

QUESTION:

Just to further understand, there is no state law at the local level that sets guidelines on revaluation of property values (except for new construction, add-ons, zoning changes, etc.).

Can the property value of an average homeowner with no changes in previous year(s) increase yearly with no basis except to increase the county revenues? How can one appeal a property revaluation with their county if there are no criteria for raising property values?

ANSWER:

The board of assessor's responsibility includes annually assessing property at fair market value as of January 1. While adding new construction is part of the process, the process also involves reflecting market changes (up or down) in property values.

The purpose of a revaluation is not to increase county revenue but to ensure equity and uniformity of assessment. As stated above, each year there are two types of value changes made to a county tax digest. The change may be due to inflation or a result of increases due to new or improved properties.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia Law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's new digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred. If the county elects to set their millage rate higher than the rollback rate, then the law imposes certain requirements. The requirements are to hold three public hearings, place notices of the increase in the paper and issue press releases.

If you received a reassessment notice for 2008, I hope that you filed your appeal timely and trust that through the appeal process you will be able to resolve this matter.

If your property was not reassessed for 2008 and you feel the current assessed value on your property is higher than fair market value, you may wish to file a real property return between January 1 and the close of the return book in your county (March 1 or April 1) in 2009. Declare your estimate of the property value on this return which will be reviewed by the board of assessors. If the assessors do not accept your return value you will be sent a change of assessment notice in the spring of 2009 and can file appeal at that time and follow the administrative appeal process set out in 48-5-311. Please check with your county to find out the deadline for filing the return.