

*We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation during the reassessment and hope this information gives you a better understanding of the revaluation process.*

### **Revaluation Project Timetable of Work**

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS/REVIEW:  
April 2016 to May 2017

VALUATION DETERMINATIONS:  
May 2017 to June 2017

NOTICES OF VALUE CHANGES:  
June/July 2017

APPRAISAL HEARINGS:  
June 2017 to August 2017

PROJECT COMPLETION:  
August 2017

Town of Skowhegan Assessing Office Staff  
Phone: 207-474-6903

William Van Tuinen  
*Assessor*

Leisa Emery  
*Assistant Assessor*

### **TAX RELIEF**

*The following exemptions provide for local property tax relief. Applications are available at the Assessor's Office.*

**Veterans.** A person must be a ME resident, 62 years or older and have served on active duty during a recognized war period or; be receiving 100% disability compensation for service connected injury.

**Homestead.** A person must be a ME resident and have owned and resided in that homestead for at least 12 months prior to date of application.

**Blind.** A person determined to be legally blind by a medical doctor.

**Business Equipment Tax Exemption.** For businesses that own qualified equipment placed in service after April 1, 2007.

*The following Current Use Programs provide for a reduced valuation; however a penalty is assessed upon withdrawal from the program. Applications are available at the Assessor's Office.*

**Tree Growth.** A parcel of land with at least 10 forested acres which are harvested for commercial purposes.

**Farm Land.** Property must have a minimum of 5 acres and produce an income from agricultural use.

**Open Space.** No minimum acreage but the parcel must be undeveloped and provide a public benefit.

**Working Waterfront.** No minimum acreage but the parcel must be providing access to or in support of the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

*The following programs provide for property tax relief as a reimbursement. Please contact the Maine Income Tax Division at 207-626-8465.*

**Maine Residents Property Tax & Rent Refund.** Eligible Maine residents can receive a partial refund of property taxes and/or rent paid on their primary residence.

**Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement.** Eligible Maine Businesses may receive a rebate of property tax paid on eligible equipment.

## ***Property Revaluation (Property Tax Equalization)***

### **Understanding the Process**

### **Questions & Answers**



## SKOWHEGAN PROPERTY REVALUATION PROGRAM STARTS APRIL 2016

A town-wide revaluation project is underway. Representatives from Vision Government Solutions, a firm hired by the Town of Skowhegan, will perform a Town-wide property revaluation program that is required by Maine Revenue Services. These inspections will start in April 2016. This program will take approximately 10 months to complete.

The data collectors will carry photo identification. A description of their cars and license plate numbers will be on file with the Skowhegan Police Department and the Tax Assessor's Office. The Assessor suggests that homeowners request identification before granting anyone permission to enter your home or business.

During this process, data collectors will visit residential and commercial properties to physically measure a building's exterior and do an inspection of the interior. Building characteristics such as, size, age, quality of construction, construction materials, improvements, story height and condition are noted. To ensure a home or business is inspected, a homeowner or company representative must sign a property record card to verify the inspection. The entire process takes approximately 15-30 minutes.

Data collectors generally work between 8 AM & 6 PM Monday through Friday. There will be an initial attempt to enter a property; if no one is at the home or business, on that occasion a letter will be sent to homeowners and business owners to call and schedule an appointment at his/her convenience. The Assessor's Office appreciates your cooperation and assistance with this procedure.

Some frequently asked questions:

**Q. *Why is a property revaluation necessary?***

**A.** The last revaluation was done in 1991, and many changes have occurred in the Skowhegan real estate market since that time. The **equity** that was established has slowly deteriorated. Some town properties are assessed at significantly less than their fair market value. However, some properties are assessed closer to market value than others, creating inequities.

**Q. *Why does my home need to be inspected now? Isn't that information already on file at the Town Office?***

**A.** Although there is information on file at the Assessor's Office, the accuracy of that information requires verification. Correct data ensures **fair and equitable** valuations.

**Q. *Do I have to let the Data Collector into my home?***

**A.** The homeowner certainly has the right to refuse entrance. However, it is in the homeowner's best interest to allow an inspection. Otherwise an estimate of the interior's amenities will be made. A fair and accurate revaluation requires equal access to all properties.

**Q. *When will Data Collectors be in my neighborhood?***

**A.** Announcements on the Town's website will describe the areas where personnel will be working.

**Q. *If my valuation doubles, does that mean that my taxes will also double?***

**A.** No. Although we frequently refer to the project as a revaluation, a better term is equalization, because what normally occurs during a revaluation is that some taxes go up, some go down, and some stay the same. How much an individual's taxes increase or decrease depends on the degree to which a

property is presently over or under valued, compared to others of like value.

**Q. *What determines my tax?***

**A.** There are two basic factors which affect a person's tax bill. The first is the amount of money raised to fund municipal, school, and county services. In Skowhegan, the amount for municipal services is set by voters at the annual Town Meeting. The second is the valuation. The property's valuation multiplied by the tax rate results in the amount of tax owed. (The tax rate is determined by dividing the total value of the Town into the total amount to be raised.)

**Q. *How will the depressed state of the economy affect the revaluation?***

**A.** Values will be based on actual sales data for the period of April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017. Property values, in general, have leveled off or in some cases, declined. In determining "just value", we attempt to estimate the long term fair market value, reflecting neither the peak nor the bottom of the market.

**Q. *When and how will I be notified of my new assessment?***

**A.** All property owners will receive a change in assessment notice in early summer of 2017.

**Q. *Will I have the right to contest the new valuation?***

**A.** Yes. The change in assessment notice will include instructions for requesting a hearing. However, you must show that the Appraiser erred in computing your valuation.

**Q. *If I have any questions, who should I contact?***

**A.** Please feel free to contact the Assessor's Office at 207-474-6903. The Assessor's Office is open Monday – Friday from 8 AM – 4:30 PM.