

Protests lead to lower valuations

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Friday, 12 August 2011 22:03 - Last Updated Friday, 12 August 2011 22:05

More than a third of Chase County property valuation protests come from Wauneta

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Of the 34 property valuation protests heard by the county board of equalization this year, 13 came from Wauneta property owners whose homes sit near a new grain handling facility built there last year.

Property owners cited noise, dust and traffic from the new facility as the reasons their property had depreciated in value.

The board of equalization (BOE), which is comprised of the three county commissioners, agreed with the property owners.

As a result, the commissioners lowered the valuations of those properties by 20 percent.

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They took it another step further by establishing boundaries in the proximity of the grain facility.

The valuation of homes within these boundaries will be reviewed prior to issuing next year's tax valuation statements.

Assessor Dotty Bartels said the statistical trends followed by her office presently show that residential values in Wauneta are undervalued.

As a result, it's not a lock that homes within the established boundary in Wauneta will automatically be devalued 20 percent, she said.

Only those property owners in Wauneta who protested this year will get the decrease on the 2011 tax statements.

Property values of commercial properties within the boundary will not be adjusted.

The loss of valuation to the Village of Wauneta will total \$62,140 for the 2011 tax year.

The valuation of the new grain facility owned by Frenchman Valley Coop totals \$836,541, which likely exceeds the loss in valuations due to the commissioners' action on residential properties affected.

The total reduction in valuation resulting from the protests this year stands at \$565,593.

Assessor Dotty Bartels made valuation corrections within her office that decreased valuation \$375,199.

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Bartels said the BOE was not able to arrive at an agreement on one residential property and the commercial facilities owned by Scoular Grain.

Hearings on those cases were heard July 12 by the Nebraska Tax Equalization Review Commission. No decision had been made by the commission as of Tuesday.

Commissioner districts to

remain static after census

There will be no realignment of commissioner districts in Chase County following the 2010 Census. Information compiled by County Clerk Debbie Clark shows all three districts fit within the equal-population requirements.

The population difference in the smallest district can be no greater than 10 percent of the largest district.

With Chase County's population of 3,966, the ideal population split would be 1,322.

As a result, the lowest populated district can include no less than 1,256 people while the largest must be under 1,388.

The current breakdown of population in District No. 1 is 1,293; District No. 2, 1,369; and District No. 3, 1,304.

Since the districts already fall within the guidelines, no changes will be necessary.