

Calendar of Events

- February 27-March 3
IAAO Course 402
- March 6-10
IAAO Course 102
- March 13-17
Collector of Revenue
I
- March 16
CAS Challenge Exam
- March 20-24
IAAO Course 601
- April
Assessor Recertification
- May 1-5
Collector of Revenue
I
- May 8-12 & May 15-19
Citified Appraisers School
- May 15-19
Collector of Revenue
I
- May 30
MCR Comprehensive Exam
- June 3
AEI, AEII, MAE Deadline
- June 20
MAE Exam
- July 16-20
MACA Summer Conference
- Visit gcd.msstate.edu
for more information.



Across County Lines



Two Perspectives of the Assessing Field

An interview with the most recently elected Tax Assessor, Black Pickering, Lincoln County and one of the longest certified Tax Assessors, Parker Pickle, Desoto County Tax Assessor.

Introduce yourself.

Blake Pickering: My name is Blake Pickering. I am serving my first term as the newly elected Assessor/Collector of Lincoln County. The county seat of Lincoln County is Brookhaven and we have 24,838 parcels. I became certified this year (2016). I am the youngest Assessor/Collector currently serving in the state. I am married to Nicole, with a daughter, Lexi, and a son on the way. Interesting non-job related fact: I am a fantasy football fanatic.

Parker Pickle: Parker Pickle,

DeSoto County Tax Assessor for seven terms, real property parcels 71,394, personal property parcels 4,607, 35 years as a certified appraiser, I am featured in the Coffee Table book as one of the 300 "FAMOUS MISSISSIPPIANS"!!!
GO FIGURE

How did you become involved in county government/tax assessment?

Blake Pickering: Before becoming elected, I was the Assistant Business Manager for the Lincoln County School District so I came in totally green. The job experience I did have, combined with a bachelors in Accounting from Mississippi College gave me a certain comfort level with the collecting side of things. The assessing side of things has not

come as easily and luckily I inherited a very competent staff.

Parker Pickle: After graduation from Ole Miss, I was hired by AW Bouchillon to work in the office and I have been here since October 1, 1980. A long damn time!

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Blake Pickering: I enjoy interacting with people the most. The ability to interact with and help people was a large part of the reason why I ran in the first place. The day to day variety is also appealing to me. No two days are ever the same around here so it definitely keeps me on my toes.

Continued on Page 2



Parker Pickle, Desoto County Tax Assessor



Blake Pickering, Lincoln County Tax Assessor



New Assessor/ Collector Webinar Series

County tax Assessors and Collectors are faced with many challenges in their role. To help ensure that all County Tax Assessors/Collectors and their staff have the opportunity to stay up to date on information in their job, a new webinar series will be offered by the Mississippi State University Extension, Center for Government and Community Development. Each month a short webinar will be offered, free of charge to all staff who work in a county tax assessor or collector office. Topics will vary throughout the series and will be announced very soon. Participants will be able to view from their desktop or by smartphone. Sessions will be limited to one hour and will be offered at different times each month. Information about the series will be released by email in the coming weeks.

FREE

Two Perspectives of the Assessing Field

Continued from Page 1

Parker Pickle: I love my office staff top to bottom and they say they love me! Haha! I have 14 employees and 11 of us have a college degree.

How would you describe an average day in your office?

Blake Pickering: The average day is very seasonal. The first three months of the year are a constant bustle of people in and out of both offices. By the time summer gets here the collectors slow down as the assessors start to get things ready for the land sale and finalize the land rolls. August starts with a rush and goes out painfully slow. The few months have been a painfully slow crawl filled with a little riding and a little overdue spring cleaning. I am blessed with a great staff that handles everything professionally and we all enjoy ourselves with minimal complications.

Parker Pickle: An average day in my office depends on the time of year. Sept, Oct, & Nov are what I call the quiet months, then tax bills go out to the public and all hell breaks loose.

What is the biggest challenge you see in the Mass Appraisal

field?

Blake Pickering: The one thing that I have noticed within our county is that given our size, we are not able to develop accurate values for rural communities. We have so many small communities, each with their own identities that cause property values to vary greatly. However, due to such a small sample size, we have to apply a county-wide value as best we can.

Parker Pickle: Our biggest challenge in DeSoto County is keeping up with the influx of people that are moving to our county. Homestead exemption is a pain in the ass in a county our size.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone new to the mass appraisal field?

Blake Pickering: Considering I am brand new to this, giving advice is probably the last thing that I should be doing. The one thing I would encourage someone new to the field to do would be always be fair. Create a precedence of action over time that you always follow when dealing with people that you can use as the standard (provided it is accurate) anytime your decisions are

questioned. Once you make a decision, be willing to review it if questioned, but if you are correct in your assessment then hold firm.

