AAP Journal
Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania

AAP Assessors' Association of Pennsylvania
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CCAP County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
In partnership with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

DCED/STEB and the PA Counties' Agreement

Renee Reynolds, Director, Pa State Tax Equalization Board

Act 2 of 2013: Community and Economic Development Enhancement Act with the modernization of an oversight statewide computer system as outlined, along with recommendations of international standardization set forth from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) contractual independent study of 2014.

What Does This Mean?

The intent of this project is to leverage modernized technology with the capability for future enhancements to fulfill the Act 2 requirements. Additionally, this will cut down on duplication of work providing readily available reports maintained in one system.

The agreement signed by counties will temporarily forgo the $0.20/deed paid by the state to help offset the financial burden to implement this new system.

What is the Benefit for STEB and the Counties?

STEB Benefits: One benefit will be to fulfill the legislative mandate to implement a statewide data base system (Chapter 15 of the Community and Economic Development Enhancement Act) to replace the current outdated system which is no longer being supported. *Let's face it, did anyone really like TEDtrac?* The new system will provide a state-of-the-art solution and services for state government and administration of property taxes. It will have the ability for more up-to-date ratio studies, certifications, and the flexibility to comply with international standards and legislative changes. The new system will be responsive, configurable and have the flexibility to grow. Another benefit of the system is better time management for STEB staff. Currently, staff is manually creating reports for certification, ratio studies and other ad-hoc requests from legislators and government agencies. The new system will have the capability to produce new and enhanced reports in one easy download.

County Benefits: The temporary forgiveness of the 20 cents will benefit the counties and county officials not only by cutting down on the duplication of STEB work but also by having access to STEB information statewide. This will include ratio studies, sales analysis, reports, audits, sales supplements and verification, configurable data parameter; all of which will have the capability to be sorted through an individual user's dashboard for better visualization and sharing tools. The system will be cloud-based, providing access anywhere such as meetings, appeal hearings, etc. The geospatial records or map displays will visually show sales trends. There will be no upfront cost for the access, just the forgiveness of the paid invoices to help offset the cost to implement this system.

The AAP has a STEB subcommittee working with STEB staff on conducting some preliminary research in anticipation of the software change. STEB looks forward to working with the counties on this endeavor and continues to value the support of the AAP and its members.

AAP Events Calendar

CPE Review Classes
Via Zoom
May 17 -19

Act 28 - *Via Zoom*
June 3

USPAP - *Via Zoom*
June 22

AAP Membership Meeting
Via Zoom
May 4 at 1 p.m.

AAP 2021 Annual Conference
Via Zoom
May 5, 6 11 and 12

Fall 2021 CPE Classes
Location TBD
Intro - August 23 – 27
Site/Market - Aug 30 – Sept 3
Cost - September 13 – 17
Income - September 20 – 24

CPE Review Class
Location TBD
November 15 to 17

AAP 2021 Fall Conference
Kalahari Resort, Mount Pocono
November 4 to 5

** Visit www.paassessors.org for mor information.*

What's Inside

President's Message, Legislative Update, CPE License Recertification, AAP People, County Corner

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President's Message

Hello Everyone,

As I write this letter today, March 4th, I hope everyone has been safe through the winter months. All of us, I'm sure, are looking forward with much anticipation to spring and summer! I, like many of you, enjoy the warmer weather. This past year has gone by so quickly and this message will be my final one as President of our association. My thoughts turn back to 2016, when I was nominated and elected AAP Secretary. I was told at that time by several of you how surprisingly fast one's time serving as an AAP officer seems to go, and I certainly can agree with that. It's been a rewarding experience, and I encourage everyone to get involved in our association, serve on committees, if you can, and if asked to be nominated for the executive board, think about doing that. We truly have a great organization! Thank You! – to all of you who helped me this last year – especially Terry Cochran and Lori Lawyer.

