

Changes In Property Tax Function Announced

Texas Comptroller Susan Combs has announced changes to ensure efficiency and transparency in her agency's property tax functions and provide much needed assistance to appraisal districts.

Combs has renamed the Property Tax Division the Property Tax Assistance Division.

It will move out of the Local Government Assistance and Economic Analysis Division and become a stand-alone division at the Comptroller's office.

"The division's new name and independent identity reflect a renewed emphasis on one of our key responsibilities, providing technical assistance to local school districts and county appraisal districts to help them comply with property tax laws and use property appraisal methods that produce accurate results," Combs said.

"Through more outreach and

education, we will work with taxpayers who are sometimes confused by property taxes and appraisals set by the local districts.

Taxpayers have the right for their concerns to be heard."

Combs also plans revisions to the annual Property Value Study (PVS), which measures the taxable value of property within school districts, which is then used to determine the amount of state funding distributed to Texas school districts.

To the extent possible, additional adjusted property sales data will be used and fewer property appraisals will be conducted for the PVS.

This shift in study focus will free up personnel to assist appraisal districts in their work.

Only one state in the nation does not do a PVS.

"It is very important that we continue to perform an indepen-

dent, outside evaluation of local property values through the PVS in its new approach," Combs said.

"The study provides checks and balances to ensure property is appraised at market value, property taxes are levied fairly and tax revenues are sufficient to provide a quality public education for Texas children."

School districts and county appraisal districts that disagree with the results of the PVS have a right to appeal.

Combs announced that effective Nov. 3, those appeals will be conducted by the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), rather than hearing examiners within the Comptroller's office.

Combs made a similar change when she shifted tax case appeals to the neutral SOAH in January 2007.

"The same principle applies," Combs said.

"Anyone who disagrees with a decision by our office deserves a fair and impartial hearing."

Energy Efficient Homes Can Save Money

If every single-family home in Texas increased its energy efficiency by 20 percent, the energy savings would add up to more than \$13.7 billion over seven years.

A single household could potentially save \$1,791 to \$2,507 on electricity bills over that period, and with 87 percent of Texas' 6.3 million homes valued at \$200,000 or less, this efficiency gain represents significant savings to most Texas families.

A new report by Texas Comptroller Susan Combs says significant energy savings are possible if consumers are armed with credible, understandable energy efficiency information when buying a home or considering home energy upgrades.

"When you shop for a car, you can look at the gas mileage rating," Combs said.

"There is no widely used energy rating system for homes."

Energy evaluation systems, home energy ratings and mortgage programs allowing buyers to roll the cost of energy improvements into their home loans have existed for years, but the public is largely unaware of them.

Requiring mandatory energy ratings on millions of homes would be difficult to implement.

Instead, Combs' report advocates consumer education and a voluntary energy rating system.

"As energy costs increase, and as concerns for national energy security and the environment heighten, consumer awareness is changing," Combs said.

"With relevant, accurate information, the power to save energy is in the hands of the consumer."

"And if consumers want energy efficient homes, the marketplace will respond."

Texas A&M University is developing an online ratings tool for consumers who want to gain greater control over soaring utility bills and those who are in the market for a new home.

The tool will generate an ac-

curate energy efficiency rating for any home when the consumer enters key information about the home's energy usage, heating and cooling systems and other features.

The online tool will show consumers whether their home or other dwellings are as energy efficient as they could be.

When the new system is available in spring 2009, Texans will be able to access it on the Comptroller's State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) Web site at www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us.

The SECO Web site now has a new look and more energy conservation information and tips.

Residential consumers, government agencies, businesses and schools can find practical ideas to conserve energy as well as incentives and funding sources for projects to reduce energy costs and maximize efficiency.

The average annual electricity bill for Texas homes is 45 percent higher than in neighboring states and 56 percent higher than the national average.

Texas' per capita residential energy consumption is also the highest in the nation, due to air conditioning demand and greater use of electricity for home heating than in other states.

"Access to reliable, affordable energy is critical to serve Texas' growing population and to ensure continued economic growth," Combs said.

"Texas leads the nation in energy production, and we can lead the nation in maximizing that potential through energy efficiency."

The 80th Legislature passed a bill by Rep. Mark Strama requiring SECO to conduct a comprehensive study to identify potential methods for providing home energy efficiency information to Texas consumers.

