

Appraisal Notices for Tax Year 2020 are in the mail to Area Property Owners

Section 23.01 of the Texas Property Tax Code requires that all taxable property be appraised at its market value as of Jan. 1. This means that none of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will affect the 2020 appraisals.

Deaf Smith County Appraisal District recently mailed out the 2020 appraisal notices and according to the district's chief appraiser, Danny Jones, the values on the notices are reflective of Jan. 1 property values.

Jones said that the real estate market was still extremely strong on Jan. 1 of this year. The average home value in Deaf Smith County for 2020 is \$110,430 which is an 8.69% increase from the 2019 average home value of \$101,640. Jones explained that any effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the real estate market will be reflected in the 2021 appraisals.

"It is too early, and we don't have enough data to understand what impact this crisis will have on real estate values moving forward. The last two quarters of 2020 will give us a clearer picture of how the real estate market is reacting. However, sales through May are still strong and show no sign of going down in value."

Protest procedures for 2020 appraisals will look much different this year in the wake of social distancing. Most protests can be resolved through an informal hearing with the appraisers. Please call our office at 806-364-0625 to set up an appointment or to discuss your appraisal over the phone. All ARB hearings will be conducted via telephone conference calls, Zoom video conferencing, email, or in person. If you disagree with your 2020 appraisal, you may file a formal protest by utilizing the districts online protest portal found on our website www.deafsmithcad.org, or you can complete the protest form located on the back of your appraisal notice and mail it to Deaf Smith County Appraisal District, P.O. Box 2298, Hereford, Texas 79045.

The deadline for filing a protest is July 6, 2020.

"We plan on making every effort to contact each property owner who files a protest and see if we can resolve the matter prior to it being scheduled for a formal hearing. Our appraisers will be making phone calls or communicating electronically with those property owners, so we ask for the public's patience as we work through the appeals process this year" said Jones. I encourage everyone who disagrees with our appraisal of their property to file a protest and submit supporting evidence of their claim for a reduction in value. The more evidence an owner can provide, the higher the likelihood of a successful appeal."

Items of evidence that are accepted by the district are recent sales contracts, fee appraisals, damage repair estimates, pictures of the condition of the property, or current sales data of similar property.

If you are not satisfied with the decision that the ARB makes, you have the right to go to binding arbitration or appeal to the District Court.

"It's important for folks to understand that all we can deal with is the value of the property, not the amount of taxes they pay. If people are wanting to protest the amount of taxes they pay, this is not the place to do so. We ask that you only file an appeal if you disagree with the value of your property. If you disagree with the amount of taxes you pay, this needs to be taken up with the elected officials of the taxing units."

The appraisals set by the appraisal district are used by the local governmental entities in Deaf Smith County such as the city, schools, the county and the hospital district to determine what tax rate they need to adopt to generate the tax revenue needed to function. In theory, as appraisals increase, tax rates can decrease accordingly to offset and maintain the same amount of property tax revenue as the previous year. The rate to maintain the same tax revenue is known as the no-new-revenue rate. In the last legislative session, the state law was changed to require cities and counties to get voter approval any time they are increasing property tax revenue by more than 3.5 percent. The old restriction was 8 percent.

"Even though our lobby is currently closed to the public, our staff are still here working and serving the public. We simply ask that you conduct all business with our office via the telephone or email" said Jones.

The Deaf Smith County Appraisal District office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and can be reached at 806-364-0625 or you can visit the district's website at www.deafsmithcad.org You may also email djones@deafsmithcad.org or mpowers@deafsmithcad.org