Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual

Introduction

The *Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual* (WPAM) serves as the guide for uniform property assessment throughout the State. Section 70.32, Wis. Stats. requires that assessors utilize WPAM when valuing real property. The WPAM aids assessors in the interpretation of statutes related to classifying and valuing property, describes the property assessment cycle and deadlines, and defines the responsibilities of public servants charged with carrying out property valuation. WPAM is developed and maintained by the Department of Revenue (DOR), Office of Assessment Practices per sec. 73.03(2a), Wis. Stats. and is updated on an annual basis.

WPAM refers to, and affirms, recognized practices in the professional appraisal of property; however, it is not a comprehensive textbook in the theory and practice of professional appraising. The assessor is expected to be grounded in these theories which can be found in a multitude of textbooks such as *The Principles of Appraisal Practices*, published by The Appraisal Institute. In addition, the assessor is expected to have a thorough knowledge of mass appraisal principles which are discussed in textbooks such as *Property Assessment Valuation* and *Mass Appraisal of Real Property*, both published by the International Association of Assessing Officer.

Property owners should understand that the WPAM is meant to be interpreted in its entirety. Extracting material from one section without understanding how it fits into the other sections can result in misunderstandings. For these reasons, the DOR has developed guides that answer common questions of particular relevance to property owners. These guides can be found on the DOR website http://www.revenue.wi.gov/html/govpub.html#property.

Finally, it is highly recommended that property owners direct questions regarding a specific property to their local assessor, their district office, or their attorney.