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# PITKIN



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Max P. Arnold, F.A.S.A., President

Thomas A. Arnold, Associate  
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August 25, 1983

Lyle C. Kyle, Director  
Legislative Council Staff  
State Capitol Building  
Denver, Colorado 80202

RE: PITKIN COUNTY

Dear Lyle:

We hereby submit the result of the property assessment study for the above named county. This report is divided into eight parts: Summary of Findings; Questionnaire and Office Resource Survey; Market Data Analysis; Property Record Card Audit; Agricultural Audit; Natural Resources Audit; Personal Property Review; and Mobile Home Review.

The findings in these reports are based on the results of an eight month study effort. During the study over 50,000 sales of residential and commercial properties were collected and analysed, along with over 8,000 residential and commercial property record cards which were collected and reviewed. Extensive interviews were conducted with each assessing officer both at the beginning of the project and at the end with numerous personal contacts during the course of the study. In addition, speciality audits were conducted on agricultural and natural resource properties.

These reports are being submitted with one very important and very large caveat; that is virtually none of the counties performed a complete reappraisal. Values were simply arrived at by "factoring" with total disregard to the true appraisal process.

As documentation for this finding, we performed over 8,000 form appraisals using the 1977 manual issued by the state and in addition we completed over 1,000 complete appraisals, also using the state manual. These findings will be contained in the overall management report which we will be submitting to your office. It is our conclusion based on our findings that all but a handful of counties should be ordered to completely reappraise the counties. Unless this is done most counties will simply continue to compound existing imbedded inequities in perpetuity.

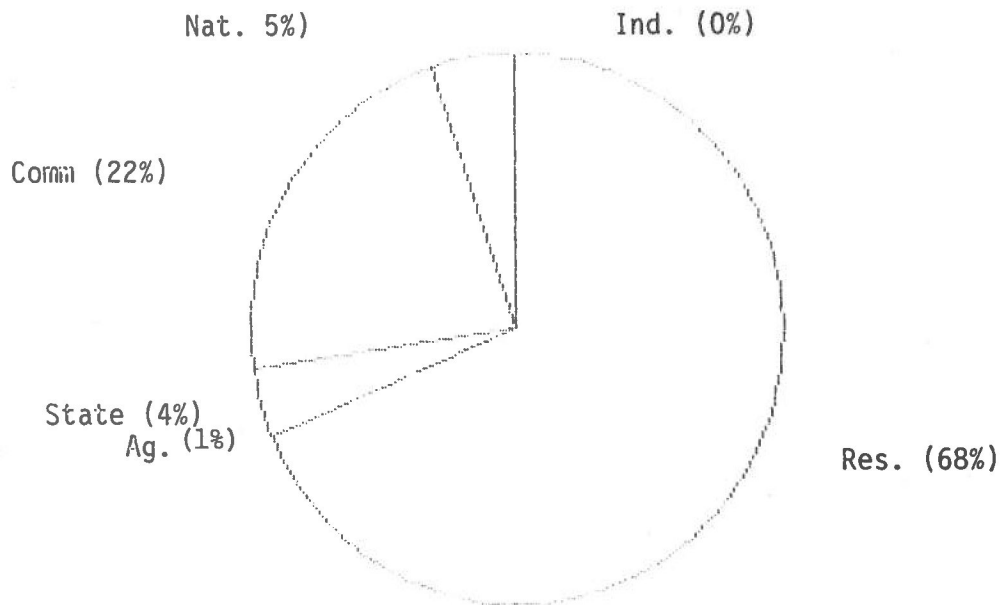
Very truly yours,

MAX P. ARNOLD & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Max P. Arnold, F.A.S.A.

# PITKIN COUNTY

1982 TAX BASE



PITKIN COUNTY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1982 Tax Base

Class as a % of Total Assessed Value

<u>Res</u>	<u>Com</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>Agr</u>	<u>Pol Con</u>	<u>Nat Res</u>	<u>State Assd</u>
68	22	0	1	0	5	4

I. Updated all accounts from 1973 base year to 1977 base year.

Yes    x                      No

Comments:

II. Market Data Analysis

	<u>Level</u>	<u>Quality</u>
A. Residential		
Single Family	97.78	8.83
Multifamily	-----	-----
Condominium	99.12	11.67
B. Commercial	98.90	8.48
C. Industrial	-----	-----

Comment: Residential property assessment is near 1977 levels; quality of assessment is good. Multifamily property assessment is near 1977 level; quality of assessment is good. Commercial property assessment is near 1977 level; quality of assessment is good.

PITKIN COUNTY

III. 1% Property Record Card Audit

Complete

Incomplete

Inventory:

x

Comment:

IV. Agriculture

Compliance

Non Compliance

x

Comment:

V. Natural Resources

Compliance

Non Compliance

x

Comment: Gravel operations need to be reviewed.

IV. Personal Property

Compliance

Non Compliance

x

Comment:

VIII. Mobile Homes

Compliance

Non Compliance

x

Comment:

OVERALL COMMENTS: Gravel operations need to be reviewed.

