



# COMMISSIONER LUANN RIDGEWAY

## APPEALING YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT



If you are a real estate property owner, at some point you have probably received a property assessment notice in the mail. Perhaps you disagreed with the assessment, but you weren't sure if there was anything you could do about it. There is. If you believe your property was unfairly assessed, you have a right to appeal. This handout lays out all the steps you need to take as a resident of Clay County to appeal a property assessment. If you need any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office. My staff would be happy to help you find the information you need or help explain the property assessment appeal process to you in further detail.

***\*Please note: Even if you have a mortgage, you pay property taxes. It is your responsibility (not your mortgage company) to appeal your reassessment.***

## UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

### **What is assessment?**

Assessment is the process of placing value on a property to determine the amount of property taxes owed. Reassessment is an update of all real property assessments, conducted by the county assessor to equalize values among taxpayers and to adjust values to current market conditions.

### **How often is property assessed?**

Real estate is assessed every two years (odd-numbered years).

### **Why is reassessment necessary?**

By law, all property tax assessments must be based upon market value and be uniform within the same class or sub-class of property. Over time, the value of property may change, depending upon its nature, location and other factors such as improvements made to the property. Some values change more rapidly than others. Reassessment is the only way to be sure that the taxpayer is being taxed fairly, and is taxed the same as other comparable properties.

The economy of the entire community also affects your appraised value. If the economy is strong, thereby increasing the value of property on the market, it will be reflected in increased property values. Conversely, if the economy is weak, creating a soft or lower real estate market, these values will be reflected in the appraisal.

### **Who is responsible for reassessing property?**

The county assessor is primarily responsible for assessing property

within the county to make sure that the tax burden is equally distributed among all property owners. This is accomplished by distributing the burden according to the market value of the properties. However, the assessor's work is subject to review by the county Board of Equalization and the State Tax Commission. The State Tax Commission is the state agency charged with general supervision of assessors and enforcing property tax laws.

### **How does my assessed valuation affect property taxes?**

The overall amount of real estate taxes to be collected in your community is determined, not by the assessor or any single government official, but by all local governments providing services in your community such as your municipality, school, park and library districts. That is why it is important to be aware of any proposed increases in spending by your local governments. On the other hand, the assessed valuation of your property does determine your share of those taxes. It is important, therefore, that your assessed valuation be accurate and fair.

### **Who are the taxing districts in Clay County?**

Schools, mental health facilities, health centers, fire districts, ambulance districts, road districts, water districts, hospital districts and library districts, to name a few. Your property location determines which districts receive your tax dollars. You receive a separate city tax bill.

**CONTACT COMMISSIONER LUANN RIDGEWAY**

**816-407-3613** ◦ [lridgeway@claycountymo.gov](mailto:lridgeway@claycountymo.gov) ◦ [www.claycountymo.gov/ridgeway](http://www.claycountymo.gov/ridgeway)

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHANGE-OF-VALUE NOTICE

**Legal Description:** Summarized due to limitations of space, this may be a lot and block description (subdivision) or metes and bounds, which is commonly found with acreage tracts of land.

**Parcel ID:** This number is assigned by the county assessor to an individual parcel of land for identification purposes only and has no legal significance.

**Property Class:** This tells you the type of property being assessed, either residential, agricultural or commercial.

**Assessed Value:** The estimated market value of your property is determined by analyzing sales information of similar homes in your area, property improvements, property condition and other factors. Your residential property then receives an assessed valuation of 19% of its estimated market value. For example, an estimated market value of \$100,000 would calculate to an assessed valuation of \$19,000. Your notice gives you the previous and current assessed value for your property.



## CLAY COUNTY ASSESSOR CHANGE-OF-VALUE NOTICE

April 2011

PROPERTY CLASS	PREVIOUS MARKET VALUE	CURRENT MARKET VALUE	PREVIOUS ASSESSED	CURRENT ASSESSED
RESIDENTIAL	171,600	169,600	32,600	32,220
AGRICULTURAL	0	0	0	0
COMMERCIAL	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	171,600	169,600	32,600	32,220

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
OR AN APPOINTMENT  
PLEASE CALL  
407-3510

PARCEL ID: [REDACTED]

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: S16A NW1/4 SE1/4 EXC ROW

14-410-00-01-004.00

PROPERTY LOCATION: [REDACTED]

Dear Property Owner:

This is your **Change-of-Value Notice** required by state law; **this is not a tax bill**. A change of assessed value will affect the amount of your property tax bill in December.