Moving PVS appeals to SOAH removes any appearance of bias and ensures that the integrity of the appeal process is beyond question."

To set the changes in motion, Combs has hired Comal County Tax Assessor-Collector Sherman Krause as the assistant director of the Property Tax Assistance Division.

"As Comal County tax assessor and chairman of the Comal Appraisal District Board of Directors, Sherman Krause knows first-hand how challenging it can be for local governments to carry out complex property tax laws and state reporting requirements," Combs said.

"He has the knowledge and experience to help our Property Tax Assistance Division fulfill its responsibilities to inform and advice local governments and taxpayers about property tax issues."

Sherman Krause was elected Comal County Tax Assessor-Collector in 2000 and was re-elected in 2004.



Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Gould, Jr.

Satsky, Gould United In Marriage Sept. 6

Family and friends gathered together to celebrate the marriage of Jill Renee Satsky and Morris Spencer Gould, Jr. on Saturday, September 6, 2008 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Houston.

Jill is the daughter of Edward and Judith Satsky of Eagle Lake. Spencer is the son of Morris and Gloria Gould of LaMarque.

The couple met at MD Anderson Cancer Center where they both work as Physician Assistants.

The church altar was decorated with beautiful arrangements of pink roses mixed throughout lush greenery. The center aisle pews were accented with ivory tulle bows adorned with pink roses and navy blue ribbon.

The double ring ceremony was officiated by Deacon Daniel Pagano. The organist was Daryle Nance, and his daughter, Lauren, served as Cantor.

The readings were performed by Kristin Satsky, sister-in-law of the bride, and Katie Campbell, cousin of the groom.

Escorted by her father, Jill wore an original Maggie Sottero corset-back, strapless gown in ivory taffeta. Styling included a ruched band neckline and a full skirt and chapel-length train caught up with diamond-shaped pearl motifs. A beautiful French bustle was added for the reception. Her veil was made of ivory tulle with satin trim. Jill carried a lovely bouquet of fresh pink roses and white calla lilies accented with pearlescent ivory ribbon.

In accordance with wedding tradition, a shiny, 1978 penny was placed in the lining of Jill's shoe as her "something old"; a pearl, and diamond necklace, ring, and earring set given to her by Spencer at rehearsal dinner the night before was her "something new"; the veil she wore belonging to her sister, served as her "something borrowed"; and an ivory satin and lace garter accented with navy blue ribbon was her "something blue."

The bridal attendants included the matron of honor, Rhonda Morrow of East Bernard, sister of the bride; Sarah Matthews of Houston and Rebecca Vasek of Temple, lifelong friends of the bride; Elizabeth Ninan of Missouri City, Prachee Singh of Houston, and Holly Snyder of Galveston, all friends and co-workers of the bride; and Kari Roe of Houston, cousin of the groom.

The ladies wore marine blue sleeveless, floor-length chiffon dresses with a charmeuse round-neckline and sash at the waist. The dresses were accented with satin straps and peep-toe heels in the same shade of blue. They carried bouquets of fresh pink roses accented with baby's breath and ivory ribbon.

The flower girl was Sophie Morrow of East Bernard, niece of the bride. She wore an adorable ivory taffeta gown that was a near exact replica of the bride's dress. She carried a basket covered in ivory satin and filled with pink roses.

The groom was attended by best man, Eric Gould of Oak Harbor, Washington, brother of the groom; Corby Allen of Kingwood, Edgar Bustillos of Bacliff, and Sam Friday of Denver, Colo-

rado, all longtime friends of the groom; Marc Delclos of Pearland, friend and coworker of the groom; Charles "Bo" Roe of Houston, cousin of the groom; and Wade Satsky of New Braunfels, brother of the bride.

The ushers included Darren Burnett of Santa Fe, and Dan Burnett, Jr. of Texas City, cousins of the groom.

The ring bearer was Seth Campbell of Carrollton, cousin of the groom.

The Catholic wedding ceremony with exchange of rings and vows was followed by a lavish reception at the Omni Palace in Houston.

The tables in the Grand Ballroom were beautifully decorated with ivory linens topped with navy blue, shimmery organza overlays. The centerpieces consisted of hurricane lamps with ivory taper candles set atop silver chargers, adorned with iridescent blue river rocks and fresh pink rose petals.

