

STERLING COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN - 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Sterling County Appraisal District, established January 1980, is a political subdivision of the State of Texas. The provisions of the Texas Property Tax Code govern the legal, statutory, and administrative requirements of the Appraisal District. The Appraisal District is governed by a Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors are elected by the taxing units within the boundaries of Sterling County and must live within the District two years prior to serving on the Board.

The Chief Appraiser is appointed by the Board of Directors and is the chief administrator of the Appraisal District. The Appraisal District is responsible for local property tax appraisal and exemption administration. The taxing units such as the County, School, City, and Underground Water Conservation District set a tax rate from the property tax appraisal issued by the Sterling CAD.

Purpose

The purpose of this Public Relations Plan is to create a positive image of the Sterling County Appraisal District while informing the public about the roles and responsibilities of the Appraisal District.

Appraisal District Goal:

The goal of the Sterling County Appraisal District is to provide professional service to the taxpayers of Sterling County and maintain equity in property valuations. This goal includes:

1. Local property tax appraisal so that taxation is equal and uniform.
2. The administration of exemptions and special valuations authorized by the local taxing units and the State of Texas.

Objectives:

1. Maintain a positive relationship with the taxpayers of the district.
2. Keep the public informed. Provide information either at public meetings or in the local newspaper.
3. Make improvements as needed, with focus on the deficiencies of the Methods and Assistance Program or MAP Review.
4. Work closely with the office of the County Assessor & Collector
5. Continue with the training requirements for the Chief Appraiser

Board of Directors Duties:

1. Establish the Appraisal District office
2. Appoint the Chief Appraiser
3. Approve a periodic reappraisal plan for the appraisal of all real property at least once every three years
4. Approve the annual operating budget
5. Authorize the annual preparation of an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant
6. Designate a financial institution as the depository every two years

7. Appoint members of the Appraisal Review Board (by resolution)
8. Provide advice and consent to the Chief Appraiser concerning the membership of the Agricultural Appraisal Advisory Board
9. Approve contracts for appraisal firms selected by the Chief Appraiser and other contracts for necessary services
10. Approve general policies as needs.

Appraisal Review Board Duties

1. Hears Taxing Unit Challenges
2. Hears Property Owners Protest
3. Issues Change Orders to the Appraisal District
4. Accept Certified Property Values
5. Approves the Appraisal Roll

Agriculture Appraisal Advisory Board Duties

1. Appointed by the Chief Appraiser with the advice & consent of the Board
2. Composed of three members
3. Must be land owners and residents of the District
4. Meet at least once a year
5. Advise the Chief Appraiser on the valuation and use of land that may be designated for agriculture use or that may be open space agricultural land in the District.

Sterling CAD Appraises Property for:

1. Sterling County
2. Sterling City ISD
3. City of Sterling City
4. Sterling County Underground Water Conservation District

Surveys:

The Appraisal District will attempt to conduct surveys of residents and businesses within the Appraisal District in order to obtain a feel for customers' attitude concerning the district.

Strategies:

1. Take and pass the required training courses
2. Provide public information that educates the public and promotes the Appraisal District
3. Establish a Website for public access
4. Publication of Property Tax protest and appeals process for Appraisal Review Board
5. Budget
 - a. Publicize notice of time, date and place of public hearing
 - b. Publicize proposed budget with amount of increase
6. Provide programs for local civic club – Sterling Lions Club
7. Take advantage of public media, (radio, newspaper) when possible
8. Participate in community events

Timeline:

January – December

- Attend training to maintain RPA certification
- Meet with property owners as needed
- Work with the County Tax Assessor/Collector
- Get assistance from the PC group in Fort Worth
- Get assistance from the P&A group in San Angelo
- Quarterly meetings with CAD BOD

March

- Schedule CAD BOD Meeting
- Publish Taxable Property Renditions in the Sterling Courier

April

- Notify Tax A/C of the form in which the roll will be provided to each taxing unit.
- Publish Homestead Exemptions & Productivity Appraisal Notices in the Sterling Courier
- Preliminary 2017 Values for the taxing units
- Schedule CAD BOD Meeting

May

- Schedule CAD BOD Meeting
- Financial Audit FYE 2016
- Publish Notice in Sterling Courier regarding taxpayer protests and procedures
- Training for ARB members
- Schedule ARB Hearings

June

- Schedule ARB Hearings
- Work on Proposed Budget FY 2018
- Schedule CAD BOD Meeting
- Complete the 7-Hour USPAP Course

July

- Hold ARB Hearings – July 18, 2017
- Certified 2017 Values and Approval of Appraisal Roll (by July 20th)
- Certify Values by July 25, 2017
- Schedule CAD BOD Meeting
- Review the 2018 Proposed Budget
- Complete the 2-Hour TAAD Laws and Rules Update
- Work on Horwood Properties
- Worked on four cases of 1-d-1 Open Space Issues

August

- Work on Horwood Properties
- Worked on the Sterling CAD Guide to 1-d-1 (Open Space) Agricultural Appraisal and Wildlife Management Plan
- Worked on four cases of 1-d-1 Open Space Issues

September

- Publish Notice of public hearing for the annual budget
- Schedule CAD BOD Meeting – 2018 Budget – approved September 14, 2017
- Completed work on Horwood Properties
- Completed the Sterling CAD Guide to 1-d-1 (Open Space) Agricultural Appraisal and Wildlife Management Plan
- Published the Highlights of the 1-d-1 Open Space Land for local landowners.
- Completed work on four cases of 1-d-1 Open Space Issues

October – December

- Schedule CAD BOD Meetings and Ag Advisory Board Meeting
- Correct appraisals for tax statements – Assessment Change Docket
- Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays