

Appealing the Assessor's Valuation Is Easier Than You and I Thought

I have devoted the last two columns to helping you appeal the County Assessor's valuation of your home. And every day I have taken phone calls from readers, especially those who are computer-challenged, asking for additional guidance.

But read the following one-sentence email I received from the Jeffco Assessor: "To protest, all that one must do is notify the Assessor's office in a signed writing that they do not agree with the value on the Notice of Valuation on or before June 1."

You can even go to the Assessor's office (on the 2nd floor of the County administration building, aka the Taj Mahal) and compose your one-sentence protest in longhand. You'll have the opportunity to sit down with a deputy assessor and explain why you feel your home is over-valued. He'll take notes and do the research for you, and you'll

get a letter of determination in July. Your effort may not be as convincing as a detailed analysis citing three qualifying sales of comparable homes, but it's a great alternative to doing nothing. Try it, and let me know your results.

Occasionally a homeowner who is contemplating selling his or her home will ask me whether they should not protest a high valuation, because it will help them get more for their home.

I can assure you that buyers and their agents know better than to consult the assessor's valuation of your home. First of all that valuation is already 10 months old when it is mailed to you, and it will be two years and 10 months old before it is updated in 2013. In addition, we all know that it is a computer-generated figure. The only time a human being really looks at

valuing your home is when you show up at the Assessor's office to challenge the computer's calculation.

When I first brought up this topic two weeks ago, I focused on the disparities in valuation of similar homes and said that it brings into question the methodology (i.e., computer programming) used by the County Assessor. It's too bad that these notices of valuation are mailed out during the last week of the legislative session. If they went out in January or February, I bet we'd read about legislative hearings in which county assessors were made to answer serious questions about how they perform their constitutional duties, and we might have an audit performed on the source code used for generating these valuations. Maybe some smart legislators will put it on their calendar, while it's on their mind, to call for such hearings in the next legislative session.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH,**
Realtor®

This Week's Featured New Listing:

2-Story Home with Main-Floor Master!

This home at 1498 Quail Court is in Golden's Village at Mountain Ridge, nestled between Highway 93 and the Mt. Galbraith Open Space Park. In fact, there is a trailhead for that park located within the subdivision, a short walk from this home. A city park with playground, softball field and basketball court is equally close — about a three-block walk. Mitchell Elementary School is within sight, too — just across a pedestrian bridge from this neighborhood. Use that same bridge to access Clear Creek, downtown Golden and the Colorado School of Mines campus. The July 4th fireworks display takes place about 1/2 mile away, making your deck a perfect viewing stand. Take a narrated video tour at the website shown above, then call your agent or Jim Smith for a private showing. Open this coming Saturday, 1-4 p.m.



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