I invite you to check out this edition of the *AAP Journal*. Renee Reynolds from the Pennsylvania State Tax Equalization Board has written the featured article entitled "DCED/STEB and the PA Counties' Agreement". A good many of you are aware of STEB's efforts through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to implement a statewide database for assessment data, as per Act 2 of 2013, when STEB merged with DCED. This article gives some insight on the subject. In this issue's "County Corner" segment, Cindy Treible from Monroe County offers some interesting info about Monroe County. I have always been interested in history and historical facts; the articles on our various counties across the commonwealth have provided a lot of good stuff. I'm thinking of writing an article on Bedford County for a future issue to share with everyone.

Our licenses are up for renewal this year. Some information has been placed in this issue letting you know how that can be accomplished. All the renewals are being done electronically through the Pennsylvania Licensing System (PALS) at the Pa State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers (SBCREA).

It sounds redundant, I know. The COVID-19 pandemic continues and our association, like others, has made many adjustments over the last year. We continue, however, to put forth a great effort. We are still holding all of our meetings virtually. The winter Board of Governors' meeting, along with our various committee meetings and the Virtual Fall Conference were held virtually. Our Spring Conference and CPE classes will be entirely over the Zoom. As I've said in previous messages, most all of us have learned how to "zoom". Our Education and Training Committee has been most vigilant in keeping up with education opportunities for all of us through this time. I can't commend them enough. Is there light at the end of the tunnel, so that we can begin to have in-person gathering again? One of our goals this year is to have an in-person Fall Conference. Let's hope that can be achieved. I'm ready for "normal"!

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Legislative Update

By Jonathan B. Schuck, 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, the vestiges of winter should be melting and the first signs of spring should be bursting forth. With the transition of seasons in progress, I hope this Update finds you healthy, safe and enjoying the warmer weather.

During the first two months of the 2021/2022 Session, 978 bills/resolutions have been introduced, 8 of which pertain to assessment-related matters and 6 of which pertain to tax claim-related matters. Of the 14 pertinent bills, 13 represent familiar topics and bills re-introduced from the 2019/2020 Session. I do not anticipate significant activity on many of these bills in the near future but a topical summary is provided here:

Property Tax Reform

House Bill 302 - elimination
House Bill 430 - penalty relief from tax bills not received by new owners
House Bill 473 - local option to cap increases in taxes or tax rates
House Bill 581 - local option to incentivize affordable housing

Property Tax Reform and Relief for Seniors

House Bill 74 - property tax freeze
House Bill 219 - Taxpayer Relief Act income threshold increases
House Bill 563 - property tax deferral

Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans/Veterans' Organizations

Senate Bill 122
Senate Bill 244

Assessment/Licensure Reform

House Bill 403 - owner choice for property crossing municipality boundaries
House Bill 325 - advisory opinion power granted to boards/commissions – i.e. SBCREA

Public Tax Sale Requirements

House Bill 264 - bidder pre-registration and affidavit of PA non-delinquency
House Bill 663 - (restrictions on tax sale activities
Senate Bill 252 - modernization of advertising requirements

Cumberland County - Job Opening

Cumberland County, located in Carlisle, Pa is currently recruiting for two (2) full time assessor positions to join our tax administration team! As a county assessor you will gather data and make determinations as to the base year value and perform specialized assessments in residential and commercial/industrial properties located in Cumberland County. The starting hourly rate is $22.23/hour or $43,348.50/year. In addition to a competitive salary, Cumberland County offers excellent benefits to include health/dental/vision insurance currently with no premium share options, paid time off, twelve (12) paid county holidays, and a county retirement pension (vested after 5 years of service)! To learn more about these career opportunities or to apply online please visit *www.ccpa.net/careers*! Please call (717) 240-6165 with any questions. Join a #CareerofServiceatCumberlandCounty TODAY!

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The *AAP Journal* is published four times a year.
Deadline for the Summer 2021 issue is June 4, 2021.

Article submissions are welcome.

