

My home value is declining, but my tax bill is not. Why?

Taxes do not increase or decrease solely because property values increase or decrease.

Several variables can impact your actual tax bill, including property values, primary and secondary tax rates and special assessments such as an irrigation district.

Tax rates are set by your taxing authority. Taxing authorities include county and city governments, school districts, your community college and other taxing districts. Representatives from these taxing authorities meet each year to determine the budget needs of their jurisdiction.

Primary taxes are used for general operations and maintenance of the various jurisdictions.

Secondary Taxes pay for bonds, budget overrides, and special districts such as fire, flood control and other limited purpose districts.

Taxing authorities, such as school districts, have teachers, utilities and other expenses that must be paid. Even after cutting budgets, taxing authorities such as counties, towns and cities need tax dollars to pay recurring operating costs such as law enforcement, judicial services, road maintenance and many other services.

If there is a bonded indebtedness, no matter how low property values are, the jurisdiction must pay the amount, it is just like a mortgage.

When you review your 2012 tax bill you may notice the biggest increase in taxes is for school districts. In 2010 the Arizona State Legislature made a revision mandating the Property Tax Oversight Committee (PTOC) to oversee a tax formula provided by the Legislature for school districts. The tax rate for each school is calculated using those numbers. The legislators determine how much of the budget the district tax payers need to come up with and how much the state general fund pays.

What impact does my property value have on my tax bill? When tax rates are applied to your net assessed property value, your tax bill is calculated. Notices of Property Value are mailed every February. I encourage property owners to review these notices. If you do not agree with the value, you can appeal within 60 days.

The Assessor has no jurisdiction or responsibility for budgets, tax rates, or amounts of taxes paid. The Assessor's responsibility is to locate, identify and value taxable property in the county.

Annual budgetary meetings in which taxing authorities set tax rates are open to the public. You may go to our website www.graham.az.gov to get information on taxing authority contacts and where their annual budgetary meetings are located so tax payers can contact them about attending.

Successful government relies upon informed and involved citizens communicating their wishes and concerns to their local and state representatives.

I will be happy to attend a meeting of your group or club to answer questions or provide an explanation of the assessment process.

Darlene Alder
Graham County Assessor
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