Properties in the county have been classified as residential, agricultural, or commercial and then appraised based on their true value in money. "True value in money" is the price a property would bring if it were offered for sale on the open market.

Property taxes *cannot* be determined until the levies are set by various taxing jurisdictions in September. Property classification and assessment rates are set by state law and *cannot* be adjusted by the Assessor.

Residential properties are assessed at 19% of appraised value.  
Agricultural properties are assessed at 12% of appraised value.  
Commercial properties are assessed at 32% of appraised value

### \*ABATED PROPERTY

State statute 99.800--99.865, Tax Increment Financing diverts local and state taxes on public and private development projects to pay development costs. Statute 135.200, Enterprise Zones, offsets state income tax liability of businesses creating new jobs and \$100,000 investments in designated areas. Statute 353.110, Urban Redevelopment Corporations Law, exempts ad valorem taxes for purpose of construction of industrial, commercial, residential, or public structures.

*ABATED PROPERTY		
STATUTE	PARCELS	VALUE
99.800	3749	1,058,498,042
135.200	28	109,674,125
353.110	31	59,873,600

**Market Value:** Market value, true value in money and appraised value have the same meaning under Missouri law. A simple definition of market value is the price the property would bring when offered for sale by a person who is willing, but not obligated, to sell it, and is bought by a person who is willing to purchase it, but who is not forced to do so. Your notice gives you the previous and current market value of your property.

**Assessment Percentages:** The real estate tax depends on the levy rate in the community in which you live. Real estate for residential property is calculated at 19% of market value. Commercial property is calculated at 32% of market value. Agricultural property is based on 12% of productivity value. None of the revenue that is collected by the county collector goes to county government. Most of these monies (88%) go to your local school districts.

# GENERAL ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

All Clay County Assessor's offices are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Liberty Office, 1 Courthouse Square, Liberty, MO 64068  
816-407-3500  
E-mail: [assessor@claycogov.com](mailto:assessor@claycogov.com)  
Website: [www.claycountymogov/assessor](http://www.claycountymogov/assessor)

Westside Annex, 1901 NE 48th St., Kansas City, MO 64118  
816-407-3470

Mapping Division, 234 W. Shrader, Liberty, MO 64068  
816-407-3370

You should also submit supporting documentation for your appeal, such as a copy of a recent sales contract, recent appraisal from an accredited firm, or repair estimates with photos, and income and expense information for commercial properties. Bring any of the above information with you to your informal hearing or mail to: Attn. Annabelle, Clay County Assessor's Office, 1 Courthouse Square, Liberty, MO 64068.



## HOW DOES REASSESSMENT AFFECT MY TAXES?

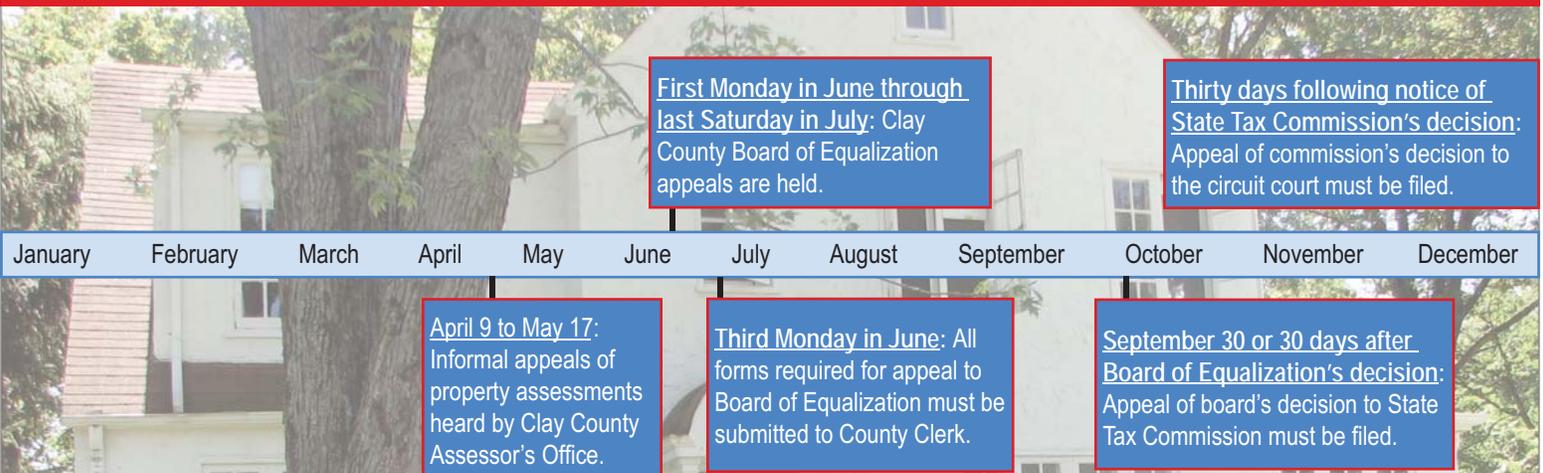
The answer is: It depends. An increase in assessed value probably means your property taxes will increase, but not in all cases. If you believe the market value of your property as stated on your reassessment notice is too high, you should immediately begin the process to appeal your property assessment.

