

2018

ARANSAS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

The information contained in this report is to provide the citizens of Aransas County and other interested parties with an overview of the information compiled by the Aransas County Appraisal District





Aransas County Appraisal District

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Dear Property Owner,

The employees of the Aransas County Appraisal District strive to provide the citizens of Aransas County with fair and accurate property valuations. Property taxes play a vital role in local government. However, property taxes can be a frustrating and confusing subject for many property owners. No other topic in local Texas Government can stir the opinion of property owners like the appraisal process. With that in mind, every year we provide the property owners in Aransas County with this report to outline some of the beneficial information that our work produces.

We not only appraise property for the taxing entities, we also administer property tax exemptions for homeowners, veterans and disabled persons. This is another part of our responsibility to you, the property owner. It is our duty to advise you of anything in the Texas Property Tax Code that will benefit you and help reduce your tax liability. If you *think* you may qualify for an exemption please call our office and ask; we will be happy to assist you.

Our website has a great deal of information. Links to property tax resources, online GIS mapping and property search capabilities are only a few of the tools available. We continually update the content of our website to give you the most current information possible. However, if you find a link that no longer works or the information in the link is outdated, please let us know, we will correct it as soon as possible.

The employees of the District are also citizens of Aransas County, and the property owners are our friends and neighbors. We take our responsibility to you very seriously. Our goal is to make sure we provide you with fair and accurate appraisals and are able to answer your property tax questions accurately. But, just as important, we want to make sure property owners are treated as we would want to be treated, with respect and dignity.

The most important message we can convey is, *we work for you*, the taxpayers of our great county. So if you have questions, please call or drop by our office, we will be happy to help you.

Sincerely,

Mike Soto, RPA
Chief Appraiser
Aransas County Appraisal District

ARANSAS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT

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Executive Summary

The Aransas County Appraisal District has published this report to provide our citizens and taxing units with an overview of the information we compile each appraisal cycle. The information will allow the reader, at a glance, to have a better understanding of the values and properties located within the county.

As always, the goal of the Aransas County Appraisal District is to provide our customers with the best service possible in a professional and courteous manner.

Our Goal

Our goal at the Aransas County Appraisal District is to provide the best service possible to our consumers, the local taxpayer. The fair and accurate appraisals we produce allow the local taxing entities to make sound financial decisions which results in tax rates that are lower than most other nearby counties. Aransas County is an exceptional place to live and we take great care in producing accurate appraisals for the public.

Our Appraisal District

The Aransas County Appraisal District is an independent political subdivision within Aransas County. We appraise all taxable property located within the boundaries of the county annually. The Board of Directors of the Aransas County Appraisal District is the governing body of the District and its members are appointed by our local taxing authorities. Their primary function is to insure that the District has the resources to perform the task of producing accurate appraisals as outlined in the Texas Property Tax Code. Other duties of the Board include adopting an annual budget, appointing an appraisal review board, and the adoption of policies that provide for the general operation of the District.

The Chief Appraiser is appointed by the Board of Directors and is the Executive Officer in charge of the daily operations of the District. The Chief Appraiser hires the staff for the district and is responsible for the production of the appraisal roll used by the entities to adopt tax rates. Other responsibilities include supervision of the staff and maintenance of the facilities of the District.

The District as of January 1st, 2018 appraised property for ten taxing jurisdictions. The following is a list of those taxing authorities.

Aransas County

Aransas County Independent School District

Aransas Pass Independent School District
Port Aransas Independent School District
City of Rockport
Town of Fulton
City of Aransas Pass
Aransas County MUD#1
Aransas County Navigation District
Lamar Improvement District

Aransas County is one of the smallest land mass counties in the state. However, when parcel count is taken into consideration we are right in the middle of all Texas counties with approximately 29,500 parcels. The 2018 certified property value in Aransas County was in excess of 3.3 billion dollars of real and personal property and that amount also puts Aransas County right in the middle of appraised value of all Texas counties.

