

Annual Report to the Mason City Conference Board Year Ending 12/31/2015



From Mason, IA.com

Conference Board Members

Chairperson:

Mayor Eric Bookmeyer

City Council:

Travis Hickey • Alex Kuhn • John Lee •
Bill Schickel • Brett Schoneman • Janet Solberg

Cerro Gordo County Board of Supervisors:

Casey Callanan • Phil Dougherty • Jay Urdahl

Mason City Board of Education:

Janna Arndt • Doug Campbell • Paul DeRoy •
Jodi Draper • Lorrie Lala • Brent Seaton • Scott Warren

**2015 REPORT
OFFICE OF MASON CITY ASSESSOR**

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Iowa law requires assessors to perform a sales ratio study of the real estate in their jurisdiction every odd year and to revalue real estate when necessary. The purpose of the sales ratio study is to compare assessments to actual real estate sale prices. Iowa law requires commercial, multiresidential, and residential properties to be assessed at market value. The law also requires property values to be equitable with those of other like properties in the jurisdiction. From the results of the ratio study, the assessor determines if the existing assessments are in line with current market values or if assessments need to be adjusted to be in compliance.

In Mason City, both residential and commercial assessments were in compliance with the city-wide level ratio study. However, when looking at the ratio study at the neighborhood level, some areas of the city were over-assessed while other areas were under-assessed. Market adjustments were made to residential properties at the neighborhood level to ensure residential properties, no matter what neighborhood they fall in, are valued at current market value and are equitable with other like properties in similar neighborhoods.

Nearly 12,000 assessment notices were generated and mailed to property owners in Mason City last spring, notifying owners of changes in their assessment classification and/or valuation. Assessors are required to notify the property owner in writing any time the assessed value or classification of the property has changed. Most every property in Mason City changed in value or classification for 2015.

This was the first year assessment notices were outsourced to Mailing Services, Inc. This was necessary due to the volume of notices we were sending and the time constraints in getting notices mailed by the April 1 deadline. Due to coordinated efforts between the programmers in the IT Department, City Assessor staff, and Mailing Services staff, the process went smoothly and we will continue to outsource in years when we have a large volume of notices to mail at one time.

Assessment Appeals

There were three times as many appeals to the Mason City Board of Review in 2015 as in 2014, yet less than 0.5% of all properties in Mason City were appealed. The current Board of Review members may be newer appointments to the Board, but they all have an extensive background in real estate and market value. The three members have complimentary skill sets and work well together. For each assessment appeal filed with the Board of Review, additional market and equity analysis is done by the Assessor's Office on the property(s) being appealed. The Board reviews all information presented by the property owner as well as the Assessor before ruling on an appeal.

There were twice as many appeals to the Property Assessment Appeal Board (PAAB) in 2015 as in 2014. If a property owner is not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Review, he/she may file an appeal to the state-level PAAB or District Court. 11% of appeals to the Board of Review were further appealed to PAAB. Defending each property assessment at PAAB or District Court requires hours of preparation for both the assessor and the attorney representing the Board of Review. A good defense may also require additional fee appraisal(s) and/or expert witnesses. Of the 11 PAAB appeals I have worked on since being appointed in Mason City, 3 have been settled, 7 were upheld, and 1 has not been scheduled yet. There have been 0 losses.

