Oconee reassessment will go to private firm

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WALHALLA — Oconee County is taking the necessary steps to hire a private firm to do this year's reassessment of property values.

Procurement Office Director Robyn Courtright said Thursday that she is working with County Assessor Leslie Smith to try to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) by early next week.

Reassessment of property values is done every five years.

Interim County Administrator Gene Klugh recommended hiring a private firm to handle this year's reassessment during a County Council budget committee meeting Saturday.

Klugh cited the heavy workload needed to do the reassessment, the Assessor's Office small staff and the strict deadlines for getting the job competed as the prime reasons for hiring a private firm.

'... the idea of contracting out the project is a very wise decision.'

Leslie Smith
Oconee assessor

Smith, whose office was besieged by appeals stemming from the previous reassessment, said Thursday he agrees with the decision to hire a private company to do the job this time around.

"We currently only

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have adequate staffing to handle our ongoing workload," Smith said. "Therefore, considering the cost and time involved with hiring and training additional staff, and the short time frame we have to work in, that exploring the idea of contracting out the project is a very wise decision."

Courtright and Smith said this is the first time a private company would be hired to do the county's reassessment. However, Klugh said it has been done successfully in other counties.

Smith said the reassessment this year includes a site visit to each property, which hasn't been done since the early 1990s.

Also, Smith said changes in the law since the previous reassessment five years ago now require two values — full market and capped — to be estimated for each property. The full market value of the property would be as of Dec. 31 of this year.

"Our staff would be handling the capped values and the contractor would be providing the full market values," Smith said.

Smith said the county hopes to stick with the original reassessment schedule that calls for the work to be completed and approved by the South Carolina Department of Revenue prior to July 1, 2011, which is the date the reassessment notices will be mailed.

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