



**VILLAGE OF RICHFIELD
ASSESSOR'S UPDATE 12/19/2013**

In November 2012, the Village contracted with Associated Appraisal Consultants, Inc., to replace Grota Appraisals, LLC, as your municipal assessor. Beginning in 2013, we have begun a six-year project to physically visit all properties in the Village, review and update all property records, and maintain annual assessed values at or near market value. I believe that we had a very successful assessment year in 2013.

The Village's assessment records have been maintained for many years in an appraisal software package called PC Market Drive. It is our intent to continue to maintain the assessment records in this digital format. The advantage of this software is that it can easily share data with both Washington County and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. On a regular basis, the assessor can receive updated sales information from the DOR as well as updated ownership information and changes in legal descriptions (or new parcels) from Washington County. Since Associated Appraisal is a licensed user of the software, we can provide the Village with most of the software updates, saving time and money for the Village.

During the time between November 2013 and July 2014, we successfully accomplished the first stage of our six-year project. The following is a summary of the tasks completed:

- Obtained archive property records from Grota Appraisals in both paper and digital formats.
- Sorted and filed all paper property record folders in order, making sure to account for all records.
- Updated Market Drive software to from version 2012 to version 2013
- Balanced assessed values for all parcels (land and improvements) to match the 2012 assessment roll. (These values had all been changed in Market Drive software when we received the database from Grota Appraisals)

- Mailed Statements of Personal Property to all business owners who own taxable personal property in the Village.
- Entered building permit data into Market Drive software for each parcel that was issued a building permit in 2012.
- Reviewed all sales of real estate that took place in the Village during 2012 to determine which sales were arm's length sales and which were not.
- Reported sales validations to Department of Revenue, along with all property attributes for arm's length sales.
- Performed a sale ratio study to determine the ratio of assessed value to sale price for all valid sales.
- Identified which properties required field visits for 2013.
- Mailed letters to properties we planned to visit to inform property owners of the new Village assessor and explain the reason for our upcoming visit.
- Performed field inspections to gather data for updating assessment records, reviewing sales, building permits and requests by property owners.
- Performed a detailed review of land classifications and land valuations of rural properties in the Village and made adjustments in acre classifications as necessary.
- Processed all Statements of Personal Property that were completed and returned to the assessor.
- Updated property records with all new information obtained from field visits.
- Completed new assessed values for personal property and real estate and provided an updated assessment roll to Village staff.
- Mailed notices of changed assessments to owners of any properties whose assessments have changed.
- Conducted Open Book meetings on July 8th in afternoon and evening.
- Finalized all assessments at Board of Review on July 24th.

We mailed approximately 800 notices of changed assessments to property owners in 2013. During the Open Book, we met with approximately 25 property owners. We also received calls from several property owners who couldn't attend the Open Book and discussed their concerns by telephone. Changes were made to some assessments as necessary as a result of the Open Book meetings. At the Board of Review, only one objection was made and it was withdrawn by the property owner during his testimony.

After the Board of Review we have continued to provide assessment information to the public as requested (including several requests per week by realtors and appraisers) and responded to telephone calls and emails from property owners who

are questioning their assessed values.

In August, the Department of Revenue released the 2013 equalized values, which showed a 3% drop in the equalized value of the Village from January 2012 to January 2013. The ratio of assessed value to equalized value for the Village in 2013 is approximately 105%.

For the 2014 assessment year, we are planning to perform field inspections of approximately 1,000 homes in the Village to update the assessor's records as part of our six-year project. Prior to the inspections we will mail letters to property owners to inform them of the process and the reason for our visit. If no one is home at the time of the visit, we will leave a doorhanger on the main entrance with instructions on how to call for an appointment. Our staff will be carrying photo ID tags and driving red fleet vehicles, clearly displaying our company name, so that we are clearly recognizable. We will be courteous and professional in our communications with all property owners.

We look forward to continuing our positive working relationship with the Village of Richfield and its residents. For questions or inquiries, I can be reached at by phone at 800-721-4157 or by email at deanp.apraz@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Dean W. Peters
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Consultants, Inc.**
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