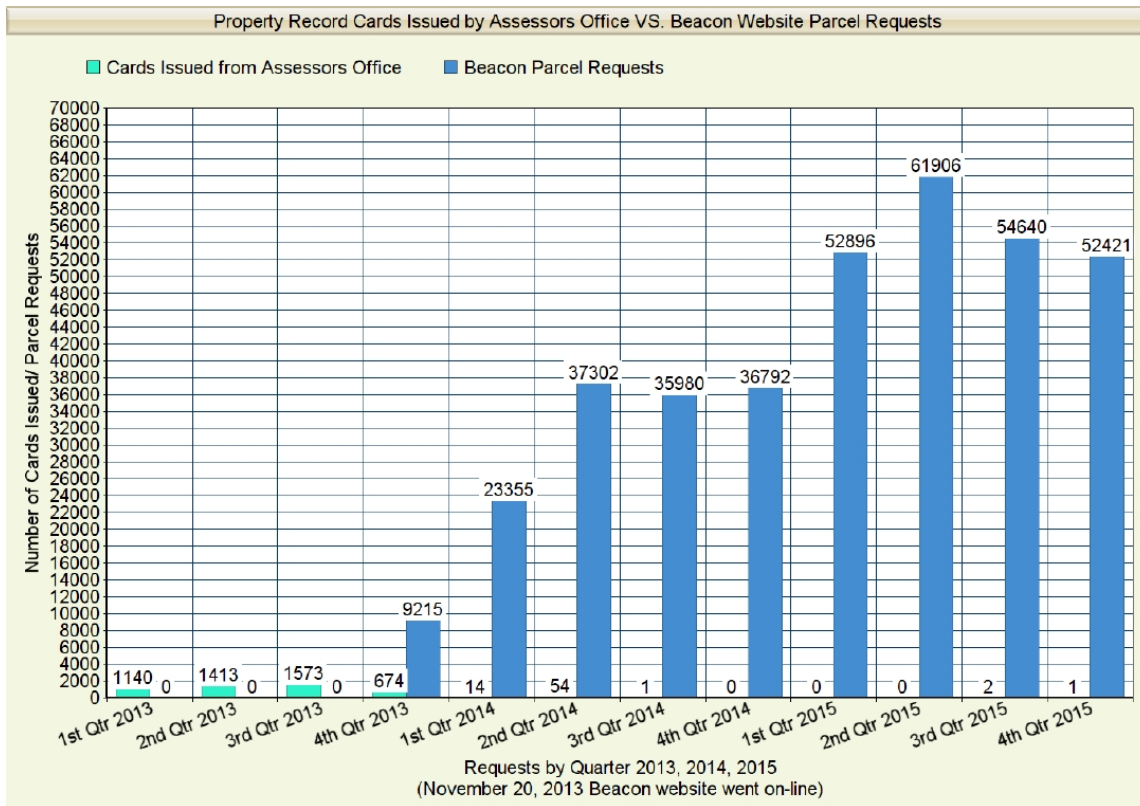
Pictometry ChangeFinder

ChangeFinder is a program that compares two separate years of Pictometry imagery to identify changes in building footprints. It is designed to help Assessors identify real estate constructed or removed which affects assessment records. Pictometry imagery is oblique photography that captures images of properties from both top down above as well as side views for all 360° of every property. ChangeFinder results from the comparison of the 2009 and 2013 imagery are in this report. Pictometry will be doing another flight to capture oblique imagery again in Spring 2016. We will once again use ChangeFinder to

compare the 2013 to the 2016 to look for changes in building footprints. Both the County and City Assessor cost share this project, although multiple departments benefit from Pictometry imagery.

Beacon Website

The Beacon real estate website was launched on November 20, 2013. In the first year, there was an average of 350 parcel requests per day. In the second year, the average number of parcel requests has grown to 595 per day. Complete property information can be accessed 24-hours a day, 7-days a week through the Beacon website. Due to the success of the real estate website, we are exploring options to add more features which will allow the public to access other documents and file property tax exemption applications such as the Homestead Credit, Military Exemption, and the Business Property Tax Exemption applications online through the Beacon site. Look for these advancements in the upcoming year.



Reappraisal Projects

The Mason City Conference Board approved two separate reappraisal projects with Vanguard Appraisals Inc. in 2013. The reappraisal is being done for the purpose of equalizing assessments to ensure compliance with the State Laws of Iowa, and the rules and policies of the Iowa Department of Revenue. It is worthwhile to note that Vanguard Appraisals was also contracted to reappraise the same classifications of property in Cerro Gordo County simultaneously with the Mason City projects.

The first project is the Commercial reappraisal, which includes reappraising all commercial, industrial and multi-residential properties in Mason City for the establishment of January 1, 2016 assessments. These three classifications of property include nearly 1500 parcels. Vanguard began their work on properties in Mason City in February 2015. Between February and December there was an ongoing coordinated effort between the City Assessor’s Office and Vanguard Appraisals to keep two copies of records current

and identical, one copy in the Assessor's Office and one copy at Vanguard's office in Cedar Rapids. For 10 months both copies of property records had to be continually updated with ownership transfers and sales, building permits, parcel combinations or apportionments, and changes in classification and/or exempt status.

Vanguard Appraisal's scope of work included field reviews of every parcel; analysis of local vacant land sales and improved parcel sales; analysis of local construction costs for determining replacement costs; real estate depreciation analysis; application of these local market factors to individual parcels; and a final field review of each parcel. Vanguard turned their final work product over to the Assessor on December 31, 2015. These parcels are currently going through a final review in the Assessor's Office and assessment notices will be mailed to property owners in mid-February.

Initial comparison of the 2015 total valuation for commercial, industrial and multiresidential classes of property to the 2016 total valuation for the same property classes shows an increase in total valuation of nearly 10%, or roughly \$50 million in assessed valuation as a result of the commercial reappraisal project.

