

ASSESSOR'S PROGRAM

Complaints Bring About Assessment Publication

By PHILIP E. WATSON
County Assessor

For long years, the property owners of Los Angeles County complained—and for good reason—that not until they got their tax bills in November did they know whether or not their assessed value had increased.

And by that time, because the period for filing petitions for assessment changes then was a brief two weeks in July, it was too late to lodge a protest.

Finally, at the 1963 session of the legislature, we were successful in passing a law that would allow us to notify taxpayers of their assessments in plenty of time for them to file a petition if they

disagreed with the value we had placed on their property.

WE BEGAN our notification program last year by publishing all assessment listings in the one-fifth of the county made up of the Pasadena, San Gabriel Valley and Long Beach-Lakewood areas (which we designated Full Publication Area Number One), and all changes in assessed values in the other four-fifths of the county.

Now it's publication time for this year. Beginning this week, we will be publishing full assessment listings in the community papers in the areas served by our Regional Offices 4, 8, 11 and 12—the communities of Glendale,

Hollywood, central Los Angeles, Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada and Hacienda Heights—the one-fifth of the county we have designated Full Publication Area Number Two. We will again publish all assessed value changes in the remainder of the county.

The notification law provides an alternative to newspaper publication—notification by postcard. I have chosen the newspaper option because one of the side benefits of this method is that it not only notifies the individual property owner of his value, but furnishes a public audit of the work of our department.

ANYONE, whether the listing is his own property or not, can simply multiply by four—since all assessments are at 25 per cent of market value—and see for himself whether our appraisals are correct.

This is basic to my belief that we should provide the property owners, and the general public, with every opportunity to check on our work. While the assessment roll has always been a public document, it has always been difficult for the average citizen, tied to his job and family, to find time to search out his assessment. With newspaper publication, we are, in effect, putting this information in his hands.

Unfortunately, this is about as far as we can go. It is not within one's power to make sure everyone takes advantage of this opportunity to receive ample notice of any change in his assessed value.

Don't wait until you get your tax bill.

Finance Office Gives Earnings

Net earnings after taxes for the six months ending June 30 for the Hawthorne Financial Corporation were \$561,867. Earnings for the first six months of 1964 were \$519,457.

The association now operates three offices: in Hawthorne, Westchester, and Torrance.

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