

## REQUESTS FOR REVIEW OF PROPERTY VALUES

Property owners often feel that the real market value assigned by the county assessor is too high. While we strive to accurately appraise every piece of property, with over 28,000 property tax accounts in Columbia County there are bound to be mistakes made. That is why we have always responded quickly and thoroughly to requests from property owners to review the real market value of their property.

Two major changes have taken place during the last few years. The first is Measure 50 which significantly changes the value that is used to determine your tax bill. For most properties the market value is no longer used in calculating your tax bill. Instead, the assessed value is used. For the 1997-98 tax year, the assessed value was the 1995-96 real market value reduced by ten percent. Each year the assessed value is increased three percent over the prior year. New construction, property divisions, disqualifications from exemption or special assessment and zone changes (also referred to as “exceptions”) can be added to this value. The average assessed value for residential property is 25 percent less than the market value, although this can vary a great deal (refer to your tax statement for a comparison of assessed value to market value). Thus, even if the market value of your property is reduced or there is an exception, there will be no reduction in your tax bill unless the market value falls below the assessed value. The second major change is that the assessors office staff has been reduced, including a reduction in full time appraiser positions from 6 to 4.

It will therefore not be possible to conduct valuation reviews as thoroughly as we used to and the following steps are being implemented to review the value of your property:

- 1) You will be asked to fill out a Request for Review form indicating clearly why you think our market value is too high and what you think the market value should be. If you have documentation and/or pictures that support your argument, please attach them.
- 2) If the reduction in market value will be less than 5%, no review will be conducted. Real estate appraisal is only accurate to plus or minus 5%.
- 3) If your estimate of the market value would not reduce the assessed value, a review will be conducted for the following tax year and will be conducted some time after the first of the year. You will not be notified.
- 4) If your estimate of the market value is lower than the assessed value or if you disagree with the real market value assigned to an exception, a review will be conducted for the current year and will be completed in late November. In most cases the review will be based on the information that you have provided. If the appraiser needs additional information they may call you to schedule an interior inspection. You will be notified of the results of our review by December 15.

**If you are dissatisfied with the results of our review you may file an appeal with the Columbia County Board of Property Tax Appeals. Appeal forms are available from our office or the County Clerk and must be filed with the County Clerk no later than December 31.**