The Appraisal Review Board consists of five members appointed by the Board of Directors. They serve staggered terms and are limited to three two year terms. To be eligible to serve on the ARB the individual must have been a resident of the county for at least two years. The ARB is responsible for the approval of the appraisal records. They also are the first formal avenue of dispute resolution between property owners and the District. Other responsibilities include correcting errors in the appraisal roll, acting on supplemental changes to the certified roll and making determinations on the proper application of exemptions and special appraisals.

The District relies on the advice of the Agricultural Advisory board for the information necessary to produce the agricultural values used in the special appraisals on those qualified properties. Each board member gathers information and relays their finding to the chief appraiser in periodic meetings. The chief appraiser then uses that information to develop the net to land calculations used in these appraisals.

Appraisal of Property

The physical inspections of the properties in the district began in late summer 2017 and will end in February 2018. ACAD uses Pictometry aerial images as well as on-site physical inspections for the data collection during the appraisal cycle. The district inspects from a planned driving schedule all properties at least every two years. The predominance of improved properties are physically inspected every year. When property changes are noted the appraisal team then field verifies the dimensions and quality of the change and enters the data into the CAMA system. Every year is a reappraisal year. Notices of appraised value are provided to every property owner regardless of whether or not the property meets the requirements set forth in the Property Tax Code.

Local Economic Conditions

Unlike other areas in Texas, Aransas County has had a stable and at times a robust real estate market. Aransas County continues to be a desirable retirement destination and an exceptional family oriented community. The positive national press coverage and effective marketing campaign by the Chamber of Commerce have many people considering Rockport-Fulton as desirable retirement or vacation home choice.

Tourism remains the driving force in our local economy. Rockport-Fulton was voted one of the best places in America to live on the nationally televised show “Today in America”. USA Today readers voted Rockport as the 5th best small coastal town in America in 2015. The Aransas peninsula is bound by Copano Bay to the west and Aransas bay to the east, making it one of the premier fishing locations along the entire Gulf Coast.

Industrial and petrochemical jobs continue to increase in Aransas and nearby counties, creating a strong base of local home buyers, in addition to the traditional tourism and retirement populations. Aransas County is expected to have one of the strongest housing markets in the state for years to come.

Hurricane Harvey

Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Aransas County on August 25, 2017, and significantly altered the workload, process, and nature of appraisals for 2018. The appraisal process is, and is expected to continue to be, abnormally challenging; and other CADs from across the state sent staff to help with the initial workload. Each property was inspected and labeled using a system of percentage-based “H-Codes”, which have been re-evaluated thoroughly and applied uniformly across the county to reflect varying levels of damage.

Aransas County has sustained widespread damage from Hurricane Harvey, and many properties have extensive repairs, remodels, and renovations. Additionally, the economic landscape of the market is in a similar state of turmoil. Construction is evident on nearly every street, and the forecast for future growth is bright as the area comes back stronger than ever.

Legislative Changes

The 2017, 85th Texas Legislature produced many pieces of legislation which affect the operation of appraisal districts as well as taxpayer exemptions and rights. Below is a list of some of the most important changes:

- HB 150 & HJR 21 relating to an exemption from *ad valorem* taxation of part of the appraised value of the residence homestead of a partially disabled veteran or the surviving

spouse of a partially disabled veteran if the residence is a homestead.

HB 217 relating to the authority of certain persons to defer or abate the collection of ad valorem taxes on a person's residence homestead.

HB 455 relating to the authority of a property owner to participate by telephone at a protest hearing by an appraisal review board.

HB 626 relating to late applications for certain exemptions from ad valorem taxation.

HB 777 relating to the eligibility of land owned by certain members of the armed services of the United States for appraisal for ad valorem tax purposes as qualified open-space land.

HB 1101 relating to the authority of the chief appraiser of an appraisal district to require a person to file a new application to confirm the person's current qualification.

