

COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL REAPPRAISAL IN MARION COUNTY

Marion County Assessor Drew Sanders announced in November 2011 that the door-to-door inspections of all Commercial and Industrial properties in Marion County was beginning approximately November 7, 2011. Inspections started in Pella and will continue for about another month there. After Pella, the appraisers will start in Knoxville.

A reappraisal program was approved by the Marion County Conference Board in January 2009 to contract with Vanguard Appraisal Inc. Vanguard Appraisal is located in Cedar Rapids and its primary business is to conduct mass appraisal projects for city, county, and township jurisdictions. They started in 1968 and have had the opportunity to appraise property in 90% of the jurisdictions in Iowa.

One may ask why does our office need to hire an outside company to reappraise these properties. The simple answer is that it is more economical to do so. We could do this process in our office. However, I would need to hire additional staff to perform the process in a timely manner. The staff would need to be trained in commercial and industrial property which is more varied and specialized and requires extra training time and cost. The county would have to provide benefits, and the additional staff would be laid off after the project is complete, making them eligible for unemployment compensation from the county. Vanguard Appraisal already has many appraisers with the commercial expertise necessary to perform the project in a timely manner.

The purpose of the reappraisal program is to equalize property assessments so that each taxpayer is responsible for paying only his/her fair share of the property tax burden. Periodic inspections and reappraisal of properties is necessary as all types of properties do not increase or decrease in value at the same rate. Some properties physically deteriorate faster than others, and in many instances similar buildings located in different areas of the county will differ greatly in value due to economic factors.

Data collectors with photo ID will make interior and exterior inspections of all commercial and industrial properties. They will be compiling information to be used to estimate the fair market value of each property. Information to be collected includes type of construction, type of interior finish, physical condition of the property, age of structures and exterior measurements. A complete sales analysis, local construction costs and economic conditions are also considered. No estimate of value will be given at the time of inspection.

Property owners are asked to cooperate by allowing a complete inspection of their property and providing accurate information so that a fair and equitable assessment may be determined for each property.

The preliminary data collection process will begin in November 2011. The project is scheduled for completion December 31, 2012.

Notice of final value estimates will be mailed to each property owner after January 1, 2013. The property owners will have an opportunity to meet informally to discuss their revaluation in the spring of 2013.

The new assessed values will be effective for January 1, 2013, for taxes payable in fiscal year 2014 - 2015.

Representatives of Vanguard Appraisals, Inc. in conjunction with the Marion County Assessor's Office will be conducting this project.

All law enforcement agencies as well as the Marion County Assessor's Office will be apprised of the areas where data collectors are working. They will also have a listing of all names and license plate numbers of anyone involved in the project.

If any property owner has questions regarding the reappraisal project, they are urged to contact the Marion County Assessor's Office at 641 – 828 -2215.