

While your mail this week brings you the Columbia County Assessor's annual statement of Assessed Values for the 1977-78 Tax Year, Henry T. "Hank" Hudson, Assessor, and staff are busy reviewing and making last minute adjustments to to approximately 16,000 real property accounts, trying to maintain the assessments at 100% of market value, as the law requires.

The total impact of additions to the roll of new construction, and Mobile Homes; greatly increased Forestland valuations, substantial timber values and "trend" or blanket increase adjustments, plus physical reappraisal of Vernonia School District 47 Jt., will add about 21% to the County's total assessed values for this year. However, this figure will be modified to some extent by the Appeals Process before the Board of Equalization, and by an expected surge in Forest and Farm Deferral applications which must be made within 20 days of mailing of the Value Notices.

Pretty generally except for land and timber increases, which represent nearly 2/3rds of the increased values, and except for Maintenance 3 (the Nehalem Valley), increases will range from no change to +25% over prior values for various property classes. Maintenance 3 will show an average 30% increase in the City of Vernonia, the land increased 39% there while structures show an average 27% increase over the prior year. Vernonia Rural areas show a whopping 142% increase in land, mainly due to the high percentage of Forest Lands in the District that are up as much as 150% over a year earlier.

Hudson states that the full effect of the 150% average increase on Forest Land in Columbia County is difficult to measure, because many owners will seek the Deferral Programs that are offered Forest and Farm owners, in an effort to reduce the individual Tax load. Many will attempt an Appeal to the Equalization Board, and many, in discouragement, may be tempted to put those lands on the market, or to strip merchantable and premerchantable forests from them to reduce values. He earnestly advises Forest Land owners to not resort in haste to the latter two approaches. The Legislature and the Governor are greatly concerned at the economic implications of ever-rising taxes on a 30 to 50 year harvest wait, and perhaps will take some legislative action to modify that burden some how. Forest Land values for Tax purposes will average \$250 to \$350 per acre, compared to prior values of \$110 to \$150 in Columbia County. "Market values are more consistently on the upper side of \$500 to \$1,000 per acre, from all we can determine, from recent sales", he said. "However, these sales usually contain some young timber growth which is Tax exempt. This results in the lower figures for Forest Land Assessment purposes."

The Assessor asks each Taxpayer to examine his Valuation Notice in the light of the total figure, not necessarily the various components that make it up, and compare that total with his best information as to the fair market value of his property, or similar properties that have sold. His office can be contacted prior to May 1, 1977 to answer Taxpayer questions concerning their values. Appeals can be made to the Board of Equalization on forms his office can provide. This must be done prior to May 16, 1977.

Some thoughts Hudson would like to leave with Countians are reminders that valuation increases do not necessarily mean Tax increases. He asks each Taxpayer to examine the Budget reports that various Taxing Districts put forth, very carefully, and then take the time to vote conscientiously, and not in frustrated reaction to the Assessor's Value Notices. Most Tax entities in our County appear to deserve Voter support of their budget proposals.

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Chamber plans for Christmas

The Vernonia Chamber of Commerce is

The Vernonia Chamber of Commerce is already planning for the Christmas holiday season. A rummage sale is planned for Friday and Saturday, May 20-21 to raise funds for additional street decorations. Though the Christmas lights across Bridge Street are worn out they will not be replaced in the effort to save electrical energy.

Marilyn Van Winkle is chairman for the event, assisted by Orv Olson. Small items for the sale may be left at Joe's TV Shop.

The rummage sale is to be held at the IOOF hall, hours to be announced later.

Brewer's UPHOLSTERING
876 Bridge
Senior citizens
freepickup & delivery

429-2842 (after 6 p.m.)



One of those who volunteered to clean up

Lake Vernonia.

VERNONIA PAPERBACK EXCHANGE
buy - sell - exchange
wide selection
Located in the Chalet Flower Shop on Bridge
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Monday - Saturday

Cedar Side Tavern
LIVE MUSIC
Sure Fire Blue Grass

9 p.m. Saturday

(\$1 cover charge - starts at 8 p.m.)

Bridge Street

Vernonia

Open seven days a week until 2:30 a.m.