

PRESS RELEASE

2013-14 Columbia County Property Tax Statements

October 8, 2013

Sue Martin, Columbia County Assessor

The 2013-14 Columbia County Assessment and Tax Roll has been certified and property tax bills will be mailed on October 11, 2013 to Columbia County property owners.

Property owners are invited to attend a short presentation on Oregon's Property Tax System and the Assessor will be available to answer questions on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 at 6:30 pm and again on Wednesday, November 6, 2013 at 2:00 pm. These events will be held at the Columbia County Courthouse Annex in the Main Floor Meeting Room.

Between January 1, 2012 and January 1, 2013, real market values for residential properties countywide increased an average of 2%. Residential properties within the City of Clatskanie had the highest average increase at 15% while properties within the City of Vernonia experienced the largest average decrease at 23%, although this average reflects a steep drop in properties located within the flood zone.

There were two new local option levies approved by voters this year. Property owners within the Clatskanie Rural Fire Protection District will pay an additional \$1.2533 per \$1,000 assessed value to the CRFPD for the next five years for operational costs to improve services. City of Prescott property owners will pay an additional \$2.15 per \$1,000 assessed value for the next ten years for an arsenic removal/filtration system.

Property tax statements for residential properties in Warren, Deer Island and the rural Saint Helens areas will reflect real market values changes due to a reappraisal for the 2013-14 tax year. This reappraisal consisted mainly of curbside inspections by registered county property appraisers unless major changes were noted that required a more detailed inspection.

A total of \$59,043,665 in property taxes are being billed for the county, cities, schools and special districts. That amount is 7.71 percent more than was billed last year. In addition, a total of \$1,237,600 will be collected for such things as drainage district assessments and the Oregon Department of Forestry's fire patrol special assessments. That amount is 6.22 percent higher than last year.

Countywide, the market value of all taxable property increased from \$5.49 billion to \$5.71 billion, an increase of 4.00 percent. The total tax assessed value this year is \$4,411,299,852 or 6.73 percent higher than last year.

The first payment of the tax bill is due on Friday, November 15, 2013. At least one third of the amount is due at that time. Payments can be made at the tax office in the

courthouse on Monday through Thursday between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:00 pm. Since the courthouse county offices are closed on Fridays, property owners should be sure to mail their payment with a postmark no later than November 15. A return envelope will be included with the statements. For payments that are made using a bank's bill pay service, the tax account number should be noted in the memo field. The second and third installments are due by February 18, 2014 and May 15, 2014, however the County does not send out a statement or a reminder notice for the February or May due dates.

Columbia County is once again providing a way to pay property taxes with E-checks and credit and debit cards through the Point & Pay website. Property Tax payments can be made with your E-checks and credit and debit cards on-line at www.co.columbia.or.us, or by calling 1-866-587-4007. There is a 2.5% charge to use your credit or debit card and a flat fee of \$2.95 for E-checks.

This year, arrangements have been made with the St. Helens Community Federal Credit Union located in Scappoose, Saint Helens and Rainier as an authorized collector for the County to collect only the 2013-14 property tax payments through November 15, 2013.

Property owners who pay the entire amount due by November 15th will receive a three percent discount. If two thirds of the bill is paid by November 15th a two percent discount of the amount paid will be allowed.

Property owners may appeal the value of their property as in past years. However, there would only be a reduction in the taxes due if the market value falls below the assessed value. The deadline for filing an appeal is December 31, 2013. Appeal forms are available from the County Clerk or County Assessors Office, or can be found online at www.co.columbia.or.us/departments/assessors-office/assessors-property-tax-appeals-and-review.