## THE VALUE OF MY PROPERTY WENT DOWN, BUT MY TAXES STAYED THE SAME OR WENT UP. WHY?

The amount of taxes you pay is made up of two components: the assessed value of your property and the tax rates set by your individual taxing authorities, such as school and fire districts. The assessor is required by law to establish the fair market value of property as of January 1 of the reassessment year, which is every other year in the odd year (such as 2011 and 2013). Taxing authorities set their own rates according to their budgetary needs and voter approval.

If property values in their district go down, then taxing entities may choose to roll up their rates to make up for the loss in value up to a certain amount. A taxing entity may modify its tax rate, not to exceed its maximum authorized voter-approved levy, through the adoption of an ordinance, resolution or policy statement in a non-reassessment year. In contrast, taxing entities must roll back their tax rate to the prior year's tax rate in reassessment years regardless of whether or not they are at their tax rate ceiling.

## TIMELINE FOR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT APPEAL PROCESS



### Can I appeal in a non-reassessment year, too?

Yes, you can file an appeal to the Board of Equalization. However, since reassessment happens every two years, the economic conditions of January 1 of the reassessment year apply to all appeals. That means, even if the real estate market went down after January 1 of the reassessment year, it may not have an impact on the value of your property.

### Can I appeal my tax amount?

No, you cannot appeal your tax amount. Your tax amount is determined by the tax rates set by various taxing authorities such as school districts, fire districts, sewer authority and cultural districts. But you can appeal the assessor's estimate of value for your property.



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## APPEALING YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT



If you disagree with your property's value as assessed by the Clay County Assessor, you have a right to appeal your property tax assessment. The process involves three basic steps: 1) Informal hearing with the Clay County Assessor's staff (not required); 2) Clay County Board of Equalization appeal; and 3) State Tax Commission of Missouri appeal. These steps are described in further detail below:

- 1 Informal Appeal:** The Clay County Assessor's office hears informal appeals of property assessments from April 6, 2013, through May 17, 2013 but you need to contact the Assessor's office no later than May 13, 2013 for an appointment, phone 816-407-3510. This step isn't required, but if you would like an informal hearing, call the office to schedule an appointment.
- 2 Clay County Board of Equalization Appeal:** This mandatory step begins the formal appeal process. To appeal to the Board of Equalization, you must request the necessary forms from the Clay County Clerk's office (phone 816-407-3573) and then return all of the forms to the Clerk no later than June 17, 2013. Board of Equalization appeals begin in July.
- 3 State Tax Commission Appeal:** After your case is heard by the Board of Equalization, you may also appeal to the State Tax Commission if you are unhappy with the board's decision. To do so, you must file the appeal within 30 days of the board's decision or by September 30, whichever is later. For more information, such as requirements for filing an appeal, grounds for filing an appeal and preparing for and presenting your case, visit the State Tax Commission's website at [www.stc.mo.gov](http://www.stc.mo.gov) or call 573-751-1715.
- 4 What If I Still Don't Agree with the Decision?:** If you're still unsatisfied with the decision made by the State Tax Commission, it's possible to appeal the decision to the Clay County Clerk of Circuit Court. The appeal must be filed within 30 days of the mailing or delivery of notice of the commission's decision. In limited circumstances, decisions of the circuit court regarding property assessments may be appealed in the same manner as all other civil appeals. Remember: A change-of-value will only be made at any point in the appeal process if you can demonstrate that the appraised value does not accurately reflect the property's true value.

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