

# A PEEK INSIDE THE AUDITOR'S OFFICE

Issue 7

July 2016

## ERIE COUNTY AUDITOR NEWSLETTER

### A side note from our Auditor

The 2nd Quarter of 2016 seems like a blur! There were plenty of things happening in the Auditor's Office to keep us busy. I will share with you a few of the major highlights:

Auditor of State Audit progress: This got off to a rocky start. As mentioned in the last newsletter, Erie County is being audited by the State Auditor's Office for the first time in many years. After some internal changes in staffing, the State Auditors finally got started in March, almost two full months behind schedule. As a result, we have been scrambling to meet the June 30 deadline for submitting audited results to the State. Unfortunately, due to the delayed start we had to seek an extension for filing, finalizing our audit by the end of July or early August. Frustrating, but out of our control.

BOR: We had 224 complaints filed and have completed a review of all the filings. We have settled 92 of the complaints, 4 were withdrawn by the filer and we are in the process of hearing the remaining 128 cases. Our goal was to have all hearings complete by July 31, but due to schedul-

2018 Revaluation: We hit the ground running implementing the Paperless Reappraisal System in the County. The staff has been hired and the training is on-going. We have started in the more rural areas to review what we currently have and make corrections as needed. The goal of paperless reappraisal is to complete the review phase earlier, allowing more time for analysis and taxpayer input in the process and a more consistent, cost effective approach to the reappraisal process. We will be communicating with the public via the news media (Register, Journal and radio stations when we will be out doing site reviews).

2016 CAAO Summer Conference: As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we were the hosts of the 2016 CAAO Summer Conference at Kalahari.

ing issues we have adjusted our completion to August 31. Five years ago we were averaging well over 500 cases per year. Our trend the last four years is in the positive: 2013-279 cases filed, 2014-204 cases and in 2015-224 cases filed. This year was a statistical update year for Erie County and our trend continues downward. This is due in large part to the efforts of our Real Estate staff whom have taken ownership of this process and continue to address issues as we find them and LISTEN to the taxpayers when an issue arises.

Affordable Health Care Act: As was mentioned in the 1st Quarter Newsletter we met the employee notification deadlines and forms were delivered to them on time, in fact, a week early! However, we did have some issues with completing the final piece of this mandated legislation, as it took the IRS over 6 weeks to approve our submission, which was to be done by June 30. Filing early, jumping through the IRS hoops and waiting the 6 weeks, we got final approval the last week of June! Sue Kane, Robin Reed, Mark Wroblewski and Brenda Hurst did a masterful job coordinating this process and dealing with the hurdles, but in the end persistence paid off and they can feel good about a job well done.

A special thanks to three of our local businesses who helped make the conference a success: Joe Lamb, Owner/Operator of Goodtime I, Jackie and Gary Finger, Owners of The Village Pump on Kelleys Island (what a great job feeding a large crowd) and certainly the staff at Kalahari. In addition, we had a presentation by Sheriff Paul Sigsworth and Deputy Nick Kotsopoulos on safety in the workplace. Thank you for supporting the Auditor Summer Conference and the time you spend doing the job of protecting the citizens of Erie County. We are truly blessed to have these gentlemen working in law enforcement in Erie County-thank them the next time you see them. Siggy and Nick "be safe out there".

Finally, we have been working on staff training the 1st six months of this year in anticipation of replacing two valued, long-time employees of



Richard Jeffrey

### Inside this issue:

- Staff Spotlights
- 2018 Property Revaluation
- 2016 CAAO Summer Conference
- CAAO Legislative Committee Update
- Payroll Information
- Tax Exemption Clarification

the Auditor's Office-Sue Kane and Ellie Olsen, both of whom will be retiring in the 4th Quarter of this year. If you see them in the next few months be sure to thank them for their service and wish them well as they begin a new chapter in their lives. Thank you both for your countless days of public service...you will be missed.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard Jeffrey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located at the bottom right of the page.

**STAFF SPOTLIGHTS**



Jenny Capizzi

Jenny has been employed by the Auditor's office for 5 years. She has a long history of working in the Real Estate industry in Erie County, including a Realtor, managed a Real Estate office, and was also a business coordinator for a Real Estate office. Jenny has a Degree in Psychology from The University of Toledo. Currently, Jenny is the Homestead Exemption Coordinator for Erie County and seeks to educate all property owners on not only the Homestead Exemption requirements and

reductions but also the Owner Occupancy credit, also known as the 2.5% credit. Jenny can also issue dog licenses, vendors licenses and assist with any other questions that may come her way. She has previously lived in Huron but currently resides in Perkins township, However, as a graduate of Sandusky High School she will always consider herself a Blue Streak at heart! Jenny and her husband Charlie enjoy spending time on their boat during the sum-

mer and devote most of their free time to their 2 kids: their son CJ who will be attending college in the Fall, and their daughter Cassidy who will be a Senior this year at Perkins High School. Jenny also wants to mention her furry best Zoey.



Jean Siesel

I graduated from St. Mary's High School and then received my Associate of Applied Business degree from Firelands College. I have also taken additional computer programming classes through Firelands. I have been in the restaurant business for over 40 years where my duties included, but were not limited to payroll and accounts payable. I grew up

in Sandusky and have lived either here or in Milan for most of my life. I am married to Steve Siesel and we have a combined total of 6 children (1 son and 2 daughters each). We also have 6 grandsons between the ages of 10 and 17 who keep us very busy! I have been employed by the Erie County Auditor's Office since 2012 and am currently an Accounts

Payable Clerk. I am responsible for entry, balancing and printing of all the accounts payable checks for the county. I receive and maintain documents from vendors to create their vendor files which are necessary to process payments. I also maintain the documents required for all payments and for 1099 preparation.