Vanguard Appraisals will begin their work on the second project, the Residential reappraisal, in the spring of 2016. This project includes establishing updated market values of 11,000 parcels in Mason City. The scope of work is similar to that of the commercial reappraisal but also includes interior inspections of every single-family and two-family property in Mason City. This project will take two years to complete and will establish new assessments for 1/1/2018.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Dana Naumann

Dana Naumann, ICA, RES, AAS
Mason City Assessor

**STAFF OF MASON CITY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE,
BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS
MASON CITY, IA
2015**

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Administration

Dana Naumann, ICA, RES, AAS

Mason City Assessor

Appointment term 1/1/2016 – 12/31/2021

Tara Fitzpatrick, ICA

Chief Deputy Assessor

Appointment term 7/29/2013 – 7/28/2019

Staff

Pamela Pingel

Residential Appraiser

Janell Graves

Real Estate Clerk

BOARD OF REVIEW

Janel M. Nagel

Appraiser

Appointment term 1/1/2013-12/31/2018

Ray Mechem

Real estate finance

Appointment term 1/1/2014-12/31/2016

David Guetzko

Realtor

Appointment term 1/1/2015-12/31/2020

STATEMENT OF ASSESSED VALUATIONS OF MASON CITY
As of July 1, 2015

Real Property (1-1-2014)	\$1,608,678,383
New Construction (added 1-1-2015)	\$ 20,015,339
Revaluation	\$ 36,764,179
Property Returned to Taxation	<u>\$ 192,194</u>

Total Real Property \$1,665,650,095

Less:

Demolitions (removed 1-1-2015)	\$ 13,074,570
Revaluation	\$ 44,557,447
New Claims for Tax Exempt and Non-Taxable	\$ 2,486,130
District Court and PAAB Decrees	\$ 1,238,190
	<u>\$ 60,241,337</u>

Net Real Property \$1,605,408,758

Railroad and Utility Property \$ 63,509,283
 (Assessed by the Department of Revenue)

Full Value of Taxable Real Property \$1,668,918,041

Less Partial Exemptions:

Urban Revitalization	\$ 9,517,540
Pollution Control/Recycling	\$ 1,706,680
Land Conservation	\$ 294,980
Historical Property	\$ 487,149
Other	\$ 30,000
	<u>\$ 12,036,349</u>

ADJUSTED VALUE OF NET TAXABLE REAL PROPERTY \$1,656,881,692

STATEMENT OF PROPERTY CLASSIFICATIONS OF MASON CITY
As of July 1, 2015

Agricultural		
Number of Parcels		363
Total Agricultural Value	\$15,455,130	
Total Agricultural Acres	7,587.56	
Residential		
Number of Parcels		11,290
Total Residential Value	\$1,091,398,550	
Number of Dwellings	10,598	
Multiresidential		
Number of Parcels		183
Total Commercial Value	\$47,189,317	
Number of Buildings	243	
Commercial		
Number of Parcels		1,273
Total Commercial Value	\$352,091,031	
Number of Buildings	1,115	
Industrial		
Number of Parcels		97
Total Industrial Value	\$99,274,430	
Number of Buildings	171	
Exempt (government owned, schools, churches, etc)		
Number of Parcels		<u>866</u>
Total Parcels in Mason City		14,027

ACTION OF THE 2015 BOARD OF REVIEW
Chair Janel Nagel, Ray Mechem, Dave Guetzko

The 2015 Board of Review considered 62 protests.

The total value of real estate considered for protests \$18,457,390

Total number of protests by class of property:

Agricultural	0
Residential	58
Multiresidential	1
Commercial	2
Industrial	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	62

Number of protests denied 45

Number of protests upheld 17

Reduction in value - \$512,690

Increase in value \$0

TOTAL value of real estate considered after BOR action \$17,944,700

**DISTRICT COURT & PROPERTY ASSESSMENT APPEAL BOARD (PAAB)
Report for 2015**

District Court appeals filed after 2015 BOR Session 0

PAAB appeals filed after 2015 BOR Session 7

PAAB appeals by class of property:

Agricultural	0
Residential	6
Multiresidential	0
Commercial	0
Industrial	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	7

Number of appeals denied 4 (All Residential)

Number of appeals settled 2 (All Residential)

Reduction in value - \$17,000

Increase in value +\$0

*The 1 remaining Industrial appeal has not been scheduled for a hearing as of 1/20/2016

Prior year appeals decided in 2015:

