter "C." We used the statement "Not Like" to indicate that we wanted text results that did not match our criteria ("C\*"). By using the *wildcard character* "\*", we've indicated that we want results that begin with a "C" and can contain any number of characters after the "C." In the opposite case, if we wanted only values ending in "C," we would say "\*C."

As you can see, the design grid within design view provides a lot of flexibility in query building. In fact, there are several methods with which a user can add fields to the design grid. For example, a user can: "double-click" the field in the table pane, "click and drag" the field from the table pane or expand a "drop-down list" of fields from the design grid. There are also a multitude of criteria, functions and sorting options that can be applied in the design grid. We will discuss a few of these in greater detail in "Part III: More Complex Queries."

The other two views available when working with queries are *datasheet view* as seen in Figure 2.2 and *SQL view* as seen in figure 2.3 on the next page.

Datasheet view, similar to the datasheet view from tables, displays the data in spreadsheet-like format. This view shows the results of the query as it was built in design view. The fields will appear in the order they were added to the design grid and the data will be sorted according to the user-defined criteria or parameters.

SQL view shows the programming language the query is based on. SQL, Structured Query Language, uses key statements to query data fields within the database. For example, in Figure 2.3 our query uses the basic SQL command "SELECT." This command lets the database know that we want to build a sample dataset to be viewed and analyzed. This statement is not used

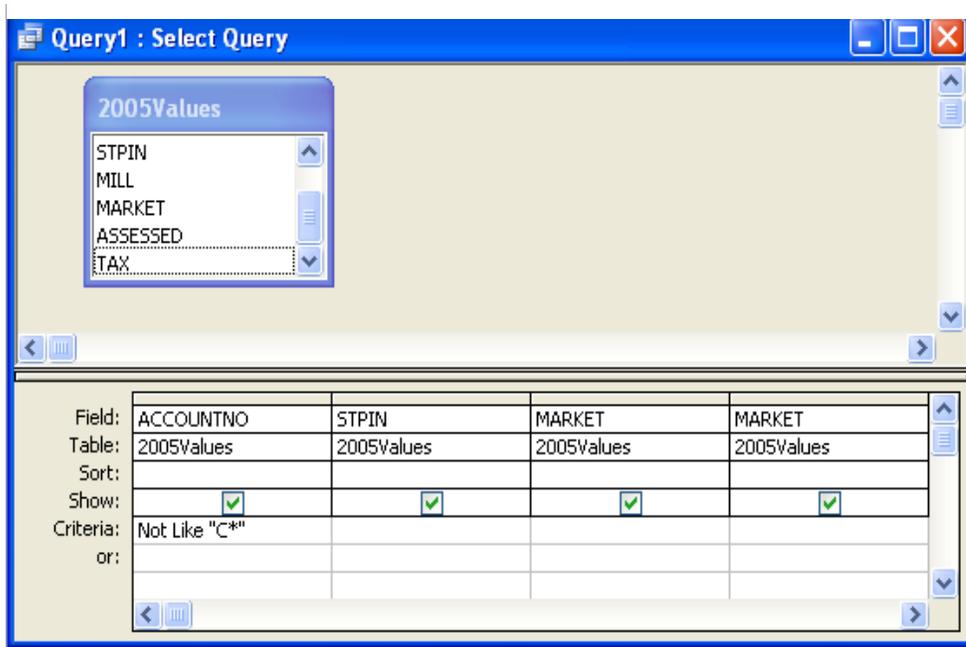


Figure 2.1 (MS Access query in design view)

for any data manipulation. Queries that manipulate data are known as *action queries* within MS Access (they use statements like: “INSERT INTO,” “UPDATE” and “DELETE”). We will discuss these types of queries in “**Part III: More Complex Queries.**” After the SELECT statement in Figure 2.3 we identify which fields (from which tables/queries) we want to include in our query. The syntax to use here is: [table].field (e.g. [2005Values].ACCOUNTNO). Next we indicate which table(s) we are selecting these records from. To do this we use the statement “FROM” (e.g. FROM 2005Values). Finally, any user defined criteria will be specified using the “WHERE” statement.

