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AAP Journal

ASSESSORS' ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

Contents

President's Message 2
Legislative Update 3
AAP People 4
Memberabelia 7

Calendar

AAP Board of Governors' Meeting
Kalahari Resorts, Pocono Manor
May 6, 2025

AAP 2025 Annual Conference
Kalahari Resorts, Pocono Manor
May 7 - 9

CPE Review Class
TBD
May 19 -20

Act 28
Virtual
May 20

USPAP (7-hour AQB Course)
Virtual
May 21

2025 Fall CPE Classes
CCAP Office, Harrisburg
Intro – September 8 - 12
Site – September 15 - 19
Cost – September 29 – October 3
Income – October 6 - 10

AAP Board of Governors' Meeting
Wind Creek Bethlehem
November 12

AAP Fall Conference
Wind Creek Bethlehem
November 13 and 14

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

Blazing Your Own Trail:
Advancement Through Involvement

Camdon Porterfield, CPE, Westmoreland County

In what feels like a lifetime ago, I was sitting with my high school journalism advisor, Denise Valerio, at the end of my senior year. "Print journalism is a dying breed," she urged.

"Whatever you do in college, get as involved as you can and blaze your own trail."

I blew her off at first, as any cocky 18-year-old would do. I had a journalism scholarship to Robert Morris lined up, why would I want to go in a different direction?

Yet serendipitously, a year later, I was broadcasting sports games for Pitt athletics, parlaying that experience into documentary filmmaking and representing the student body on the UPG Senate – all at a place I was only supposed to 'get my core classes from.' I took a chance, got involved, and made a way for myself over those four years.

Later on, I was sitting in the office of yet another educational mentor, Dr. John Prellwitz, at the end of my collegiate career. "If an opportunity arises that furthers yourself, do it. It may not be Communications-related at first, but it will come. You need to blaze your own trail wherever you land."

Sound familiar?

Eventually, I followed Dr. Prellwitz's advice – especially after looking at market rents in Los Angeles. I needed a stable job in order to save up for my dream. So I went back to what I had always known – tax assessment.

The only way Evaluator Services and Technology would hire me on a full-time basis, even with eight years of experience, was with a CPE license. Truthfully, I thought this was a stopgap for my long-term objective – Southern California was still calling my name.

Yet by February 2015, I was valuing property and acting as a hearing officer for the Boards of Assessment during the Indiana County reassessment. I was intimidated at first, unsure of myself and my career path.

But days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months. While my mind was set on a future elsewhere, I was actually becoming pretty good at this whole 'tax assessment' thing.

Soon after the Indiana project, the company decided they needed some better PR and marketing strategies ahead of the Blair County reval. After some internal review, they landed on a certain 23-year-old University of Pittsburgh Communications grad to lead their rebranding – at which time, I realized Dr. Prellwitz' philosophy came to fruition.

There I was, doing something I loved while working in a field I virtually stum-

Continued on page 4

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President's Message

Hello, AAP Members,

Even though I reside in northwestern Pennsylvania, I think it's safe to say that spring is just around the corner. Yes, we may see a random snowflake or two before the end of March, but the worst of it is over.

As I write this, Erie sits atop the "Golden Snow Globe Contest" with over 110" of snow for the year, but we're in a tight race with Syracuse, NY for that top position. Not a distinction I'm thrilled about. If you work with a revaluation company, you have been collecting data all winter long to keep up with schedules set in contracts. Spring's arrival opens the doors for county data collection to get back to a regular schedule in the field.

Spring also brings the AAP Annual Conference which will be held May 7, 8, 9 at the Kalahari Resort. Registration is now open. This will be the last conference in this renewal cycle to get mandatory continuing education hours for your CPE license renewal. The Conference Planning and Education Committees have put together a great slate of classes to choose from. Part of the Annual Conference is the distribution of awards to our members for contributions over the last year. Please take some time to read through the award descriptions and consider making a nomination.

As this is my final submission as President, I want to extend my thanks to the other members of the Executive Board, the Board of Governors' representatives, Committee Chairs, and the AAP (CCAP) staff that work to make our organization run.