Parker Pickle: When you do some work start it, complete it and take it all the way to the finish. You won't remember it two weeks from now. In other words complete the task.

What trends do you see developing in the Mass Appraisal Field?

Blake Pickering: I think that technology will continue to be developed to improve the accuracy and speed of the appraisal process. The use of drones is one thing that I look to grow in prominence as the technology is perfected and becomes more cost efficient. As I am far from the cutting edge on most things and extremely conservative regarding change I am sure there are a lot of beneficial programs out there now that I am unaware of that will become more commonplace in the field as time passes.

Parker Pickle: Complete and total computerized assessment of real and personal in the near future.

The Value of Assessor Education

By Whitney Hodges,
Lauderdale County Deputy
Tax Assessor

We have a little saying in the Lauderdale County Assessor's office: Simply, Be the Best!

Five years ago, Mr. James Rainey was elected Tax Assessor in Lauderdale County. He replaced a three-term incumbent and came into the office with a small amount of experience in assessing property. He had served as the City of Meridian Tax Assessor early in his career. He brought a fresh attitude and a whole lot of enthusiasm. The first few weeks in office, he spent time understanding the office functions, and, of course, talking with the media. You see, Lauderdale County was working with outside contractors for Real Property assessments.

When running for office, Mr. Rainey promised to

employ local people, full time, for the assessment of the real property.

Lauderdale County has in excess of 45,000 parcels of real property.

Quickly, Mr. Rainey went about the task of understanding the education level of our department. He inherited 7 county employees, 2 in home- stead, 3 in personal business property and 2 in real property/mapping/ clerical. These employees had limited training. He also hired 3 field appraisers and sent them to Certified Appraiser's School, hosted by the Center for Government and Community Development.

Next Mr. Rainey began to ask questions about the requirements for MECF Track II Certification.

The county only had two Assessment Evaluator I, and Mr. Rainey knew we needed to increase our education level to bring appraising back in-house.

In order to do this, he had to gain the approval of the Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors. They have been instrumental in this process. He researched the classes offered by the International Association of Assessing Officers. The courses offered in Mississippi were not enough to educate our people in a timely manner, so the Board authorized our traveling to Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Tennessee for IAAO courses.



**Theresa Bell 2016
MAE Recipient**

During this time of growth in our department, several things were gained outside the class-

room. Our appraisers were able to meet and learn from other employees in other states. One group of new friends actually sent a study guide for one of the harder IAAO Courses, 102- Income Approach to Valuation, and this helped two of our appraisers pass the exam on their first attempt. Secondly, it opened the door to discussions about the proper way to handle Section 42 housing appraisals. An instructor forwarded a large folder of court cases and historical data on the assessing of government housing units in America. Thirdly, we have learned the value of comparing notes with other counties. We feel comfortable calling another county or state tax assessor to discuss odd or unique property assessments. And the best improvement has been the increase in Mississippi Assessment Evaluators, we now have SIX!



A NEWSLETTER OF THE MS
IAAO & MACA

MS CHAPTER OF
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ASSESSING OFFICERS
P.O. BOX 462
GULFPORT, MS 39502



By Nick Elmore, MS IAAO Representative,
Jackson County Assessor

IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER OF IAAO

Some may ask the questions... "Why should I join the IAAO? What will it do for me?". The short answer to these questions can be stated in one word - PLENTY. IAAO members have access to a wide array of benefits that will help you increase your professional knowledge and value to your organization. The most important benefit is unlimited access to the IAAO website where you will find a wealth of resources on

virtually any topic you can imagine. The IAAO library allows you access to thousands of books, articles, research projects, surveys and other sources of information related to property valuation and tax policy. If you can't find the exact answer you are looking for in the library, you also have a complete listing of members and instructors with years of experience who are more than willing to discuss options with you. IAAO also offers its

members free online classes in management and productivity to enhance your personal skills on the job as well as regular publications full of timely, information filled articles. The magazine *Fair & Equitable* will be sent to you monthly along with the biannual publication *The Journal of Property Tax Assessment and Administration*. As a member of IAAO you also have the opportunity to add to your resume through the attainment of multiple

types of appraisal certifications. These designations are recognized around the world as a symbol of your dedication and expertise. There are so many other valuable assets to IAAO membership that I can't list here. I encourage you to check out the website at www.iaao.org and explore for yourself. If I can ever be of any assistance to you in the future, please don't hesitate to contact me. I hope all of you have an amazing remainder of the year!