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE  
(as answered by Assessor)

Information Concerning the Residential Class

Was the Property Tax Administrator's residential appraisal manual (A.H. 513 or any other manuals approved by the Property Tax Administrator) for 1977 used by the assessor in valuing residential property effective January 1, 1983?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  x

If the answer is negative or doubtful a written explanation and the necessary documentation shall be provided.

Were adjustments made to the manuals for local conditions?

Yes  x  No \_\_\_\_\_

If the answer is yes, explain.

Information Concerning Commercial and Industrial Classes

Was the Property Tax Administrator's Commercial and Industrial Appraisal Manual (A.H. 523 or any other manuals approved by the Property Tax Administrator) for 1977 used by the assessor when valuing commercial and industrial property effective January 1, 1983?

Yes  x  No \_\_\_\_\_

Were adjustments made to the manuals for local conditions?

Yes  x  No \_\_\_\_\_

If the answer is yes, explain.

COUNTY ASSESSORS OFFICE RESOURCES  
(Information provided by County Assessor)

I. No. of property parcels by classification

- (A). Residential 8,993 \_\_\_\_\_
- (B). Commercial 641 \_\_\_\_\_
- (C). Industrial 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- (D). Agricultural 79 \_\_\_\_\_
- (E). Natural Resources 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- (F). Personal Property 3,411 \_\_\_\_\_
- (G). Total Number of Parcels 13,128 \_\_\_\_\_

II. Staffing by Function

- (A). Appraisal 2 full time, 2 part time \_\_\_\_\_
- (B). Administrative 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- (C). Clerical 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- (D). Automated Data Processing \_\_\_\_\_
- (E). Other \_\_\_\_\_

III. Budget of Assessor's Office

- (A). Salaries 162,374 \_\_\_\_\_
- (B). Total 216,101 \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Work Processing

- (A). Manual System partial \_\_\_\_\_
- (B). Automated Data Processing yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - (1). Hardware Manufacturer Data General \_\_\_\_\_
  - (2). Software Resources and Language Basic \_\_\_\_\_

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(3). Automated Functions

(i). Appraisal partial

(ii). Accounting yes

(iii). Mapping no

(iv). Inventory yes

(v). Other \_\_\_\_\_

(4). Centralized System within County yes

(5). Other Features \_\_\_\_\_

(6). Combined System yes



## MARKET DATA ANALYSIS

The contract required Max P. Arnold & Associates to obtain 1975 and 1976 sales of improved and unimproved residential, commercial and industrial properties in each county and the 1977 actual values for the properties. The sales and the 1977 actual values were gathered and analyzed according to the stratification and statistical principles outlined in the contract. From this data a median ratio and a co-efficient of dispersion was developed for improved residential, commercial and industrial property in each county according to the established economic areas. For this report only the overall county figures by economic area by class of properties presented. We can, upon request, develop median and coefficient within price ranges and with years where possible.

The purpose of this market analysis is twofold. The median ratio is an indicator of the level of values in the county as of 1977, and is a function of the relationship between the 1977 actual value as determined by the assessor and the sale price 1975 and 1976. Theoretically the level of value equals 100 (i.e., market data \$20,000; actual value \$20,000). Thus, an overall median ratio of say 115 percent would indicate an over assessment while conversely an overall ratio of 85 percent would indicate an under assessment within a particular class.

The coefficient of dispersion (C.D.) is an indicator of the quality of assessment. The coefficient of dispersion indicates the range of the individual actual values from the median. A low C. D. indicates a high degree of quality or uniformity. Parenthetically, it should be noted that it is quite possible for a county to have either a low or a high level of assessment and at the same time have achieved a high degree of quality (uniformity) of assessment.

Appraisals. As required by the contract, appraisals were to be made in counties where sales data was insufficient to determine the level of value and quality of assessment in a particular class (residential, commercial or industrial) through the market data analysis approach. Where market data is insufficient to arrive at a value the assessor must look to either the cost approach or the income approach to arrive at value. As a practical matter only the cost approach could be used in the smaller counties. Although in the larger counties an income approach may have been used if sufficient data was available.

In addition, although not required under the contract, appraisals were made in those counties where high growth occurred since 1977 and in counties where present economic conditions may have indicated a lower level of value than those that existed in 1977.

## MARKET DATA COLLECTION

Economic Areas

The county is divided into four economic areas for assessment purposes which are also used for the study economic area breakdown. The features distinguishing each area are: (1) general type of specific economy; (2) desirability; (3) type and quality of construction; and (4) relative ranking in cost of construction, considering contractor costs, labor costs, etc. in comparison with the Denver area.

Market Data Collection

A complete record of 1975-1976 sales information was provided.

