AAP Journal
Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania

AAP
ASSESSORS' ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

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CCAP
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS Association of Pennsylvania

An affiliate of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

Homeowner's Guide to the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code

By Robert Buddenbohn, Executive Officer
Pennsylvania Association of Building Code Officials, Inc.

This article is a short primer and great refresher on many aspects of building codes for not only assessors, but also local property owners.

Uniform....But Not Really
Many townships, boroughs and cities in Pennsylvania have amended the state's Uniform Construction Code (UCC) to impose additional, more restrictive requirements than those contained in the state law or the codes adopted by the UCC.

Each municipality that has chosen to administer and enforce the UCC must have a designated Building Code Official (BCO).

Building Code Official
You must contact that designated Building Code Official for the opt-in municipality in which you wish to build, add-onto, remodel or repair any residential structure, to determine what local amendments to the UCC, if any, that municipality has imposed. You are required to comply with local amendments to the UCC as well as the state law and the adopted residential code.

For an opt-in municipality, the BCO can also provide you with:

- Information on whether the type of work you wish to perform requires a permit
- Permit applications
- Requirements for plans and construction documents required for the type of work you wish to perform
- Permit fee schedules
- Inspection requirements
- Occupancy permit applications and requirements

Words of Caution
Please keep in mind that doing work regulated by the UCC without a permit may result in an enforcement action being taken against you by your municipality, and upon conviction, you may be subject to fines and penalties up to and including $1,000 per day for each violation.

Also, occupying any structure without a Certificate of Occupancy issued by the BCO is a serious violation and will also result in enforcement action. Please do not occupy or begin using any structure without a Certificate of Occupancy!

Residential Information Only
This article only applies to single family dwellings, two family dwellings (duplexes, twins, houses with separate dwelling units on first floor and second floor), townhouses and structures that are considered to be "accessory" to these types of residential structures.

Anything else is a "commercial" structure and must comply with all of the requirements for commercial buildings.

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AAP Education Calendar

2017 Fall Conference
November 2 - 3
Eden Resort, Lancaster

Fall 2017 CPE Review
CCAP Office, Harrisburg
November 29 - December 1

Spring 2018 CPE Classes
CCAP Office, Harrisburg
Intro - March 5 - 9
Site/Market - March 12 - 16
Cost - March 19 - 23
Income - April 9 - 13

2018 Annual Conference
April 25 - 27
Valley Forge Casino Resort

Spring 2018 CPE Review
CCAP Office, Harrisburg
June 18 - 20

2018 Fall Conference
November 15 -16
Kalahari Resort

Fall 2018 CPE Classes
Courtyard by Marriott
State College
Intro - September 10 – 14
Site/Market - September 17 – 21
Cost - September 24 – 28
Income - October 1 – 5

** Check the AAP website, www.paassessors.org, for more details*

What's Inside

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President's Message

Hello Everyone,

I hope everybody had a great summer and is looking forward to the upcoming holidays (a little ways out yet but still on the horizon). With the Fall comes our favorite time of the year, appeal season - when everybody thinks their property is worth nothing, will not sell it for anything less than big bucks, and thinks we have a personal vendetta against them. You gotta love it! I have always enjoyed going into appeal hearings (call me sick and twisted) just to see if I could prove the property owner wrong. Well, good luck with your appeals!

The Senate recently came back into session and both HB 1361 and SB 689 are in the Senate Professional Licensure Committee. More than likely, these two bills will not be addressed until the Senate settles the budget, hopefully sooner rather than later. By now, I think you all know that the House passed the original bill which would put two CPE's on the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers. We desperately need some representation on the SBCREA so keep your fingers crossed. Hopefully, everybody read the Summer Journal and our cover story, *IAAO - How It All Started*! Well, earlier this year, the IAAO Executive Board approved a recommendation from the Member Recognition Subcommittee that the IAAO Member of the Year Award in 2018 be named in honor of Matylda Zurowska Hudak, one of the founders of the association and a past assessor in Scranton. What an honor!

Moving on, I would like to thank Joan Righter Price for her previous work chairing the Self Evaluation Tool Committee and thank Deb Crawford and Joshua Zeyn for stepping up and becoming the new co chairs.

This next part has nothing to do with the assessment process but as I was stuck in traffic after work the other day, there were people beeping their horns, screaming out their windows and just acting crazy, but I was calm. You might ask why. Well, a few years ago I was one of those people also but I started thinking about the Iraq situation and how our soldiers were being shot at, subjected to mines, and worse. So, being stuck in traffic was a piece of cake. Now I think about those poor people in Florida or Texas who don't have a home or belongings and in some cases, have lost loved ones (*Be thankful for what you have as you could have nothing left but hope*). How would you like to be the assessors down there?

We have a great Conference planned for November in Lancaster so I am looking forward to seeing everybody there. In the meantime, enjoy your family and friends and stay safe.

P.S. If you read this, Tony, don't forget the wine.

Sincerely,

Larry from Philly

Larry Shubert, CPE, AAP President



Legislative Update

By Jonathan B. Schuck, Co Chair
Government Information Committee and
Director of Assessment/Tax Claim, Chester County

Greetings fellow assessment professionals throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. By the time you receive this issue of the AAP Journal, we will be enjoying the relative coolness of early fall weather. I hope this season is filled with events and memories that refresh you both professionally and personally.

Approximately eight months into the 2017/2018 Session, more than 48 pertinent bills/resolutions have been introduced and one Pamphlet Law Resolution (No. 1) filed. There has been minimal assessment-related legislative activity since the June Update. The Legislature's attention has been primarily focused on budget-related matters.

Pamphlet Laws Resolution No. 1 (House Bill 1285)

In November, voters will be asked to decide on a constitutional amendment that would allow local taxing jurisdictions to raise the maximum amount of the homestead exclusion from 50% of the median value of all the homestead property to 100% of the value of each property enrolled. Filed in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth 7/17/2017.

CCAP and the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) are cooperating on a project to collect assessment data regarding homestead properties. The requested data will allow CCAP and the IFO to evaluate the potential impact of homestead exclusions on property tax collections.

House Bill 1361

This amendment would increase the size of the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers from eight to ten. Six of the members would be certified real estate appraisers, two would be certified Pennsylvania evaluators and two would be public members. An appointee can be both a certified real estate appraiser and a certified Pennsylvania evaluator but the appointment has to specify in which capacity they are being appointed. Passed the House on 6/21/2017 and currently in the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee.

House Resolution 327

Established a subcommittee on tax modernization and reform to investigate, review and make recommendations concerning the process, rates and methods by which revenue is collected and assessed on taxpayers. Adopted 190-0 on 6/19/2017.

Senate Bill 667

This amendment would grant redevelopment authorities the same powers currently allotted to land banks through the Pennsylvania Land Bank Act. This would allow redevelopment authorities to acquire tax delinquent properties at a judicial sale without competitive bidding, to discharge tax liens on those properties, and to share up to 50% of the real property taxes for five years after conveyance of authority-owned property. It would also eliminate the need to form an entirely new entity in these municipalities; which can be redundant and cost-prohibitive given the lack of resources and funding for these initiatives. This proposal will in no way eliminate the ability of a community to create a land bank or affect existing land banks in any way. Passed the Senate on 7/26/2017 and currently in the House Urban Affairs Committee.

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Article submissions are welcome.
Please send to:
Terry Cochran
AAP Deputy Director

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AAP People & Chapter News

South Central Chapter

The South Central Chapter meets quarterly - March, June, September and December. Each meeting begins with the business meetings at 9 a.m., with seminars beginning immediately after the meeting (approximately 9:30 a.m.) and are held at the Adams County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center, 670 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Please contact Barb Walter at (717) 337-9837 for more information.

Lebanon County

Ted Conley, Assistant Chief Assessor, and his wife, Sarah are the proud parents of their second son, Oliver Jeffrey Conley, born June 25, 2017. Oliver was 8lbs 15oz, 20.5 inches and is the little brother to Liam, who is 3 years old. Congratulations to the Conley family!

Lehigh County

Best wishes and good luck to **Gregory M. Fedak**. Greg has retired from the position of Assistant Director of Real Estate and Act 319/515 Coordinator after a long and dedicated career.

Congratulations to **Corey A. Cieslak** on his recent promotion to the position of Assistant Director of Real Estate and Act 319/515 Coordinator. Corey will have some big shoes to fill with Greg's departure but there is no doubt he will do an excellent job moving forward in his new position.

Congratulations and best of luck to both Greg and Corey!

Monroe County

Congratulations to the county's newest CPE, **Michelle Koroly**!

Westmoreland County

John Sanders, former Director of Assessment, passed away on July 25. Our condolences to his family.

York County

Congratulations to **Rachel Perring**, York County Director of Assessments/Chief Assessor, on her marriage to Ryan White on August 12 at Lakeview Farms in Dover, PA, York County surrounded by family and friends. Rachel's two children, Harrison and Maddison, walked Rachel down the aisle and took part in the ceremony. Ryan and Rachel met in New York City, over six years ago. Congratulations to the new Mr. and Mrs. White!