Long pieces of ivory fabric were draped from the balcony and were gathered together in the center of the ceiling. Columns throughout the ballroom were also wrapped with ivory fabric, and gorgeous arrangements of roses in various shades of pink were displayed throughout the room.

The wedding cake consisted of four tiers of various flavors including vanilla bean rum, Florida citrus, Italian cream, and amaretto nut covered with ivory buttercream icing accented with Elizabethan scrollwork.

The groom's cake was a one layer chocolate cinnamon torte soaked in fresh Columbian mocha with a cream filling and dark chocolate finish. The cake was adorned with a chocolate "G", and surrounded by strawberries in chocolate-dipped tuxedos.

The guests were greeted with fresh fruits, vegetable, and cheeses, followed by scrumptious appetizers. The meal concluded with live-station preparation of chicken fettuccine Alfredo and tri-colored rottiini salad with sun dried tomato cream sauce, served with a fresh garden salad and dinner roll.

The festivities continued on with the happy couple's first dance, the bouquet and garter toss, and a wonderful night of dancing amongst family and friends. The couple drove away from the ceremony in a 1950 Oldsmobile Rocket 88 Coupe, a classic car restored by Spencer's father and brother. After the wedding the couple stayed at the historic Hotel ICON in downtown Houston.

The evening prior to the wedding, a rehearsal dinner was held at Escalante's Mexican Grille at Meyerland Plaza in Houston. The dinner was hosted by Spencer's parents, and included cheese enchiladas and fajitas with all the necessary fixings. At this time, the bride and groom presented their wedding party attendants with gifts of appreciation for their time and dedication in preparation for the big day.

The couple's original honeymoon plans were postponed as a result of Hurricane Ike, however, a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico is scheduled for mid-November to unwind and relax after a very busy year.

Jill and Spencer make their home in Pearland.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF HEATHER KIEBORZ

NOV. 5, 2004 - NOV. 5, 2008

To See You Once Again

I wish with all my heart I could see you once more, I would use that moment and time to tell you how much love my heart holds for you and I shall never close that door. Life each and every day with out you keeps going on

Even if some days I do not wish it I know I am being selfish and maybe even wrong, but to see you just once more I so very much long.

I try to remember all the loving and happy times we were granted to enjoy and share, I try to understand and not cry but to see you once more even only for a moment to let you know just how very much I do care.

I know that day will eventually come when its my turn To this world to say goodbye, but until then I shall hold your love close to my heart, and sometimes I shall break

Down and cry, and I will still ask the question why did you have to die?

Love, Aunt Peggy, Uncle Bingo, Ashley, E.J., Sarah and Racheal



Rice Medical Center (RMC) Employee volunteers purchased a Hill-Rom total care bed for patients who are bed bound or have decreased mobility for better patient care. The total care bed is the state of the art in patient positioning and fluctuating air mattress levels for pressure relief on bony prominences. The total care bed is displayed in the full upright sitting position. RMC continues to strive for patient satisfaction and obtain state of the art equipment for our family caring for yours.

6th Annual Veterans' Ball

5:45 pm, Saturday, 15 November 2008

Austin County Expo & Convention Center, Bellville, TX

co-hosted by

American Legion Post 115 * Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6522

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 115 * Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Unit 6522

The public is invited!

Guest of Honor & Speaker: COL Bruce Harrison, US Army(Ret)
topic: "Yesterday's Veterans, Today's Military & Tomorrow's Challenges"

Social begins at 5:45 pm. Opening colors ceremony at 6:45 pm.

program

opening colors ceremony * invocation * National Anthem * ribeye steak dinner
guest of honor presentation * cake cutting ceremony * recognition of veterans
benediction * dance with a variety of music by the Gary Henneke Orchestra
(formerly the Gus Lindemann Orchestra)

see a Caiman Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle

see a Civil War display by the 11th Texas Cavalry

semi-formal attire

military: Class "A"/Service Alpha uniform civilian: coat & tie/cocktail dress
veterans: civilian attire with headgear of veterans' organization or military attire

ticket information

All this for only \$35 per person! Purchase by Sunday, 09 Nov.

* Advance ticket sales only - no tickets available at the door. *

for tickets or more information

E-mail VetsBall@hotmail.com

Weldon Haevishar at (979)865-5188

Harold Remmert at (979)865-2944

Bernice Harlan at (979)865-9885

Mark Stolarski at (979)877-5254

DeWitt Nehrkorn at (979)865-9330

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