Please send to:
Terry Cochran
AAP Executive Director

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CPE License Renewal Update

As CPEs are nearing the end of the 2019-2021 recertification cycle with the June 30 deadline, all CPE license holders will need to be sure that they have their 28 recertification credits, including the seven-hour USPAP class without the exam and the two-hour Act 28 class. The upcoming Virtual Annual Conference (May 5, 6, 11 and 12) is a great way to earn your remaining credits! Visit the AAP website at *www.paassessors.org* for more information and registration information.

In a change from the last cycle's license renewal, all CPEs will be required to upload their class certificates via the Department of State's Pennsylvania Licensing System (PALS) at *www.pals.pa.gov*. A renewal reminder notice will be emailed to you sometime in April. At that time, you can log into your PALS account and renew your license. Instructions will be given in the renewal reminder notice.

What You Should Be Doing Now

To make sure you have access to the PALS system as soon as you are able to apply for your license certification, we recommend that you visit the system NOW and make sure your account is set up and your contact information has been updated long before June 30. *It's very important for the SBCREA to have your correct contact information on file as they contact licensees about renewal procedures.*

More information will be sent out to all licensees over the next month from both the AAP and the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers (SBCREA).

Please note that if you qualified for your license from January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021, you are exempt from the Continuing Education requirements for the upcoming renewal.



Contact us to discuss your CAMA goals for the future.

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AAP People & Chapter News

Laurel Mountain Chapter

New Chapter Officers

President – **Joyce Hillegas**
Bedford County
Vice President – **Steve Gallo**
Allegheny County
Secretary – **Danielle Maust**
Somerset County
Treasurer – **Kim Deubner**
Cambria County

North Central Chapter

New Chapter Officers

President – **Josh Zeyn**
Tioga County
Vice President – **Michelle Tidlow**
Bradford County
Secretary – **Tiffany Kaseman**
Northumberland County
Treasurer – **Wendy Cook**
Snyder County

Armstrong County

Congratulations to **Cathleen Beere** the county's newest CPE!

Bucks County

Many congratulations to **Mark Jackowski** who was recently named the county's new chief assessor!

Cameron County

Sincere congratulations to **Shelly Peters** for passing her CPE exam!

Carbon County

We wish **Kim Steigerwalt** good luck as she retires from the county. She will be missed by both the county and the AAP!

Clearfield County

Melissa Fahr, Assistant Tax Administrator, departed the county on March 5, 2021 to begin a career with the state. Melissa will be missed beyond measure, however, she is well deserving of this new opportunity. Best wishes "Mic"! We will miss you!

Crawford County

Congratulations to **Tyler Lynch** who recently passed his CPE exam!

Dauphin County

Greg Daylor has been named as the county's new director of the assessment office! Congratulations, Greg!

Lori Paul, mapping and clean and green administrator, will be retiring on April 1 after 37 years of service. Lori will be missed for her wealth of knowledge, work ethic and fun spirit! She plans to enjoy her retirement spending time with her fiancé Billy, her golden retriever Lucy, and family and friends. We wish you a happy and healthy retirement Lori, you deserve it.

Erie County

Congratulations to **Shawna Puline** who passed her CPE exam this year!

Luzerne County

The county is pleased to announce that **Rachel Fox** passed her CPE exam in February! Congratulations!

Northampton County

Congratulations to **Maryann Ace** on her retirement from the county! We'll miss her smiling face at conferences!

Correction to Spring AAP People: Donna Roof has retired from Bradford County.

AAP News

Don't forget to send your news to Terry Cochran at *tcochran@pacounties.org* for the Summer 2021 issue of the *AAP Journal*. Our next deadline is **June 4.**

President's Message

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Moving forward in 2021 – here are a couple of items of interest. Governor Wolf signed Act 87 (House Bill 1032) into law at the end of 2020. This will allow for two CPEs representatives on the PA State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers(SBCREA). Earlier this year, our association forwarded our recommendations of two very well-qualified candidates through Lisa Schaefer, executive director of CCAP, on to the Governor's office for appointment. We look forward to hearing news on those appointments soon.

