

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF APPRAISER

State law and the state constitution require the valuing of property at market value, and the prices of all types of property have shown large increases throughout the state. The massive immigration to Texas from other states and the demand for housing has even caused higher prices in the smaller communities of Texas such as Beeville. Likewise, commercial properties have also shown increases indicated by recent local sales.

So why does the appraisal district have to increase the values? Again, state law requires each appraisal district in Texas to be within 95% of market value or local schools are faced with reduced state funding. That came close to happening in Beeville ISD this year, and only because an appeal was successful, did they keep from losing \$700,000 in state funding.

Even though the values are rising, it does not mean that the tax bills will rise. Truth in taxation requires that each tax unit begins its tax rate setting process in August by calculating an "effective tax rate" that will raise the same amount of taxes that were raised in the prior year. As values go up, the tax rate goes down. If the tax unit needs additional revenue to keep up with rising inflation or other issues, they must hold public hearings to raise the tax rate above the effective rate. All of that process will be done in August and September and the public will have an opportunity to express their concern over any increase.

Another area of protection for those who have a homestead is the limit of a 10% increase of the value. Values cannot rise more than 10% from the prior year. Additionally, persons who are over 65 or disabled will not see their school and county taxes rise at all on their homestead. After a person turns 65 or is declared disabled, the amount of school tax freezes unless their home is improved by adding square footage.

What we would suggest is that each taxpayer ask themselves, "Could I sell my property for the amount that the appraisal district is proposing?" If the answer is "yes", then you have probably been treated fairly. If the answer is "no", then the owner should file a protest form which is included with this notice.

Taxpayers will have the opportunity to discuss the value with a representative of the company that does the appraisals for the district. If the taxpayer has evidence of value such as a fee appraisal, a recent closing statement, pictures of the interior of the home showing problems, or repair estimates for structural issues, those kinds of evidence are very helpful. If a resolution of the value cannot be agreed upon, the taxpayer will have the right to go before the Appraisal Review Board for a formal appeal where evidence of value will be presented by both parties. The ARB will rule based on the preponderance of the evidence presented.

If the taxpayer wishes to discuss their value informally, they should file a written protest form to ensure that their rights are protected and they will have the opportunity to meet with an appraiser informally prior to their scheduled ARB hearing. We are not trying to raise values to raise money for local tax units. We are raising values because sales indicate that the values in the past have been too low. However, if we are wrong, we will gladly make appropriate changes based on evidence. Our goal is to have all properties appraised at market value.

Richard Petree, Interim Chief Appraiser, Bee CAD