

Town of Lima Assessor's Office

2011 Activities Report

The primary function of the Assessor's Office is to provide equitable taxation for the taxpayers of the Town and Village of Lima. Every effort is made to value all property at a uniform percentage of value. This will result in fair and equitable property taxes for all taxpayers.

In Lima all property is valued at 100%. This means that the assessed value and the most probable selling price of property should be about the same. During the year the Assessor's Office sends detailed property sales information to the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services. This data is utilized by the State in order to determine the municipality's level of assessment. Prices being paid for property are compared with the individual assessed value and the town is notified concerning the results. We are pleased to report that in most instances the individual selling prices and the assessed values were extremely close based on sales transacted during 2011. We are indeed fortunate that Western New York has not experienced the downward trend in property values seen in other areas of the United States.

During the past few years we have noticed a steady increase in the number of various exemptions approved for taxpayers. Every year more land qualifies for agricultural exemptions. In order to receive this exemption the law does not require the property owner to actually farm the property. Much of the land in Lima is rented to farmers. When this happens, it is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain a written five year lease with the farmer. During the past year the office has required many owners to supply a current lease.

Even though the “Star Exemption” has been available for many years, there is still confusion concerning eligibility. In order to receive the “Basic Star Exemption” the taxpayer must own the property and it must be their primary residence. The exemption provides for a \$30,000 reduction in assessed value for school taxes only. There are no age or income requirements. If the taxpayer is 65 or older with an income under \$79,050 then the “Enhanced Star” exemption can be granted. The exemption provides for a \$60,100 reduction in assessed value. Additional exemptions are available for low income senior citizens and disabled people. Agricultural, Enhanced Star and Senior Citizen exemptions must be renewed every year on or before March first. Taxpayers should contact the assessor’s office if they have any questions concerning exemptions.

It is very important that all taxpayers understand that assessor’s do not determine the tax levy itself. The assessed value on property determines the taxpayer’s share of a tax levy that has been determined by the town, school district, fire district or county. If taxpayers believe taxes are too high then they should contact one of the various boards that levy the taxes. Any questions concerning the fairness of individual assessments should be directed to the assessor’s office.

Robert E. Morgan, Assessor
Marilyn D. Zaludny, Assessor’s Clerk