Send Your Chapter and County News!

Don't forget to send your county or chapter news for the next AAP Journal. Our next deadline is December 6.

Please send your news to Terry Cochran at *tcochran@pacounties.org*.

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Residential-type Permits Required
By state law, you will need a permit, inspections and a certificate of occupancy for:

• Any new house being built
• Any addition to an existing house
  o Building one or more new stories on top of an existing house
  o Increasing the perimeter of the existing house by adding on
• Installing a new manufactured home (HUD Code)
• Installing a new modular (industrialized) home
• Relocating and installing a manufactured home
• Any garage that is attached to the house
• Any detached garage, carport, shed or greenhouse accessory to a single family dwelling and is 1000 square feet or larger (measuring the perimeter)
• Any detached garage, carport, shed or greenhouse accessory to a two family dwelling or townhouse and is 120 square feet or larger (measuring the perimeter)
• Enclosing a porch or patio
• Installing/building a sunroom, Florida room, three seasons room
• Installing any deck that is more than 30" above ground level at any point around the perimeter of the deck
• Installing any deck less than 30" above ground level if it has a roof/covering above it
• Installing an indoor or outdoor hot tub or spa
• Constructing an in-ground swimming pool (inside or outside)
• Installing any swimming pool (including the inflatable type) that is 24" or more in height
• Installing any fence higher than 6'
• Installing any retaining wall higher than 4'
• Structural alterations to an existing dwelling unit (BCO will determine if the intended work involves structural alterations
• Changes to an existing means of egress (exit door, stairs, handrails, guard systems, ramps)
• Any portion of a dwelling or residential accessory structure that will be used for commercial purposes (open to employees or the public). *Examples include: professional offices, business offices, notaries, beauty shops, nail salons, barber shops, or car or equipment repair*

Permits must be applied for and issued before any work may begin. All work performed on residential buildings and their accessory structures must comply with the most current edition of the International Residential Code, published by the International Code Council. This code is re-published every three years with changes and additions. We are currently using the 2009 IRC in Pennsylvania and will continue to do so until further notice.



Customer Complaints Are Not Always A Bad Thing

Complaining customers are a scary proposition for many professionals, but the complaint situation represents an opportunity - not necessarily a problem.

If you deal with a person's concerns respectfully and helpfully, your effort and consideration will almost always be appreciated, and former "complainers" will walk away feeling happy and valued.

Recognizing how you can benefit from complaints given by customers makes for an opportunity to improve and grow.

Depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, it's a good idea to really grasp what the complaint is, what went wrong, and what was done to resolve it?

Continue to meet with your team and review what the complaint was; consider approaches to ensure it does not happen again.

Complaints can be difficult to handle, but, don't be afraid of them. Be grateful to the customer for bringing the complaint to your attention. Had they simply ignored their dissatisfaction and went elsewhere; it would have been a lost customer. By their bringing this matter to you he is giving you the opportunity to correct it and to make future efforts on not letting the situation repeat. Complaints + resolution = growth and customer satisfaction.

Business Training Media, a global provider of workforce training solutions for employee development. The company has provided corporate training solutions to many organizations from start-ups to high-profile companies like American Express, Yahoo, IBM, 3M, FedEx, American Honda, Cisco, Verizon, Microsoft, Wal-Mart, Johnson & Johnson, AT&T, Bank of America, Google and thousands of others.

The Hidden Risks of Social Media for Recruiting & HR Managers

By Myron Curry

Social media has forever changed the rules in the job marketplace. The amazing amount of information that is so quickly accessible provides a tempting opportunity to be a fly on the wall of an applicant's personal life. Recruiters need to exercise caution and tread carefully. There are a plethora of social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn that provide instant and often personal information about a candidate

There are risks associated with social media and if employers are not careful, they can open a Pandoras box of litigation possibilities. Social networking profiles reveal private information such as age, race, political affiliation, gender, disability and religious affiliation. This type of information is usually interspersed throughout a candidate's personal profile.

There are a few disturbing scenarios that can occur when an employer does a social media search on a potential candidate. Consider the following: a recruiter does an internet search and finds the candidates picture and religious and political affiliation and uses this information to weed out that particular candidate, or an internet search reveals a candidate in full regalia at a gay pride festival. What does the recruiter do with such personal information that would have never revealed itself in a traditional resume?

