

Fewer property tax appeals filed

By Susan Voyles
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Washoe County property tax appeals this year are half the number of a year ago, before the Nevada Legislature limited property tax increases for homeowners at 3 percent.

No matter how much more a property has been appraised this year, county Assessor Bob McGowan stressed property tax bills for homeowners will rise no more than 3 percent.

Lee Carter, a telephone company retiree in the North Valleys, said he filed an appeal this year because he doesn't trust the Nevada Legislature to keep the property tax cap in place for long.

"At a stroke of a pen, it will be gone in a second," Carter said. "With a stroke of a pen, it could be back to 9 percent. And this isn't even a reappraisal year."

The new taxable value of his house is \$242,393, a boost of \$22,648. With the 3 percent cap, his property tax bill will go up by \$72 to \$2,473, if the property tax rate stays the same.

McGowan said he expects some fine-tuning to the regulations this year.

Some possible changes include requiring property owners to submit sworn affidavits that their rents are at or below federal median rent standards for the area to receive the 3 percent cap. They now just fill out forms.

Another proposed change concerns family compounds, said Terry Rubald of the Nevada Taxation Department.

More than one residential building on the same parcel now qualifies for the 3 percent cap if only family members live there. This would be expanded to include multiple buildings on connecting parcels.

A provision that worries some in the assessor's office is allowing a property owner to claim a second home as a low-cost rental for the 3 percent cap. The rental could be to a family member at minimal or no rent.

That raises the question whether a family member lives there at all, said John Faulkner, county chief deputy assessor.

McGowan said that would put government in an awkward position of inspecting living arrangements.

Faulkner said he has heard from some Nevada taxpayers who complain their second homes in the Lake Tahoe area don't qualify for the 3 percent limit.

People in California with second homes in Nevada qualify for the limit because they the primary residence in the state.

Fast Fact

In Incline Village, 558 tax appeals were filed and will be heard over the next few weeks, down from 1,280 heard last February.

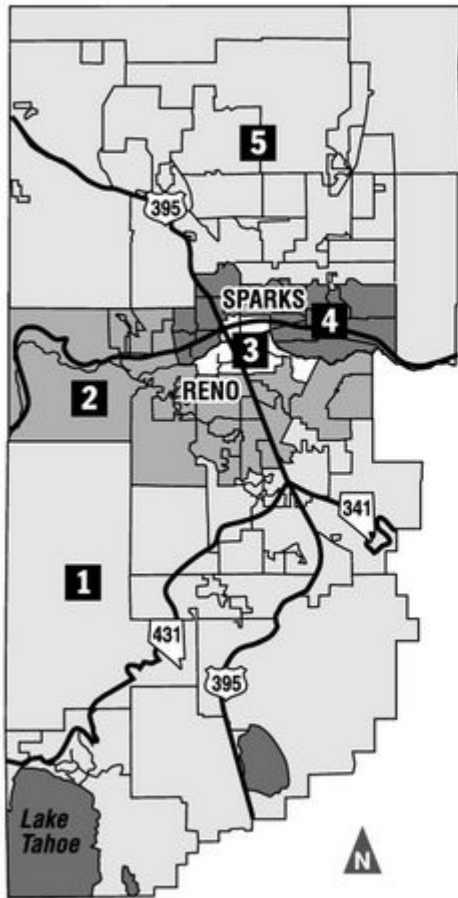
In the rest of the county, 86 tax appeals were filed this year, up from 60 appeals in 2005, but less than 2004 when 150 property owners filed appeals.

Washoe County's taxable value for the 2006-07 fiscal year is \$36 billion, up by 14.6 percent from \$31.4 billion in 2005-06.

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Washoe County property values for 2006-07

One-fifth of the county is reappraised every year, while the other four-fifths of the county are given a factor to help keep up with market values for land and replacement costs for construction. The median sales prices, as compiled by the county assessor's office, are the points where half the sales were made for more than that amount and half for less.



1 South County

Last reappraised: 2003
Parcel count: 30,534; up from 28,967 last year.
2002 median sales price for a single-family home: \$285,000
2005 median sales price for a single-family home: \$429,900
Residential land factor: 2 percent
Residential building factor: 8 percent to 12 percent

2 South Reno and Verdi

Last reappraised: 2004
Parcel count: 33,949; up from 32,473 last year
2003 median sales price for a single-family home: \$270,000
2005 median sales price for a single-family home: \$421,826
Residential land factor: 4 percent
Residential building factor: 8 percent to 12 percent

3 Downtown Reno

Last reappraised: 2005
Parcel count: 13,043; up from 13,005 last year
2004 median sales price for a single-family home: \$230,000
2005 median sales price for a single-family home: \$270,000
Residential land factor: No change
Residential building factor: 8 percent to 12 percent

4 Northwest, Reno and Sparks

Reappraised this year. Previously, reappraised: 2001
Parcel count: 29,558; up from 29,058 last year
2000 median sales price for a single-family home: \$138,500
2005 median sales price for a single-family home: \$289,000
Residential land increases range from 16 percent to 20 percent
Residential buildings were raised from 8 percent to 12 percent

5 North Valleys

Last reappraised: 2002
Parcel count: 48,226; up from 44,471 last year
2001 median sales price for a single-family home: \$159,000
2005 median sales price for a single-family home: \$311,295
Residential land factor: 11 percent
Residential building factor: 8 percent to 12 percent