

Area property values increase 10 percent

Boring, Damascus and Sandy area property values have increased 10 percent, according to trending figures released this week by Clackamas County officials.

Reappraisal district six, which includes all of Boring and Sandy and a portion of Damascus, has had an average residential property value increase of 10 percent, Juanita Orr, county assessor, said.

District two, which includes the western portions of Damascus, is being reappraised this year and results will not be available until next month, Orr said.

Orr said it is uncertain how the trending appraisals will affect property taxes.

"I haven't the slightest idea at this time," she said. "We have to wait until the rechecks—the new buildings and industry—are in and for the board of equalization to meet and decide if they'll make any changes to what we have."

Ratio studies are subject to approval by the board of equalization. "This could make quite a bit of difference (in the property value appraisals)," Orr said.

The tax assessor also said it is difficult to determine tax rates because of the likelihood of school district levy requests to be voted upon by residents. "Of course, we don't know what the levies are going to be yet. It's very seldom—with all of our districts and schools—to know what the county's tax rate will be."

Orr said the tax rates will be determined by mid-October.

Notices have been mailed to persons whose property value increased by more than 5 percent, as required by state law. Both the 1978 assessed value and the 1977 values are shown on the notice.

The increases are trends applied to keep assessment at 100 percent of market value, Orr said. The trending is based on sales of 4,400 single family homes in 1977 and increases ranged from 5 percent to 17 percent throughout the county.

The ratio study is done under the supervision of the chief appraiser and sanctioned by the state department of revenue. It is only applied with the board of equalization's recommendation.

George Malin, county chief appraiser, said availability of new construction sites, proximity to freeways, availability of mass transit and length of time since last reappraisal all effect the trending study and property values.

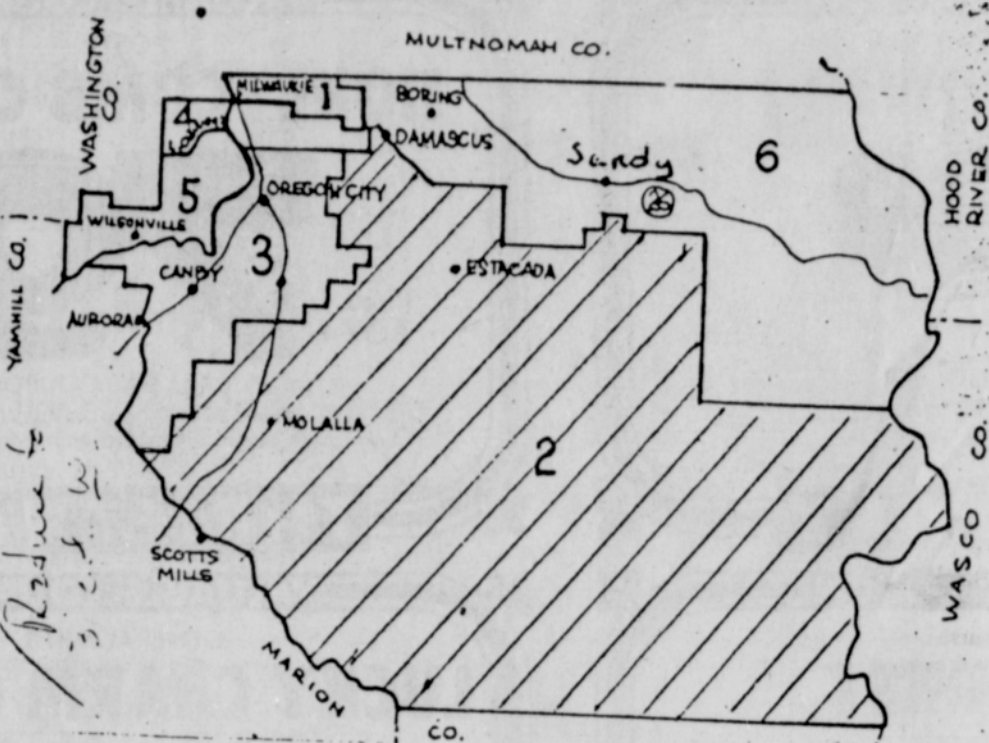
Orr emphasized that state law requires property be

assessed at market value, but that increased market does not necessarily mean higher taxes.

Clackamas County is divided into six reappraisal districts, with one district physically reappraised each fiscal year.

Taxpayers have until May 1 to appeal to the assessor's office if there are questions about the appraisal. Appeals allow for a review of the appraisal. After May 1, the assessment roll is sent to the

board of equalization, and appeals must be sent there by May 15.