Using online information skates a thin line between invasion of privacy and an employer learning as much as possible about a potential employee. Employers must decide if the benefits of researching candidates on social media outweigh the risks. It is critical that employers utilize legal counsel and develop written policies to determine the best protocol for using social media in recruiting efforts. The policy must clearly define the types of position that would warrant utilizing social media and specific guidelines for the type of information the employer hopes to find by using social media. A comprehensive written policy will go a long way in helping to mitigate risks that arise from social media searches.

Working closely with legal counsel can go a long way in protecting a company from the potential of a case of disparate treatment and its cousin disparate impact, which can occur unintentionally when using social media for recruiting. Human Resources experts argue that using social media can open the door to disparate treatment (an intent to discriminate) or Disparate Impact, when using social media sites that do not reflect the demographics of the total population.

Social media is one of the best ways to recruit passive candidates and is an essential resource in engaging the best candidates in the marketplace. Social media will continue to evolve and recruiters must use common sense, stay compliant with EEO practices and maintain records to avoid being on the losing end of a discrimination lawsuit.

Myron Curry is the President and Founder of Business Training Media, a leading provider of business management training material for corporate training and development, workplace safety, human resources and professional development.

County Corner! - Allegheny County



City of Pittsburgh

Allegheny was Pennsylvania's first county to bear a Native American name, being named after the Allegheny River. The word "Allegheny" is of Lenape origin, with uncertain meaning. It is usually said to mean "fine river", but sometimes said to refer to an ancient mythical tribe called "Allegewi" that lived along the river before being destroyed by the Lenape.

Since most of the towns during that era were developed along waterways, both the French and the British desired control over the local rivers. Therefore, the British sent Major George Washington to expel the French from their posts, with no success. Failing in this objective, he nearly drowned in the ice-filled Allegheny River while returning. The English tried in 1754 to again enter the area. They sent 41 Virginians to build Fort Prince George. The French learned of the plan and sent an army to capture the fort, which they then resumed building with increased fortification, renaming it Fort Duquesne.

The loss cost the English dearly because Fort Duquesne became a focal point of the French and Indian War. The first attempt to retake the fort, the Braddock Expedition, failed miserably. It was recaptured in 1758 by English forces under General John Forbes; he had it destroyed after its capture. They then built a new fort on the site, including a moat, and named it Fort Pitt. The site is now Pittsburgh's Point State Park.

Allegheny County was officially created on September 24, 1788, from parts of Washington and Westmoreland counties. It was formed due to pressure from settlers living in the area around Pittsburgh, which became the county seat in 1791. The county originally extended north to the shores of Lake Erie; it was reduced to its current borders by 1800.

Located at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers at the head of the Ohio River, Pittsburgh was referred to as the "Gateway to the West" from its early days as a frontier village. Easily navigable waterways with an abundance of natural resources, (coal, timber, natural gas, iron and limestone) helped Pittsburgh become the industrial center for a growing nation. The area developed rapidly in the 1800s to become nation's prime steel producer; Pittsburgh gained the label "Steel Capital of the World".

Steel production declined late in the 20th century, and Allegheny County's economy began a shift to other industries. It is presently known for its hospitals, universities, and industrial centers. Despite the decline of heavy industry, Pittsburgh is home to a number of major companies and is ranked in the top ten among US cities hosting headquarters of Fortune 500 corporations, including U.S. Steel Corporation, PNC Financial Services Group, PPG Industries, and H. J. Heinz Company. The county leads the state in number of defense contractors supplying the U.S. military.

While the riverfront steel mills of the Mon Valley are mostly gone now, the generosity of industrial giants like Carnegie and Frick, food manufacturer H.J. Heinz, and banker/financier Andrew Mellon lives on in a legacy of art, culture and education in Pittsburgh. What remained are the Frick family home, known as Clayton, as well as a masterful art collection. Andrew Carnegie's generous public donations included The Carnegie Library, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Institute of Technology (known today as Carnegie Mellon University).

Even though Pittsburgh faced rough times in the 1970s and 80s when steel production all but disappeared from its landscape, it has since re-invented itself as a hub for education, medicine, small manufacturing and research. Of course, having extremely successful sports teams has enhanced the city's reputation. The black and gold of all three of its professional teams, Steelers (NFL), Pirates (MLB) and Penguins (NHL) are synonymous with the pride local residents have in its sports teams and the city they represent.

Today Pittsburgh welcomes visitors from around the globe. Its strengths lie in its authenticity as an all-American city, and its genuine, hard-working and welcoming sense of community that has transformed it into one of the most surprisingly beautiful and progressive cities in the United States.



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