2013 PAAB appeals:

1 appeal including 2 Industrial parcels – settled -\$1,238,190

2014 PAAB appeals:

3 Commercial parcels – all denied

2015 TAX EXEMPT PROPERTY SUMMARY REPORT

Assessing Jurisdiction Mason City

TYPE OF EXEMPT PROPERTY

A. RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS (427.1(8))		
1. Churches	<u>25,938,871</u>	
2. Recreational.	<u>0</u>	
3. Schools.	<u>3,118,109</u>	
4. Residential	<u>2,157,450</u>	
5. Church Camps	<u>0</u>	
6. Others.	<u>650,247</u>	
TOTAL ALL RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.		<u>31,864,677</u>
B. TOTAL ALL LITERARY SOC. & EDUCATIONAL INST. (427.1(8))		<u>3,885,064</u>
C. TOTAL ALL LOW RENT HOUSING (427.1(21))		<u>1,071,700</u>
D. TOTAL ALL ASSOCIATIONS OF WAR VETERANS (427.1(5))		<u>229,152</u>
E. CHARITABLE AND BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES (427.1(8))		
1. Hospitals	<u>72,850,828</u>	
2. Fraternal Organizations	<u>5,995,727</u>	
3. Agricultural Societies . .	<u>438,442</u>	
4. Retirement Homes	<u>4,187,059</u>	
5. Nursing Homes.	<u>19,344,459</u>	
6. Others.	<u>20,454,506</u>	
TOTAL ALL CHARITABLE & BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES . . .		<u>123,271,021</u>
F. TOTAL ALL LIBRARIES & ART GALLERIES (427.1(7))		<u>83,514</u>
G. TOTAL ALL DWELLING UNIT PROPERTY (427.1(21A))		<u>0</u>
H. TOTAL ALL HOMES FOR SOLDIERS (427.1(10))		<u>0</u>
I. TOTAL ALL RACETRACKS (427.1(2))		<u>0</u>
TOTAL ALL EXEMPT PROPERTY		<u>160,405,128</u>

CREDITS, EXEMPTIONS & MISC PROCESSES
As of December 31, 2015

Urban Revitalization Exemptions:

New applications (by 2/1/2015 deadline)	47
Expired U.R. exemptions	0
Total ongoing U.R. exemptions	162

Homestead Credits:

New applications (by 7/1/2015 deadline)	364
Disallowed credits	373
Total ongoing credits	7,248

Disabled Veterans Homestead Credit Applications:

Approved applications (by 7/1/2015)	29
Disallowed credits	2
Total ongoing credits	47

Military Credit:

New applications (by 7/1/2015)	68
Disallowed credits	99
Total ongoing credits	1,699

Business Property Tax Credit:

New applications (by 3/15/2015)	89
Disallowed credits	63
Total ongoing credits	926