It is also important to note that in addition to writing a valid SQL

statement, Access also gives you the ability to “copy and paste” a valid SQL statement into a new query. This is important for our Wyoming County Assessors because our current CAMA vendor (Colorado CustomWare Inc.) often posts examples of queries on their support website. The Assessor can then copy these statements from the support website and paste them into the SQL view of a new query. The Assessor can then easily customize that query to meet their individual needs using the design grid in design view.

We have begun to examine how basic queries are designed. In our final installment of our introduction to MS Access: “**Part III: More Complex Queries,**” we will look at query building in greater detail. This will include an introduction to the different types of

queries (Select, Action, etc.), basic criteria, functions and sorting/filtering our results.

David Ray  
Appraiser  
Property Tax Division

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ACCOUNTNO	ASSESSED	TAX	MARKET
P0000005	279	19.11	2937.00
P0000006	69	4.73	726.00
R0000007	2174	148.92	22884.00
R0000008	11348	777.34	119453.00
M0000009	2803	192.01	29505.00
R0000010	31361	2148.23	330116.00
R0000011	812	55.62	8647.00
R0000012	1424	97.54	14989.00
R0000013	40678	2786.44	428189.00
R0000015	1735	118.85	18263.00
R0000016	485	33.22	5105.00
R0000017	374	25.62	3937.00
R0000018	393	26.92	4137.00
R0000019	618	42.33	6505.00
M0000020	1701	116.52	17905.00

Figure 2.2 (MS Access query in datasheet view)

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```
SELECT [2005Values].ACCOUNTNO, [2005Values].ASSESSED, [2005Values].TAX,
[2005Values].MARKET
FROM 2005Values
WHERE ((([2005Values].ACCOUNTNO) Not Like "C*"));
```

Figure 2.3 (MS Access query in SQL view)

## Quote of the Month

“Part of the inhumanity of the computer is that, once it is competently programmed and working smoothly, it is completely honest.”

Isaac Asimov

**Upcoming  
Property Tax Division  
Sponsored Education**

**06/27/06 - 06/29/06**  
"Access for Assessors"  
Cheyenne, WY

**07/13/06**  
Sales Verification and  
Sales Time Trending  
Laramie, WY

**08/07/06 - 08/11/06**  
IAAO Course 311  
Residential Modeling Concepts  
Rock Springs, WY

**08/22/06 - 08/25/06**  
SPSS/LEA  
Cheyenne, WY

**09/11/06 - 09/13/06**  
Uniform Standards of Professional  
Practice/Code of Ethics  
Casper, WY

**9/14/06**  
Uniform Standards of Professional  
Practice/Code of Ethics-Refresher  
Casper, WY

**10/02/06 - 10/06/06**  
Wyoming Agricultural Land  
Riverton, WY

**10/17/06 - 10/18/06**  
CCI/DOR Follow-Up Training  
(3<sup>rd</sup> tier implemented counties)  
Cheyenne, WY

**11/13/06 - 11/17/06**  
IAAO Course 601  
Advanced Mapping Methods and  
Applications  
Douglas, WY

**11/13/06 - 11/17/06**  
Basic Appraisal of Public Utilities  
Cheyenne, WY

**12/04/06 - 12/07/06**  
Personal Property - Marshall &  
Swift Residential - Depreciation and  
Effective Age - Mapping for Tax  
Districts and Special Districts.

**12/12/06 - 12/13/06**  
"Access for Assessors"  
Buffalo, WY

**01/09/07 - 01/11/07**  
New Assessor Orientation  
Cheyenne, WY

**01/22/07 - 01/26/07**  
IAAO Course 101  
Fundamentals of Real Property  
Appraisal  
Thermopolis, WY

For information on classes,  
please contact  
Jim Felton at (307) 777-5438, or  
email: [jfelto@state.wy.us](mailto:jfelto@state.wy.us)