I feel very privileged to have held the position of President of the AAP, and could not have done it without the support and encouragement of many of my coworkers and peers along the way. I will be passing the gavel to Sarah Jordan at the Annual Conference, and want to wish her all the best. The AAP will be in good hands! As the current Executive Board members move up in the ranks, we will be looking to add a new member as Secretary. Serving as an officer for the AAP takes a commitment of time and energy, but the experience you gain is well worth the effort.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Rita

Rita Yannayon, CPE
AAP President

In partnership with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

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, any vestiges of winter should be receding 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 more outside activities.

During the first two months of the 2025/2026 Legislative Session, there have been 742 House bills, 100 House resolutions, 321 Senate bills and 30 Senate resolutions introduced. Of this total legislative volume, 20 pertain to assessment-related matters and 3 pertain to tax claim-related matters.

Most represent familiar topics and many are bills re-introduced from prior session(s). I do not anticipate significant activity on many of these bills in the near future but a topical summary is provided below:

Property Tax Reform:

- **Elimination of school property taxes** House Bill 310/Senate Bill 394
- **Enhanced property tax rebate(s)** House Bill 302
- **Senior or long-time owner property tax freeze** House Bills 286, 329
  and 625 and Senate Bills 23 and 393
- **Circuit breakers** House Bill 816
- **Limiting school district property tax increases over index** House Bill 817
  Tax exemption for disabled veterans and veterans' surviving spouses
- **Explicit inclusion of mental illness as qualifying condition** House Bill 511
- **Extending review period from 5 to 10 years** House Bill 636
- **Removing requirement of war-time service** Senate Bill 133

Others:

- **Affordable housing** House Bill 359
- **Land banks** House Bill 369
- **Regionalized commercial property tax distribution** House Bill 465
- **Strengthening language on charitable use of property by nonprofits**
  House Bills 736 and 737
- **Extending LERTA exemption schedule from 10 to 20 years** Senate Bill 264

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AAP Journal

The AAP Journal is published four times a year.

Deadline for the Summer 2025 issue is June 6, 2025.

Article submissions are encouraged.

Please send to:
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AAP People & Chapter and County News

Send your news to Terry Cochran at tcochran@pacounties.org for the Summer issue of the AAP Journal.
Our next deadline is June 6.

Chester County

Chester County assessor **Courtney Smith** passed her CPE exam on December 5, 2024. Congratulations!

Franklin County

Congratulations to **Ian Rea** who passed his CPE exam!

Lancaster and Tioga Counties

Thank you to **Kevin Edwards**, Lancaster County's Director of Property Assessment, and **Josh Zeyn**, Tioga County's Chief Assessor/ Tax Claim Director, for representing county assessment offices at the CCAP Spring Conference on March 17 at the *Uniform Assessments: What Counties Should Know* breakout session. The breakout was the most popular session at the Conference!

Montgomery County

Susan Stelzer from Montgomery County, passed her CPE Exam in December. Congratulations!

Join the AAP List Serv!

Did you know the AAP has a list serv email group that is open to all active members?

The list serv allows members to exchange ideas and pose questions seeking the help of your peers.

If you're interested in joining the list serv, please contact Lori Lawyer at *llawyer@pacounties.org*.



Blaze Your Own Trail

Continued from page 1

There I was, doing something I loved while working in a field I virtually stumbled into – a field I could make a career in. What were the odds?

Fast-forward to today, where I'm three years removed from making the jump to the public sector after 16 years in the private sector. Humorously, so many people have asked me, "Why on earth would you do that? After all that time and effort, you're virtually starting over?"

Blazing your own trail doesn't mean taking the easy route – you look for opportunities to advance yourself, your career, and the people and circumstances around you.

As then-Chairman of the Westmoreland County Board of Assessment, I knew the issues and conditions that existed within the office. When the Chief Assessor job came available, I jumped at the opportunity to make a change for the better, even if it meant stepping far from my comfort zone.

While that decision turned out to be a positive one, I was urged by my AAP peers to get even further involved beyond my day-to-day responsibilities – to make a difference in the Association by bringing my unique perspectives to the proverbial table.

Taking that leap has landed me the Laurel Mountain Chapter Presidency and a seat on the AAP Board of Governors. It has been worth every second.

