

How Is My Property Appraised?

At least once every 3 years, each parcel of property in Lee County is visited and reviewed by an appraiser; however, all properties are analyzed every year by the appraisal district in accordance with Texas Law. Lee Central Appraisal District (Lee CAD) is responsible for establishing and maintaining approximately 46,000 parcels covering 629 square miles.



During property inspection, the appraiser reviews property characteristics and records any changes from the last review cycle. (*For example: if you have added or removed a barn or shed*). The appraiser also looks closely at your improvements (*houses or buildings*) to see if there is any change in the exterior condition of your property.

Lee CAD appraisers verify the:

- Size of your improvements
- Construction quality
- Physical condition of your improvements

Using these facts, Lee CAD will determine the market value of your property as of January 1st, considering one of three methods of appraisal:

- Sales comparison / market approach
- Cost approach
- Income approach

Because the appraisal district is placing a value on a large number of properties annually, the appraisal district must utilize applicable features of each method and apply them uniformly to similar properties in a process known as **mass appraisal**.

Sales Approach



In order to determine the value of your property, Lee CAD must first know what properties have sold and how much they are selling for within your neighborhood, in today's market. By maintaining a database of real estate transactions, we can arrive at the property value by studying sales of comparable properties.

Cost Approach

This method of appraising property is based on how much it would cost today to build an identical structure on the property. If the property is not new, Lee CAD must also determine how much value the building has lost over time due to depreciation.



Income Approach



This method is preferred when appraising an income producing property. This approach determines value through analysis of income and expenses to determine market value. Consideration is given for operating expenses, maintenance costs, and the return (*or profit*) that could be reasonably expected on the property.

Mass Appraisal

There are basically only two kinds of appraisal, *fee appraisal* and *mass appraisal*. Both types of appraisals utilize the same basic appraisal principles and theories. A fee appraisal utilizes the three methods discussed above, but with only one parcel of property being valued. Mass appraisal values the entire county, where market areas, neighborhoods, subdivisions, and large groupings of similar properties are appraised at one time by adopted standards.

What about my oil or gas property?



The value of your oil or gas property is based upon the reserves left in the ground rather than the amount of money you received in the last calendar year. Lee CAD is responsible for the appraisal of approximately 22,000 oil and gas parcels. If you need more information about the appraisal of this complex property, the appraisal district can provide someone to explain the appraisal method to you.

Market Value and Taxable Value – What’s the difference?

When you receive a Notice of Appraised Value from the appraisal district in April, you will see a listing of market values, both from last year and proposed for this year for your land and improvements. If you have a residential homestead exemption on your property, you might notice that your *taxable value* is less than your *market value*. That’s because Texas law provides the taxable value of a residence homestead property can only increase by ten percent per year, regardless of how much the market value increases. (*Your taxable value may increase at a rate of ten percent per year until it matches the district’s appraised market value.*)

If you have applied for and are receiving a special valuation for agricultural, timber, or wildlife management use on your land, you will also see the productivity value that has been assigned to your property. In this case, your taxes in October will be based upon the productivity value rather than the market value of the property. Lee CAD has approximately 8,000 parcels under a special evaluation.

How can appraised value change from year to year?

Property tax is “ad valorem,” which means “based upon value.” When the market value of a property changes, so may its appraised value. Your property’s market value can change as a result of the economy in general or because of changes you’ve made to the property; making it more valuable. A sluggish economy, slow growth, and no demand or few potential buyers in the market may cause a decline in property values. Likewise, a growing economy with rapid growth may cause a rapid increase in property values.



What if I disagree with the value placed on my property by the appraisal district?

If you disagree with the value that has been proposed on your property, you should contact the appraisal district within 30 days of receiving a Notice of Appraised Value. If you are not satisfied with the explanation given to you, then you have the right to file a formal protest with the Appraisal Review Board (ARB). The ARB is a panel of local citizens that will listen to evidence presented by both you and the appraisal district, and make a determination regarding the issues you have protested.



Appraised Value and the Tax Rate

After the ARB process is completed in late July, the Chief Appraiser certifies that the records are correct and then sends the certified appraised values to each of the taxing jurisdictions.

The taxing jurisdictions (*county, cities, schools, and water districts*) adopt a tax rate that will fund their operating budgets. These tax rates are expressed as a dollar amount for every \$100 of taxable value and are adopted every year in August public hearings.

How are my taxes calculated?

Your taxes are calculated by dividing your taxable value by one hundred and multiplying by the jurisdiction’s tax rate. For example:

Market Value	\$50,000
Less Exemptions	-\$15,000
Taxable Value	\$35,000
Apply Tax Rate	\$0.50 per \$100
Assessed Taxes	\$175.00