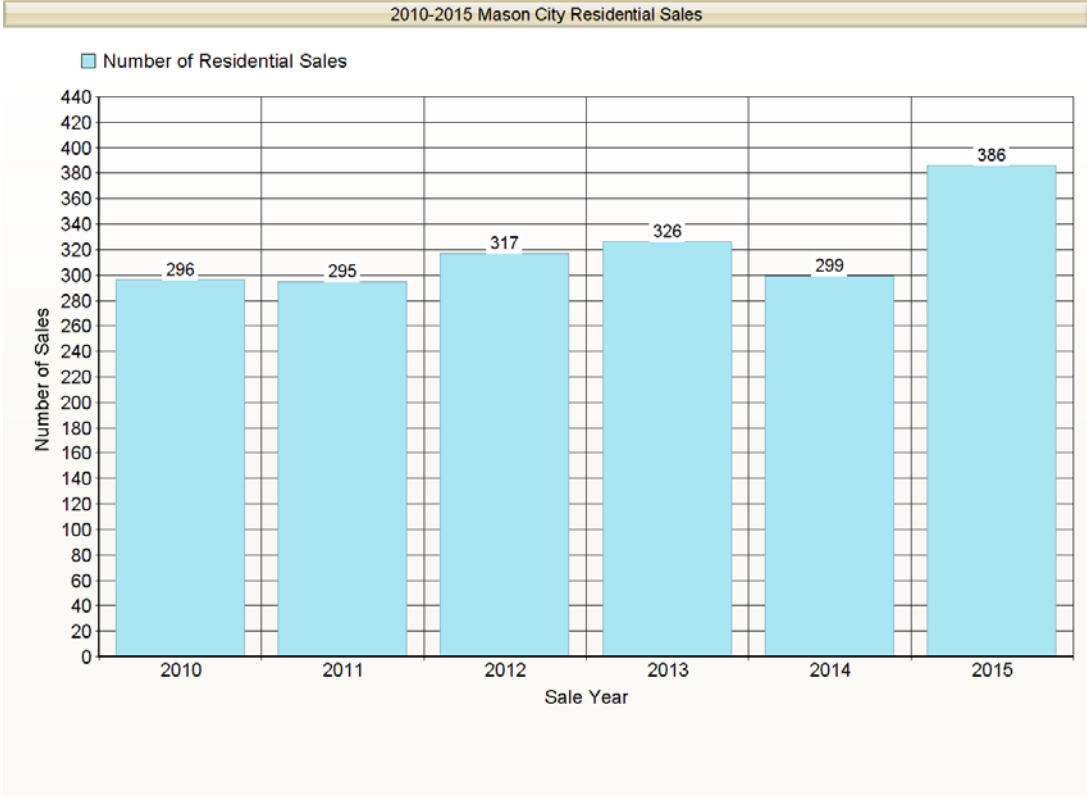
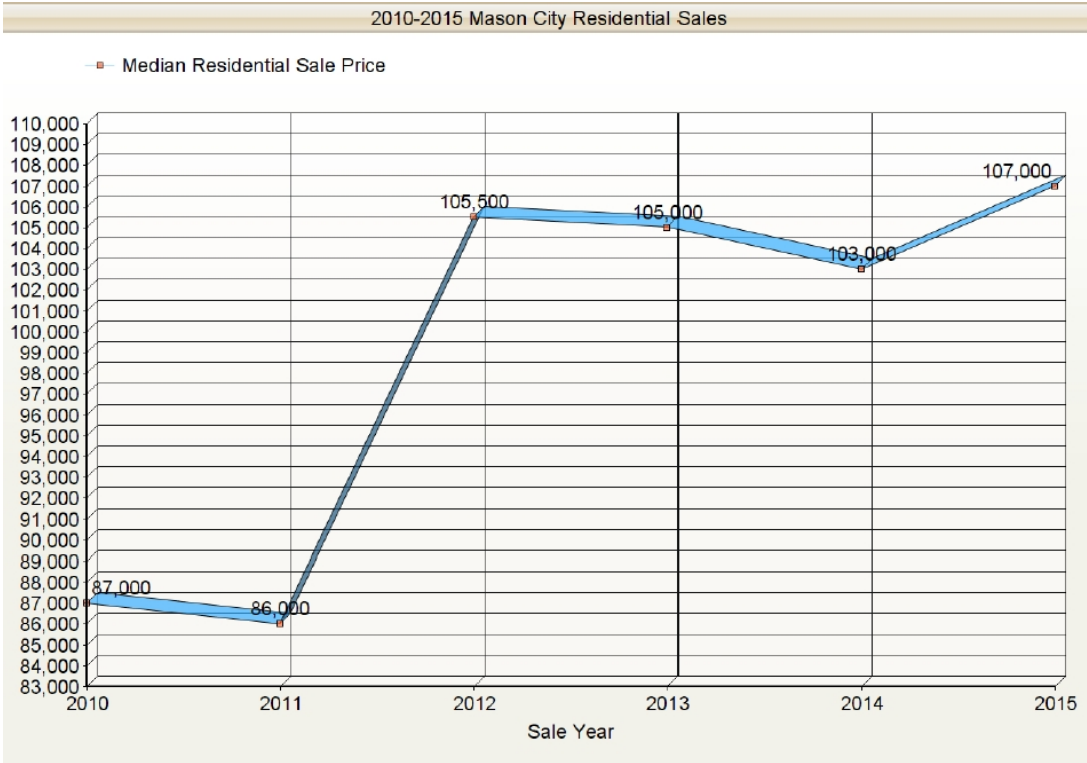
Other Credits/Exemptions:

Charitable & Benevolent Property Exemption (by 2/1/2015)	10
Forest & Fruit Tree Reserve Exemption (by 2/1/2015)	12
Slough Bill Exemption (by 2/1/2015)	9
Family Farm Tax Credit (by 11/1/2015)	27

Miscellaneous:

Assessment Notices	11,795
Building Permits	539
Deeds & Contracts	1,231
Declaration of Value Statements	762
Sale Questionnaires	488
Apportionments & Combinations	42
Class Changes	332
Grain Tax Returns	5
Credit Union Statements	6
Section 42 Housing	9
Minimum Assessment Agreements	4
Income & Expense Statements	119

RESIDENTIAL SALES STATISTICS (2010 – 2015)



BEACON WEBSITE USAGE REPORT



Summary

Application Name	CityofMasonCityIA
Date	Monday, January 18, 2016 6:55:17 PM
Date Range	11/20/2013 12:00:00 AM - 12/31/2015 11:59:59 PM
Total Requests	365,182
Avg Requests / Day	473.65
Total Visits	62,839
Avg Visits / Day	81.50
Avg Requests / Visitor	5.81

Month of Year

Month of Year	Requests	%	Visits	%
January	25,213	6.90%	4,404	7.01%
February	24,647	6.75%	4,497	7.16%
March	26,708	7.31%	4,532	7.21%
April	37,733	10.33%	5,693	9.06%
May	29,776	8.15%	5,046	8.03%
June	31,871	8.73%	5,286	8.41%
July	30,385	8.32%	5,319	8.46%
August	30,494	8.35%	5,378	8.56%
September	29,813	8.16%	5,454	8.68%
October	31,312	8.57%	5,677	9.03%
November	31,254	8.56%	5,434	8.65%
December	35,976	9.85%	6,119	9.74%

Day of Week

Day of Week	Requests	%	Visits	%
Sunday	26,537	7.27%	4,322	6.88%
Monday	65,770	18.01%	11,353	18.07%
Tuesday	67,496	18.48%	11,511	18.32%
Wednesday	64,651	17.70%	11,082	17.64%
Thursday	62,684	17.17%	10,731	17.08%
Friday	53,190	14.57%	9,503	15.12%
Saturday	24,854	6.81%	4,337	6.90%

Yearly

Year	Requests	%	Visits	%
2013	9,754	2.67%	1,302	2.07%
2014	133,974	36.63%	22,232	35.30%
2015	222,067	60.71%	39,455	62.64%

Monthly

Month	Requests	%	Visits	%
2013 June	35	0.01%	4	0.01%
2013 July	75	0.02%	27	0.04%
2013 August	167	0.05%	28	0.04%
2013 September	122	0.03%	34	0.05%
2013 October	144	0.04%	33	0.05%
2013 November	2,583	0.71%	338	0.54%
2013 December	6,628	1.81%	838	1.33%
2014 January	7,258	1.98%	1,105	1.75%
2014 February	7,191	1.97%	1,373	2.18%
2014 March	9,019	2.47%	1,575	2.50%
2014 April	14,947	4.09%	2,076	3.30%
2014 May	11,786	3.22%	1,815	2.88%
2014 June	10,741	2.94%	1,761	2.80%
2014 July	12,278	3.36%	1,973	3.13%
2014 August	11,983	3.28%	1,912	3.04%
2014 September	11,791	3.22%	2,156	3.42%
2014 October	13,269	3.63%	2,380	3.78%
2014 November	10,878	2.97%	1,895	3.01%
2014 December	12,833	3.51%	2,211	3.51%
2015 January	17,955	4.91%	3,299	5.24%
2015 February	17,456	4.77%	3,124	4.96%
2015 March	17,689	4.84%	2,957	4.69%
2015 April	22,786	6.23%	3,617	5.74%
2015 May	17,990	4.92%	3,231	5.13%
2015 June	21,130	5.78%	3,525	5.60%
2015 July	18,107	4.95%	3,346	5.31%
2015 August	18,511	5.06%	3,466	5.50%
2015 September	18,022	4.93%	3,298	5.24%
2015 October	18,043	4.93%	3,297	5.23%
2015 November	17,863	4.88%	3,225	5.12%
2015 December	16,515	4.51%	3,070	4.87%

Hour of Day

Hour of Day	Requests	%	Visits	%
00:00 - 00:59	5,789	1.59%	1,124	1.48%
01:00 - 01:59	2,986	0.82%	602	0.79%
02:00 - 02:59	2,095	0.57%	414	0.54%
03:00 - 03:59	1,335	0.37%	316	0.41%
04:00 - 04:59	995	0.27%	277	0.36%
05:00 - 05:59	1,388	0.38%	323	0.42%
06:00 - 06:59	2,161	0.59%	553	0.73%
07:00 - 07:59	4,353	1.19%	1,050	1.38%
08:00 - 08:59	9,317	2.55%	2,160	2.84%
09:00 - 09:59	20,490	5.61%	4,534	5.95%
10:00 - 10:59	29,521	8.08%	6,453	8.47%
11:00 - 11:59	32,403	8.87%	6,869	9.02%
12:00 - 12:59	33,610	9.20%	6,752	8.86%
13:00 - 13:59	24,905	6.82%	5,414	7.11%
14:00 - 14:59	30,229	8.28%	6,306	8.28%
15:00 - 15:59	33,741	9.24%	6,947	9.12%
16:00 - 16:59	32,693	8.95%	6,732	8.84%
17:00 - 17:59	25,474	6.98%	5,380	7.06%
18:00 - 18:59	14,619	4.00%	2,891	3.79%
19:00 - 19:59	10,596	2.90%	2,284	3.00%
20:00 - 20:59	11,409	3.12%	2,288	3.00%
21:00 - 21:59	12,566	3.44%	2,400	3.15%
22:00 - 22:59	12,138	3.32%	2,216	2.91%
23:00 - 23:59	10,369	2.84%	1,904	2.50%

Pages

Name	Requests	%	Visits	%
Parcels - Report	160,246	43.88%	49,274	33.38%
Parcels - Search	109,464	29.98%	56,541	38.31%
Parcels - Results	60,618	16.60%	26,872	18.21%
Parcels - Map	15,293	4.19%	6,146	4.16%
Parcels - Comp Results	7,894	2.16%	2,099	1.42%
Parcels - Comp Search	5,055	1.38%	2,653	1.80%
Parcels - Pictometry Imagery	3,435	0.94%	1,966	1.33%
Parcels - Map	1,195	0.33%	866	0.59%
Parcels - Print Setup	583	0.16%	280	0.19%
Parcels - Login	253	0.07%	134	0.09%

PICTOMETRY ChangeFinder™ RESULTS

Whether assessing property, maintaining the integrity of a pipeline or managing right-of-way encroachments, staying on top of the constant change created by building construction, demolitions and permits has traditionally been time-consuming and resource intensive. ChangeFinder helps by providing a consolidated data set that tells you exactly what has changed rather than just overloading your team with more data to sort through. Changes can be validated right from the desktop.

