Oconee sees 88% spike in appraisal appeals

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WALHALLA — The number of appeals from property owners who disagree with new appraisals stemming from Oconee's countywide reassessment jumped 88 percent over the past two weeks.



Moulder

The Assessor's Office reported Friday that it has logged 2,496 appeals to date.

The latest number represents an increase of 88.3 percent from the 1,325 appeals reported by Administrator Scott Moulder on Oct. 13.

County officials have been encouraging property owners to appeal if they disagree with their reassessment.

The deadline for filing an appeal is Dec. 9. All appeals must now go through the Assessor's Office since the departure of Tyler Technologies, Inc. a week ago.

Oconee hired Dallas-based Tyler to do its reassessment at a cost to the county of $1.8 million.

Complaints about the company's appraisals started surfacing as soon as taxpayers began to receive their reassessment notices in early September.

Some complained that Tyler appraisers never set foot on their property, while others charged that information on aerial photos Tyler used was dated or incorrect.

Derrill Fowler of Mountain Rest told The Journal this week that there's a lot of anger in his community with the job done by Tyler.

Fowler said his family owns many parcels in the county. He did a review of their reassessment based on county records accessible on the Internet.

Based on his review, Fowler said he found that Tyler appraised almost identical properties very differently.

Furthermore, Fowler said he found hundreds of examples of how Tyler increased property values above the 15 percent cap established by South Carolina's tax reform legislation in 2006.

Fowler said he thinks the county should continue to encourage people to appeal because he knows of too many people that are intimidated because they fear getting a higher assessment if they complain.

Moulder has tried to put those fears to rest by saying that people would be treated fairly and with respect.

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