The construction of commercial solar farms is expanding all over the state. I'm sure we will be hearing a great deal more about this issue in the coming weeks and months. It is something that our county assessment offices will be handling as far as assessment valuation procedures go.

Recently, our Assessment Law Committee met to get input and gain insight on this issue – to see how any counties might currently be valuing them and provide some guidance to assessors for uniform valuation procedures across the state. It was mentioned to possibly recommend, through CCAP and the Local Government Commission, some changes to assessment law. Perhaps, an approved course on solar farm valuation could be created and offered to CPEs as continuing education credits. Again, I'm sure there will be a lot more information forthcoming.

Finally, I hand this column off to Susan Miller, AAP President-Elect, who will be writing messages for next year's *Journal* issues. On behalf of our entire association, I wish Susan all the best.

Please, stay safe everyone!

Robbie

Robert Roland, CPE
AAP President

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County Corner - Monroe County

Cindy Lee Treible, CPE
Chief Assessor/Tax Claim Director, Monroe County

Sitting along the border of New Jersey, Monroe County was formed from Pike and Northampton counties on April 1, 1836 and named in honor of President James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States.

Named for Colonel Jacob Stroud, a settler that built a home for his son, you will find the county seat in Stroudsburg which was incorporated as a borough on February 6, 1815. The Stroud home is now a museum operated by the Monroe County Historical Association.

Another prominent citizen, a local attorney and member of the Monroe County Bar Association, was A. Mitchell Palmer, who became Attorney General of the United States under the Wilson administration from 1912 to 1921.

In 1846 the Easton stage coach line was established to carry mail and passengers and by 1857 that had progressed to a train. Industries sprang up such as lumbering, tanneries and ice. Blocks of ice were cut from lakes and packed in sawdust to ship on trains to the cities. The manufacturing of silk and wool came in 1873. On May 17, 1898 at the Stroudsburg Woolen Mills, six sheep were shorn to produce a suit of clothes in six hours and four minutes. It set a world record!

People looking to escape the summer heat in the cities came to Monroe County to enjoy the cool mountain air at the many resorts of the Pocono Mountains, especially around the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. This area was once called the "Eighth Wonder of the World" and can be seen from many resorts, some of them built on the high banks overlooking the Delaware River.



Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

The recreation area includes nearly 70,000 acres of mountains, valleys and floodplains. The county also has state parks, such as Big Pocono State Park and parts of the Delaware State Forest, Gouldsboro State Park, and Tobyhanna State Park.

In the 1930's Fred Waring and his "Pennsylvanians" based their operations in the Poconos and held their radio show from Worthington Hall. Fred Waring also owned the Shawnee Press and The Shawnee Inn. The stately Shawnee Inn is currently operating as the Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort.



Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort

Monroe County is home to the famous Pocono Raceway (also know as the Tricky Triangle) which hosts two NASCAR races during the summer months. Pocono is one of only a few NASCAR tracks not owned by either NASCAR or Speedway Motorsports, the dominant track owners in NASCAR. Outside NASCAR and IndyCar Series races, Pocono is used throughout the year by the Stock Car Experience, Bertil Roos Driving School, Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) as well as many other clubs and organizations.

Monroe County is now home to three major water parks - Kalahari Resort, Great Wolf Lodge and Camelback Mountain Resort, and one casino, the Mount Airy Casino Resort.

Skiing is a multi-million dollar a year industry in the Poconos and Pennsylvania native John Guresh, an employee at Big Boulder Ski Resort, is credited with bringing the ski industry to the Poconos. There are many ski resorts open during winters in the Poconos.



The Pocono Mountains offer four seasons of endless fun and a tremendous variety of diversions, such as luxurious resorts, fun things to do for the whole family, outdoor adventures, bed and breakfasts and more. The region is famous for its resorts, natural scenic beauty and quaint, historic towns. The varied landscape inspires a range of experiences, from the private and peaceful to the bold and exhilarating.

Stay, explore, and discover the Pocono Mountains. To learn more about the Poconos, visit *www.poconomountains.com* for more information.

AAP

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