GIS polygon outlines are created for analysis of changes in size and shape. These building outlines are compared with imagery and changes are flagged for verification and analysis. This technology can also compare existing building outlines to new Pictometry imagery to find changes. Assessors can:

1. Dramatically reduce the time and expense of field assessments
2. Increase revenue by discovering previously undetected improvements
3. Improve communications during the appeal process using imagery.



- Comparison of 2009 to 2013 aerial & oblique imagery
- **19,307** individual property changes recognized by ChangeFinder – new construction, demolition or change in building footprint. One record could have multiple individual changes such as tear down old garage, build new garage, and build a new deck. These would be logged in ChangeFinder as three separate changes.

The results of the 19,307 logged changes:

- **263** False positives
 - **18,801** property changes already accounted for due to permits or other discovery methods between 2009 and 2013.
 - **243** property changes unknown to Assessor's Office to be listed for the 2015 assessment year. These are new construction items such as garages, sunrooms, decks, additions, new buildings, etc. in which building permits were never taken out.
- Since only 2009 to 2013 footprint changes could be identified through ChangeFinder, the Assessor's Office staff also compared each property record card to the Pictometry imagery and discovered changes to properties which existed prior to the first 2009 Pictometry imagery.
 - The result of both the ChangeFinder and the staff discovered real estate which had not been accounted for was **\$4,245,230** in additional assessed value.
 - Almost all of these changes are to Residential records. At the current effective tax rate for residential property, this equates to approximately **\$70,000 in new property taxes**.
 - The cost of ChangeFinder in 2013 was \$10,400.
 - A new Pictometry flight is scheduled for Spring 2016. The cost of ChangeFinder in 2016 has been quoted at \$5,650 to compare the 2013 to the 2016 imagery.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2015

Service on Boards & Committees in 2015:

- President of the Institute of Iowa Certified Assessors (IICA) (3-year term 2015-2017)
 - Purpose of IICA is to provide education to assessors and encourage professional designations
- Co-Chair of the ISAA Public Relations & Editorial Committee (Iowa State Association of Assessing Officers)
 - Individually re-wrote the “Duties & Responsibilities of Iowa Assessor’s Manual 2015”
 - Co-rewrote the “Iowa Assessment Law Index 2015”
 - Co-wrote the “The Assessment Calendar”
- ISAA Resource Committee
 - This committee is tasked with providing information and guidance to other assessors, compile and organize resources in an organized and searchable manner
- ISAC Working Group Committee (Iowa State Association of Counties)
 - This committee is responsible for developing and implementing processes for multiple county offices for mandates created by Senate File 295.
- IDR Multiresidential Equalization Committee (Iowa Department of Revenue)
 - Committee is tasked with writing Iowa Administrative Rules for the equalization procedures for the new multiresidential property classification

Presentations given in 2015:

- The “The Assessment Calendar” at the 2015 ISAA Annual Conference

**Mason City Assessor's Office Priorities
(October 2012)**

- 1. Staffing** – At a minimum, 4 full time employees are needed. I would recommend these positions be filled: Assessor, Deputy Assessor, Field Appraiser, Office Manager or Clerk.
- 2. Online Real Estate** - Work with the County Assessor & MIS staff to expand the City/County Online Real Estate records.
 - Complete property record cards including sketches and photos, valuations & property taxes.
 - Real estate sales information and search capabilities
 - Expansion of the GIS data
 - Electronic forms and applications
 - Annual reports – valuations, appeals, exemptions, sales statistics, etc.
- 3. Residential Reappraisal Project** - Begin budgeting for a 1/1/2016 or 1/1/2017 reappraisal
 - a. 10,400 residential improved parcels X \$89/parcel = \$925,600
 - b. 1,600 residential vacant lots X \$10/parcel = \$16,000
 - c. Estimated total reappraisal cost = \$941,600
 - d. Budget \$950,000 over 3 years = \$316,667/year OR over 4 years = \$237,500/year
 - e. Continue with local-level reappraisal of Residential properties every revaluation year (odd numbered years).
- 4. CAMA system** - Evaluate the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software. Both Mason City and Cerro Gordo County use ProVal to appraise Residential and Agricultural parcels and VCS CAMAvision to appraise commercial and industrial properties.
 - a. Are both systems necessary?
 - b. Does ProVal comply with the Iowa Property Appraisal Manual requirements?
 - c. Is the cost of using two systems greater than the cost of a consolidated CAMA system?
 - d. Is there a joint agreement with C.G. County or can the City act alone in this decision?
- 5. Commercial & Industrial Property** - was reappraised in 2011. These records should have accurate listings other than “new construction” which needs listed annually. Continue with the maintenance and local-level appraisal of commercial and industrial every revaluation year.
- 6. Agricultural Properties** - Value agricultural land using the productivity formula from the Iowa Department of Revenue and the Corn Suitability Rating (CSR) from the USDA Department of Agriculture. The current valuation system does not use the CSR as the basis for value.

Planned
for FY17

Starting
Spring 2016

Mason City Assessor's Priorities – 6 Year Plan (January 2013)

- Ongoing statutory & administrative duties outlined in "The Assessor's Duties" handout.
- Revaluation of all properties every odd year as required by Iowa Code. State mandated equalization of property values will be eliminated through this process allowing for local, not state-level control.
- Increase transparency and accountability to property owners by mailing written notification of assessment changes each odd year.
- Appointment of a Chief Deputy Assessor.
- Upgrade hardware as needed (color copier, PCs, cameras, printers, etc) and attempt to keep up with changing technology.
- Update physical appearance of office with new carpet, paint, layout and furnishings as needed. My goal is for increased professionalism in the office with maximum use of space.
- Use Excel to maintain office revenue and expense statements, including payroll and claims. They are currently managed in paper format or ledger books.
- Increased in-office training and specialized education for staff.
- Fine-tune employee's duties and responsibilities for increased accuracy and efficiency and elimination of workload overlap.
- Approximately July 1, 2013, have all property records displayed on the county website. This will include search capabilities for real estate sales.
- Conduct further reviews of property sales to verify the sales used in sales ratio/ assessment revaluation analysis are normal arm's-length transactions and represent current market conditions.
- Convert all industrial & the remainder of commercial parcels from the 1998 to the 2008 VCS Camavision appraisal software. They are currently in two separate versions of the same software program.
- Convert all residential property records from ProVal software to the VCS Camavision software.
- Manually enter all agricultural classed property records into the VCS Camavision software. My goal is to have EVERY property record housed in one appraisal software program.
- Value agricultural parcels in accordance with the USDA Modern Soil Survey. Implementation of a soils-based software program will be necessary if we cannot piggy-back off of the County Assessor's program.
- Use GIS software to accurately map all land-based property tax exemptions. This ensures only the land qualifying for an exemption is granted the abatement.
- Review neighborhood areas (geographic distinctions in real estate markets) for accuracy and update as necessary.
- Review classification of all records and reclassify as necessary. The classifications for assessment are Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, and Exempt.
- Implement Pictometry Change-Finder software to detect changes in property footprints.
- Periodic field reviews of all real estate to detect improvements not reported by building permits. ChangeFinder can be used in lieu of on-site reviews.
- An appraisal desk review of the Commercial & Industrial parcels once they are on one database to ensure accuracy and consistency between like properties. (1-1-2016 completion estimate)
- A full field review and reappraisal of all residential properties after conversion of the records from ProVal to VCS Camavision. (1-1-2018 completion estimate)
- Ongoing appraisal maintenance to ensure accurate and uniform assessment.
- Organization and maintenance of old records. Use a scanner and software such as Paperclip for quick retrieval.

A LOOK TO FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018

This time next year, we will be levying against the taxable valuations based on the 2016 assessed values. The valuations established for the 2016 commercial reappraisal project will give the taxable valuations a nice bump. Assuming levy rates remain constant, the projected \$50 million in increased valuation results in approximately \$1.5 million in combined additional tax dollars generated for Mason City Community Schools, the City of Mason City, and Cerro Gordo County. This could even be an opportunity for the levying bodies to lower levy rates.

The additional revenue resulting from the commercial reappraisal alone more than pays for the cost of both phases combined. The total budget for both projects is \$1.2 million. Next year will be the final year we will be budgeting for the reappraisal projects (\$240,000/year for 5 budget years).

Upon project completion of the residential reappraisal, the staff of the Assessor's Office will be able to meet the statutory retirement to discover, list, and value all real estate in Mason City on a continued basis, as well as maintain current market values.

Stable and equitable assessments will be determined for 14,000 parcels by January 1, 2018 as a result of both reappraisal projects. Maintenance to property records as the result of ongoing building and demolition permits, periodic field reviews, and ChangeFinder detection will keep listing information to individual property record cards current. Statutory bi-annual ratio studies will also cause property values to be adjusted to current market values as necessary.