



www.TahoeBonanza.com, January 27, 2008, front page

Tax appeals flood assessor's office

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January 27, 2008

While Washoe County Assessor's Office officials continue this week to thumb through the thousands of assessed property value appeals filed by the Jan. 15 deadline, the preliminary numbers show Incline Village and Crystal Bay as the overwhelming leaders in the number of petitions filed.

According to the Washoe County Clerk's Office, 1,335 individual appeals from the Incline Village/Crystal Bay community were received from the county assessor's office as of Friday afternoon. Those 1,335 appeals account for 37 percent of the 3,574 appeals from all of Washoe County.

The above numbers are not official, as the county assessor's office still is going through appeals to determine final numbers, said Washoe County Clerk Amy Harvey.

"They've got a lot of duplicate petitions and they need to look through them all to determine if there are doubles," Harvey said.

Once the assessor's office deciphers all the petitions, the next phase is to schedule hearings for each appeal in front of the Washoe County Board of Equalization. Harvey currently is working with equalization board members to schedule separate hearings for the 3,574 (and possibly more) appeals.

Theresa Rudkin, chief deputy assessor for Washoe County, said the assessor's office is working hard to get through all the petitions, considering the equalization board, by law, has until Feb. 29 to hear all assessed property value appeals.

"Once the board schedules a hearing, it has to give the (appellant) to days notice," Rudkin said. "And they all have to be heard by the end of February."

The next Washoe County Board of Equalization meeting is scheduled for Friday. Harvey said board members are set to hold hearings for appeals from the Reno/Sparks area.

After Friday, the next meeting is Feb. 15, and the board is tentatively scheduled to hear six of the 1,335 (and possibly more) Incline appeals, Harvey said, although the date could change. Those six petitions include attachments, which name 6,995 Incline Village and Crystal Bay residents.

Maryanne Ingemanson, president of the Village League to Save Incline Assets, a nonprofit group of Incline tax protesters, is one of those six petitioners.

She said 6,995 residents attached in her appeal are the Incline and Crystal Bay residents who didn't file individual appeals.

Ingemanson and the • others did this, she said, to avoid confusion once a ruling is handed down, referring to past cases when only those who appealed receiver tax rollbacks. For example, about 300 Incliners who appealed their 2006-2007 assessments agreed to a settlement. However, since none of the remaining 8,700 Incline parcels didn't appeal, they didn't receive any roll backs, despite the county board of equalization's decision that assessment methodologies used in the 300 appealed cases were unconstitutional.

By adding the rest of Incline to her petition, Ingemanson said it hopefully will shore up those past problems.

"Each of the people on the (six) petitions, they all have similarly situated properties," Ingemanson said. "Basically, it means that if I win, then the ruling applies to all of the similarly situated properties."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 population estimates, 339,486 people live in Washoe County, while 9,952 people live in Incline Village and Crystal Bay.

That's a difference of 329,534 people, or 3 percent.

Ingemanson also said she was glad to see a large outpouring of Incline appeals, considering it makes up a fraction of Washoe County.

"This is huge now," she said. "It's just getting bigger and bigger."

Rudkin agreed, saying that 2008 marks one of the bigger years for assessment appeals.

"We've had similar types of appeals of this number in the past," she said. "But still, this is a pretty great amount, something that doesn't happen too often."

As for the remaining Incline appeals, Rudkin and Harvey said they will have to wait patiently until the board schedules hearings.

While the option of combining some or all of the hearings, to avoid having 1,335 separate hearings, is possible, it has to be adopted in a public meeting, Harvey said.

"Any decisions about consolidation has to be recommended by the board," Harvey said.

Information about the Washoe County Board of Equalization board can be accessed at the county's Web site. Go to www.co.washoe.nv.us, then type "equalization" in the search bar. Citizens also can follow any Village League updates at www.nevadapropertytaxrevolt.org.

Number of appeals

- Total number of Washoe County appeals: 3,574
- Total number of Incline Village/Crystal Bay appeals: 1,335
- Total number of appeals not from IV/CB: 2,239

That means 37 percent of all appeals filed dealt with Incline Village or Crystal Bay properties

Note: Numbers are as received by the Washoe County Clerk's Office as of Friday afternoon. The county assessor's office still is going through appeals to determine final numbers, officials said.

Approximate number of people who appealed past assessed property values

- 2003-2004 assessed values: 130 appellants
- 2004-2005 assessed values: 150 appellants
- 2005-2006 assessed values: 1,200 appellants
- 2006-2007 assessed values: 300 appellants
- 2007-2008 assessed values: 1,000 appellants
- 2008-2009 assessed values: 1,335 appellants

Note: 2008-2009 numbers are as of Friday afternoon and are not final. The county assessor's office still is going through appeals to determine final numbers, officials said.



Bonanza Photo - Jen Schmidt More than 300 residents of Incline Village and Crystal Bay attend the Nevada Supreme Court hearings Jan. 7 regarding two cases on property tax assessments.

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