Seneca Daily Journal 2/11/2010

Oconee officially seeking private appraiser

BY CARLOS GALARZA
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — A request for proposals (RFP) to bring in a firm capable of handling this year's reassessment of property values in Oconee County has gone out the door.

Oconee's request for re-appraisal services was posted this week on the county's Procurement Department Web site.

Whoever wins the contract is expected to canvass a county with 62,500 parcels, and a total taxable value of $7.7 billion as of the previous reassessment in 2006, according to information in the RFP. Reassessment is done every five years.

The deadline for submitting proposals is March 8 by 2 p.m.

Although reassessment is the responsibility of County Assessor Leslie Smith, Interim Administrator Gene Klugh recommended trying to hire a private firm to do the work. Klugh cited the Assessor's limited staff, the volume of work,

SEE TAXES, PAGE 6A

TAXES: Private firm considered

FROM PAGE 1

which includes on-site inspections not required in 2006, and the quick turnaround needed to have appraisals completed.

Smith said he thinks hiring a private company is the way to go.

"We currently only have adequate staffing to handle our ongoing workload," Smith said recently.

The Assessor's Office has averaged about 17 full-time employees over the past 10 years. It currently has 21 employees, but they include GIS, mapping and clerical staff and not just appraisers.

The RFP outlines a schedule that calls for reassessment to be completed by May 1, 2011 and assessment notices sent out by July 1, 2011. However, valuations would be based on a valuation date of Dec. 31, 2010, even if the county receives an extension from the state Department of Revenue to delay the mailing out of reassessment notices.

Although counties have hired private companies to do their reassessment in the past, including Oconee County in 1975, it has rarely, if ever, been done by counties in recent years.

Late last year, technical problems in converting the County Assessor's computer software system to the County Auditor and Treasurer's system, resulted in a delay of two months in mailing out tax notices.

carlos@dailyjm.com | (864) 973-6685