**2018 Property Revaluation**



John G. Cleminshaw, Inc. Staff

The mass appraisal of Erie County for 2018 is underway with the assistance and hard work of the John G. Cleminshaw, Inc. staff. A mass appraisal is the systematic appraisal of properties using standardized procedures and statistical testing. Phase 1 of the revaluation was rolled out and completed. The Cleminshaw staff visited all 25 Manufactured Home Parks in Erie County where they took pictures of the 1200 manufac-

ured homes. They uploaded these pictures into our database which will provide the stepping stone into assessing the current values. Upon completing phase 1 they began working on the next step which will consist of a comparison between our current pictometry or CAMA system vs. new aerial photographs. These show up-to-date images of every property in Erie County to ensure appropriate valuations.

**2016 CAAO SUMMER CONFERENCE**

The CAAO (County Auditors Association of Ohio) represents the interests of Ohio's 88 County Auditors while protecting the interest of the taxpayers. They also provide educational opportunities for the auditors and work closely with the Ohio General Assembly regarding legislative issues. The CAAO is divided into 4 districts and our very own auditor, Rick Jeffrey, serves as the Northwest Districts Secretary/Treasurer. Each district typically meets monthly or bimonthly, and

then the entire CAAO merges for 2 yearly conferences (a winter and summer conference). This year the 2016 Summer Conference was hosted by Erie County at Kalahari Convention Center, June 8-10. The conference focused on both the financial and the real estate duties of an auditor. Numerous post meeting events were planned to showcase our wonderful county, but the hit was a charter boat excursion on the Goodtime I for dinner at The Village Pump on Kelleys Island.



**CAAO LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The 131st Ohio General Assembly has concluded with a few notable bills effecting the Auditor's office. The first bill **HB166 Local Tax-Fiscal Revisions** extends the deadline for filing the homestead exemption and the owner occupancy application. The previous deadline was the first Monday in June. The new bill now allows the filing of applications until the end of that tax year. **SB75 Agritourism-Zoning** was adopted

to limit the county or township commissioners on prohibiting agritourism through zoning and to apply CAUV to land used for such purposes. Agritourism is defined as any operation that is agriculturally based and brings visitors to a farm or ranch. This was passed and signed by the Governor, and officially goes into effect August 17, 2016 [refer to ORC 5713.30(A)]. Another hot topic in most counties is the concern over vicious dogs and their licensure.

There is a push to place more of the responsibility on the Dog Warden and to tighten up the current laws. **SB151-Vicious Dogs** will revise current provisions of the Dogs Law governing nuisance, dangerous and vicious dogs. This is still in the pending phase and the Senate will meet for a Third hearing with regards to this bill. We will keep details and updates on our website as we receive them.

**CONTACT US**

Erie County Auditor's Office  
247 Columbus Ave  
Suite 210  
Sandusky, OH 44870

Phone: 419-627-7746  
Fax: 419-627-7740

Email: [ecao@eriecounty.oh.gov](mailto:ecao@eriecounty.oh.gov)



**Payroll Information for  
County Employees**

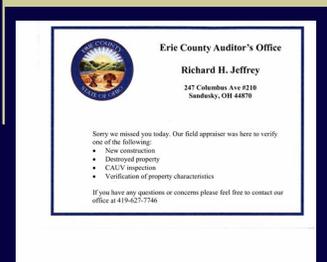
Please be sure to check with your payroll clerk prior to cancelling or changing any direct deposit account. The previously used account should **not** be closed until you have received your direct deposit into the new account, otherwise, this could hold up you being paid on time. Always be sure to contact payroll with any and all questions or changes!!

Ext. 7609 or 7747

**We're on the Web!**

[www.erie.iviewauditor.com](http://www.erie.iviewauditor.com)

With the nice weather, it is important to remind you that our Appraiser(s) may be out verifying property information. They will have Erie County I.D., either a county vehicle or county identification on their vehicle. If they stop at your property there will be a white card indicating that fact. Do not hesitate to call our office or the proper authority if you are concerned with someone on your property.



**Tax Exemption Clarification**

There has been some recent concerns and confusion over the eligibility and definition of the **Homestead Exemption** and the **Owner Occupancy rollback** (otherwise known as 2.5% rollback). If you qualify for 1 or both of these they must be on the same property. A lot of our property owners have property in multiple states, meaning, you may only receive these on 1 property, your primary residence. If you spend equal time at both of your properties then you must clarify which will be primary (typically you start where you are a registered voter, from there it is which state issues your drivers license). The Owner Occupancy credit is given if you reside in your home and it is your primary residence. The Homestead Exemption qualifications: **1.** primary residence and **2.** deeded name on the property and **3.** 65+ years or on complete and total disability, and **4.** Ohio adjusted gross income (line 3 of state taxes) is less than \$31,500 **OR 5.** You are a 100% service related disabled veteran. If you have questions or concerns please contact our office, other states are looking to recoup these fees so please double check on your situation. Also, the State has extended the June 1st deadline for filing applications, meaning we can accept these applications for current or late filers until December 31 of that year.