APPRAISAL DISTRICTS in Clackamas County outline areas used to determine property value increases.

PUC orders refunds

General Telephone Company has been ordered by the Public Utility Commissioner to refund service order charges made to customers changing from single directory listing to dual listing.

Oregon telephone companies were ordered last year to offer two people with the same last name and address the option of listing both names in the directory at no extra charge. General Telephone has been charging \$4 to customers who changed their listings after the closing date of the 1978 directory.

"Our interpretation of the tariff is that General Telephone is not allowed to charge a one-time fee for the service," said Jo Mancuso, PUC public information officer. "We've told the company it will have to refund the money to any customers who have been charged."

General Telephone had a different interpretation of the tariff.

"We understood people could change their service order free of charge until the director closed," said Doug Ward, GTE regulatory representative. "After

that, if a customer with existing service called to change their listing, we could write a subsequent order charge."

He said the company will cease the practice and refund any charges already collected. "But I question how many refunds there will be," said Ward. "I don't think very many have called in to change their listing since the directory has been out." He said exact figures would have to be researched.

General Telephone charges \$4 any time a bill adjustment "is for the sole purpose of the customer's convenience and is of no advantage to the company," said Ward.

The commissioner's office explained that General Telephone could apply for permission to make the one-time order charge. Ward said he is uncertain if the company will try to justify the charge.

"We just didn't communicate well," said Ward. He said the PUC order was "no big deal, just a matter of public policy."

Teachers, elementary board disagree

Representatives of the Sandy Elementary Education Association attended Tuesday night's meeting of the Sandy Elementary board to protest a teacher evaluation procedure the association contends is not in full agreement with collective bargaining procedures.

Association President Mike Jarrett said that some of the items the teachers are being evaluated on, including discipline, non-instructional

activities and extra-curricular activities are items that can only be discussed at the bargaining table.

Reading from a prepared statement, board chairman Dan TenEyck countered by saying that the district's evaluation procedure is in "literal and exact compliance" with the current agreement.

TenEyck cited portions in the current contract that

give the district the right to "determine by whom and when teachers shall be evaluated (and) which methods of evaluation shall be used."

The board chairman concluded by saying the district does not intend to discontinue use of the current evaluation procedure.

The teachers are protesting an evaluation procedure that was developed by the district last

fall. Superintendent Clark Lund had invited the teachers to participate in an evaluation of the procedure when the initiation of contract talks temporarily halted the evaluation talks.

Lund said that evaluation using the controversial procedure are going "smooth as silk" and that he still intends to have teachers help modify the evaluation instrument when the current contract talks are over.

Darr proposes motel-restaurant

Clackamas County Hearings Officer Richard Crist will consider a zone change request by the Darr Company of Government Camp at a special meeting on Thursday, Feb. 23.

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County financial future unclear

costs and fringe benefits. In addition, the commissioners exercise what is known as "position control" in their hiring procedures. Whenever a vacancy in an existing job opens up the commissioners analyze the post to make sure it is still necessary.

But even the county's best efforts to cut costs are sometimes confounded by old statutes that seemingly defy the laws of modern thinking.

For example, in an effort to give jurors a break on parking (there are no inexpensive all-day lots near the courthouse) it was worked out with Tri-Met that

a special bus would transport the jurors to the courthouse from a site several miles away.

But an old statute states very plainly that jurors can be reimbursed for mileage only if they drive to the courthouse. Busses don't count, so there was no way for the county to pay the jurors their transportation costs.

Williams noted, "sometimes it's hard to be efficient."

But the main problem remains a tax base that county officials say is barely adequate.

In some cases, such as the sheriff's department and the

county library, a serial levy can be used to bolster finances. "It's easier for people to identify with a service such as police protection or libraries," Williams said of the reason behind last year's passage of these measures.

But serial levies are short term solutions, and county officials say the failure of their passage in a given year could mean the elimination of a service the county residents both need and have come to expect.

Williams said what is needed is a new tax base, but the failure of the 1975 tax base measure has left the county convinced another

attempt would also fail. No plans are currently under way for a change in the tax base.

So Clackamas County continues on its course of building a modern county government on what many say is an outmoded and restrictive tax base.

The county is not alone, as many counties in this state and across the country are also facing fiscal problems. With the increasing demands placed on them for regional planning and leadership, how they weather the storm could mean a great deal to those who rely on the county and its services.

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