Telling you such things is not for self-aggrandizement – all of our stories, backgrounds, and circumstances are different. Rather, I want to inspire you. I want this to be your 'Valerio-Prellwitz' moment.

Get involved with your local chapter and at the state level.

Ask to be included on the AAP ListServ – if you take time to read and understand the questions/responses, you'll start living and breathing this profession in no time.

Reach out to the Association when you have a question or problem, and participate in solving those quandaries when they arise with others.

Use the tools around you to excel, and make yourself a resource – exact the change you want to see by being that change.

Blaze your own trail in this business – it will take you further than you can imagine.

AAP Annual Awards and Service Recognition

Nominations are now being accepted!

Nominations are being accepted for both the AAP Annual Awards and Years of Service Recognition.

Please see the Awards section on the AAP conference pages - https://www.paassessors.org/conferences-and-education/annual-conference/awards.

All awards will be given out at the AAP Annual Conference at the Kalahari Resort on May 8.

Nomination Deadline: April 5



Register Now for the AAP Annual Conference!

May 7 to 9 - Kalahari Resort



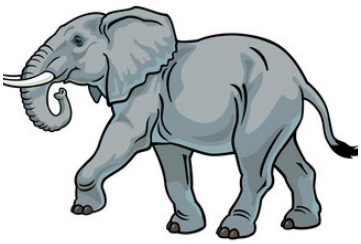
There's still time to register for the 75th AAP Annual Conference at the Kalahari Resort in the Poconos!

The online registration deadline is April 30!

Deadlines are coming up in April -

- Nominations for AAP Officers - **April 1**
- AAP Annual and Service Awards - **April 5**
- Overnight Room Reservations - April 6
- Conference Program Ads - **April 11**
- Online Conference Registration - **April 30**

After April 30, please contact Lori Lawyer at llawyer@pacounties.org to register.



AAP
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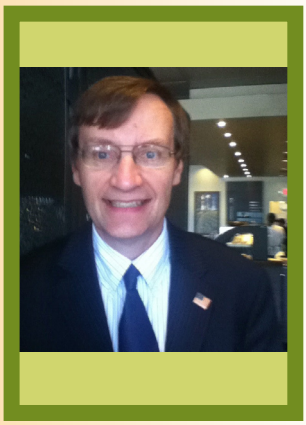
Get Involved in the AAP! Volunteer for a Committee

Now's the time to get involved and serve on an AAP Committee.

Any committee member will tell you that being part of AAP committees or the board is a great way to get to know other members and contribute in a meaningful way to AAP policies and governance.

Check out the committee lists on the AAP website and contact the committee chairs.





BRUCE WITT
CHIEF APPRAISER
BUCKS COUNTY

Past Counties: Philadelphia and worked on Wayne County and New Castle County, DE reassessments; Town of Greenwich, CT; Franklin County, OH; and Olmsted County, MN

Overall Years in County Assessment: 13 Years

Years in Some Other Form of Assessment Business: A total of 32 years total in real estate sales/brokerage/teaching/assessment

First Job Ever: Student worker at University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Military Science Department

Worst Job Ever: Phone sales for an agricultural data service

What Irritates Me Most in the Assessment Business is: Pennsylvania's base year system and infrequent reassessments

My Biggest Challenge as an Assessor is: Covering a county of 245,000+ parcels with eight amazing hard working appraisers and a 1972 base year

Not Counting My Present Job, My Dream Job Always Was: Working as a writer/photographer for National Geographic

If I Won Millions in the Lottery, I Would: Purchase a WNBA franchise for Philadelphia.

Favorite Vacation Memory: Too many wonderful memories with Sally to pick from - getting engaged at a Clearwater Beach, FL sunset. Sally and I have been married for 40 years.

Favorite Food: Barbeque ribs

Favorite Drink: Water and All Kinds of Fruit Juices

Favorite movie: *Tender Mercies*

Funniest Assessment Story: When starting at the Office of Property Assessment in Philadelphia, two of us were in the field training with our supervisor. My co-worker was wondering what commercial properties we were at with no signs and just address numbers with cameras at the front doors. I did not have the heart to tell her we were on a block that was a cluster of massage parlors.

Most People Would be Surprised to Know: I was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and, yes, I was a cheesehead before there were cheeseheads. We also lived in North Carolina and California

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