



## Hardin County Appraisal District

Hardin County Appraisal District mailed around 34,000 appraisal notices on April 14, 2021. The Texas Property Tax Code provides the deadline to protest is by May 15<sup>th</sup> or thirty days after the notice was mailed.

Many taxpayers received their appraisal notices and have questions about why their values have increased or why their taxes are increasing based off the estimate on their appraisal notice. Our office would like to take this opportunity to explain the process that leads up to your tax statements that you receive in October each year, and hopefully answer a few questions about the property tax system.

January 1 marks the beginning of the property appraisal process. On January 1, our office verifies what a property is used for, the market conditions, and the ownership of the property. This is done so our office can determine key items about the property. Is the property taxable? What is the market value of the property? Does the property qualify for any exemptions? Who is responsible for paying the taxes? The appraisal district is responsible for determining the market value of properties based off current sales. Taxpayers then can protest the Values set by the CAD. By July 25<sup>th</sup> of each year, the Chief Appraiser must certify values to each local taxing unit, including the county, cities, school districts, and special districts. Once the values are delivered to the taxing units, the District's appraisal process is completed. After the taxing entities receive the certified value, they propose and adopt their tax rates for that year. Once the tax rates for each entity are adopted, the tax office sends out tax bills and begins the assessment and collection process.

### **What is Market Value?**

Market value is the price at which a property would transfer for cash or its equivalent under prevailing open market conditions.

### **My value went up! What if I don't agree with my Market Value?**

Property owners have the right to file a protest if they believe that the appraisal on their property is not correct, please remember that you can only protest your value not your estimated taxes. Our office can only discuss market value because we do not set the tax rates. Once you file a protest an appraiser will try to contact you and review your account. if you are not able to reach an agreement then you will be scheduled for an Appraisal Review Board hearing.

### **Why does the CAD have to be at Market Value?**

Per state law, property has to be appraised between 95% and 105% of market value. To ensure that properties are being appraised at market value, the Property Tax Assistance Division of the State Comptroller's Office conducts a Property Value Study on a biennial basis on each school district in Texas. This study is an independent estimate of property values and is mandated by the Texas Legislature for school funding purposes. All school districts in Hardin County fell below the levels required by the Property Value Study for the 2020 tax year. This indicated that CAD values were below market values. This puts local schools in danger of losing state funding next year.

### **Where can I go to see Entity tax rate information?**

Taxing units begin to adopt rates in late August. These rates will be posted on the new Truth in Taxation Website at [www.hardin.countytaxrates.com](http://www.hardin.countytaxrates.com) and will assist taxpayers with a more accurate estimate of taxes. In August, property owners will receive a postcard directing them to this website to view the 2021 proposed tax rates set by each entity. The website will provide property owners with a place to give feedback to their taxing units directly through the website to let their elected officials know their thoughts on the proposed tax rates affecting their 2021 taxes.

The Appraisal District is just the first step in the property tax system. Our office deals strictly with market value and we are monitored closely by the State Comptroller's office via audits. It is vital for the values on our appraisal role to be at market value to ensure our schools receive the funding they depend on from the state. We hope that this information will help in educating taxpayers on the tax system so they can better understand our role. An increase in the market value or assessed value of a property does not inherently indicate a tax increase or savings until tax rates are determined. Our office is always open for your assistance. Our information may be found at <https://www.hardin-cad.org/>