



Mike Kadas
Director

Montana Department of Revenue



Steve Bullock
Governor

To: County Commissioners
County Clerk and Recorders
County Treasurers
Montana Association of Counties

From: Mike Kadas, Director *ML Kadas*

Date: November 7, 2017

Subject: Changes to Property Assessment Division Staff Allocation and Processes

The Department of Revenue, Property Assessment Division suffered significant budget cuts in the last legislative session due to HB2 and Senate Bill 261. These cuts impact our budget available for operations and personnel. In order to meet our new budget, the Property Assessment Division is taking a hard look at how we do business and how staff is allocated throughout the state. As a result, the Division must start making changes.

Data collection is a major amount of the Division's workload. We have many programs that rely on the collection of information from taxpayers via various reporting forms. We will be pushing hard to move to online, electronic reporting, instead of costly paper and mail processes. Electronic reporting will provide cost savings in the materials and postage, as well as manual data entry.

We also rely on information gathered by our appraisers in the field. Current, accurate property data is essential to our mass appraisal process. We will implement and deploy new technologies to create efficiencies as time and money allow. We are also analyzing our workload and priorities at a statewide level. It is our intention to allocate the Division's staff based on the location, as well as type and amount of work that needs to be done.

The Property Assessment Division has begun the process of implementing some of these changes. Although it has been a very tough decision, we have started the process of closing offices in Powell, Granite and Pondera counties, and we plan to close two more by the end of this month and very likely others as we move into next year. Because these closures directly impact the staff working in these offices, division management is meeting with each employee in person to discuss their options. After these discussions have occurred we will continue the communications and planning with local government and other affected parties. We will provide updated contact information for local government staff and for taxpayers seeking assistance. We will be implementing more phone calls, scanning, and emailing processes to keep information strong between the department and local governments where offices have closed.

We understand the significance of a good working relationship between us and local government. As we work through these changes, we will seek to improve our partnership with you and look for opportunities to continue to work together. Change will be difficult, it is our intention to serve the citizens of Montana in an effective and efficient manner within the resources provided to the department by the Legislature.