HB 2019 relating to the regulation of manufactured homes.

HB 2228 relating to deadlines for performing functions in connection with the ad valorem tax system.

HB 3198 relating to liability for the additional tax imposed on land appraised for ad valorem tax purposes as qualified open-space land in the event of a change of use of the land as a result of oil and gas operations.

SB 15 & SJR 1 relating to an exemption from an ad valorem taxation of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a first responder who is killed or fatally injured in the line of duty.

SB 731 relating to the appeal through binding arbitration of certain ARB orders.

SB 945 relating to the authority of the chief appraiser of an appraisal district to correct an ad valorem tax appraisal roll.

SB 1286 relating to the system for protesting or appealing certain ad valorem tax determinations.

SB 1767 relating to hearings and protests before appraisal review boards involving ad valorem tax determinations.

The Appraisal Process

The district has recently implemented an in-house designed tablet based solution for field work. This system allows appraisers to formulate a “drive order” of the properties for physical inspection that creates efficiencies in both miles driven and workflow while in the field.

The Pictometry images and the GIS system employed by the District are both very popular products for our citizens. The District has the county flown every year to update the aerial image library. Property owners often comment on how beneficial this information is to them for planning property uses as well as making decisions on building placement. The district’s website has these tools as well, allowing property owners to research our data. Pictometry images are used both in the field and in the office to verify size of improvements or other physical characteristics when field access is not possible. We have data layers in our GIS system that graphically represent trends in values, sold properties, land tables, school districts and any other information beneficial to the appraisal of property in the district.

Shortly after certification of the appraisal roll the field work begins for the next appraisal cycle. The appraisers gather information in the field to insure the physical dimensions of the properties are accurate. Updating properties regularly in both physical size and condition increases the accuracy of the data we produce. Any changes in the physical attributes of a property are corrected in the CAMA system so we can insure that information gathered on sales in the county are accurately employed as data points for the valuation of all properties.

Each January, businesses are sent a rendition form so they may render their property used for the production of income. All businesses are required to make an annual rendition to the District. Prior to the rendition deadline a notification is placed in the local newspaper as a reminder of this requirement. The appraisers begin to process renditions as they are returned and this continues for a short period after the April 15th deadline. In early March the local sales are examined and adjustments are made to the property schedules. Ratio studies used to determine the accuracy of the values and that information is used to determine the amount of adjustment necessary to reach market value.

As soon as possible in April the notices of appraised value are mailed to homestead properties. The remaining properties are sent notices of appraised value by the last week of April or at least by May 1st each year. Once notices are sent the staff begins to visit with property owners to try to resolve issues they may have with the current valuation of their property. Most value disputes are resolved in this manner.

2018 County-Wide Sales Ratio Information

The information in this section is statistical information on the level of appraisal within the Aransas County Appraisal District. This information was compiled from sales with a date range of 1/1/2018 to 01/01/2019. This analysis took into consideration all sales whether or not they were considered to be valid sales for the time period. The study also includes foreclosures as an indicator of value.

Median 98.02%

Average Mean 64.86%

Weighted Mean 96.45%

During the appraisal process, ratio studies are used to determine if the market area being examined needs adjustment. This ratio information represents the entire county and most specific market areas will have ratios that differ from these numbers. The ratios for 2018 were skewed significantly due to the diminished nature of a large number of properties across the county in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, and the diverse nature of their condition at the time of sale.

Property Reports

The following pages will outline the data contained our files. This data is used by the Comptroller's office to report to the Texas legislature specific property tax related information. The local governments use this data to set their budgets and tax rates.

These documents list the types or classes of properties and the number of each within our county. Exemption data such as the number of each type and the category amount for each type is also provided. The Grand Totals report will break down values and exemptions by taxing unit. This allows for a more in depth look at each individual taxing unit and the property contained within its boundaries.

We hope this information is beneficial and if you need any other information please let our staff know and we will be more than happy to provide it for you.