Number of Sales Gathered

	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Unimproved</u>
A. Residential		
1. Single Family	178	115
2. Multi-Family	2	0
3. Condominium	678	0
B. Commercial	11	0
C. Industrial	0	1

Number of Appraisals Required

Residential: none  
Commercial: none  
Industrial: none

Residential

1. Single Family Improved

<u>Econ Area</u>	<u>No. Sales</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Adj. Median</u>	<u>C.D.</u>
A	123	98.45	98.45	8.90
B	22	97.03	97.14	9.25
C	13	100.00	97.37	8.25
D	2	100.19	N/A	N/A
Overall	160	97.88	97.78	8.83

2. Multi-Family

<u>Econ Area</u>	<u>No. Sales</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Adj. Median</u>	<u>C.D.</u>
A	2	107.43	N/A	N/A
All sales in area "A"				

3. Condominium

<u>Econ Area</u>	<u>No. Sales</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Adj. Median</u>	<u>C.D.</u>
A	621	99.64	99.15	11.62
B	4	125.01	N/A	N/A
C	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
D	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall	625	99.68	99.12	11.67

Commercial

<u>Econ Area</u>	<u>No. Sales</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Adj. Median</u>	<u>C.D.</u>
A	7	99.12	99.56	7.04
B	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
C	4	92.93	N/A	N/A
D	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall	11	98.67	98.90	8.48

Industrial

<u>Econ Area</u>	<u>No. Sales</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Adj. Median</u>	<u>C.D.</u>
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NOT APPLICABLE

PROPERTY RECORD CARD AUDIT

As required by the contract, Max P. Arnold & Associates has reviewed one percent of the improved and unimproved residential, commercial and industrial property record cards in each county for compliance with the 1977 Colorado Manual. The one percent figure was based on one percent of the 1981 parcel count as noted in the 1981 annual report of the Colorado Division of Property Taxation.

It should be noted that in some counties the residential unimproved property cards reviewed were less than the one percent of the 1981 parcel count. In our opinion the number actually collected and reviewed was an accurate representative sample. We have noted if the number of cards of unimproved residential property collected and reviewed was less than one percent.

Improved Property Audit

All improved property record cards were audited to determine if the inventory and data included on the card was sufficient to arrive at a value through cost approach. In addition, for a representative sampling of the cards in each county, we developed a replacement cost new using the 1977 Colorado Manual. In addition, each card was reviewed to determine the last date of physical inspection of the property.

The purpose of the audit was twofold: 1) to determine whether a cost approach could be developed based on the information contained on the cards using any manual and 2) to determine if the data on the cards was reasonably current.

We are aware that in a number of counties the cards had not been updated to show current costs at the time of collection. Therefore, a comparison between costs using the 1977 manual and the 1977 costs arrived at by the assessor was not possible in some cases.

Unimproved Property Audit

Property record cards of unimproved property was reviewed for compliance with the 1977 manual.

## PROPERTY RECORD CARD AUDIT

Number of Cards Selected  
(Based on 1%)

<u>Res Imp</u>	<u>Res Unimp</u>	<u>Com Imp</u>	<u>Com Unimp</u>	<u>Ind Imp</u>	<u>Ind Unimp</u>
60	18	5	1	1	1

<u>No. Cards Reviewed</u>	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Unimproved</u>
Residential	61	18
Commercial	5	2
Industrial	1	1

<u>Improved Properties</u>	<u>No. Complete</u>	<u>No. Incomplete</u>
Residential	61	0
Commercial	5	0
Industrial	1	0

## Comments:

Residential: Cards not updated

Commercial: Not all of the cards submitted were updated

AGRICULTURAL LAND AND IMPROVEMENTS

As requested, we have conducted a 1% audit of agricultural land and improvements in Pitkin County, Colorado for the purpose of determining the current status of the assessment of said properties.

During an interview the Deputy Assessor, Warren Connors, stated that all agricultural land, which consists of less than 20 parcels, was classified and valued in 1982 for the 1982 assessment year. Yields, commodity prices and expenses were averaged for the 1973 - 1982 period. Agricultural improvements were valued from the 1973 manual and factored to the 1977 level.

After the interview, a sampling of 1% of the total number of acres in each of the major land classes, i.e., irrigated, meadow and grazing was pulled from the assessors records. Care was taken to abstract a sample from each of the major production areas in the county. The samples were then compared with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service Land Use Maps to ascertain the quality of the classifications for assessment purposes. On site field inspections were conducted where necessary.

In conjunction with the land sampling 1% of the agricultural improvements were also pulled from the assessors records to determine the present assessment practices for rural improvements.

As required in State of Colorado Bid No. GB-RFP-149, our findings are as follows:

1. By utilizing representative field inspections, as well as reviewing records in the assessor's office, the study shall determine if all agricultural lands have been classified according to use.

A. Irrigated farm land

Yes  x  When  1982  No

B. Dry farm land - none

Yes   When   No

C. Meadow hay land

Yes  x  When  1982  No

D. Grazing land

Yes  x  When  1982  No

E. Orchard land - none

Yes   When   No

F. Other

Yes  x  When  1982  No

Remarks

The assessor worked with a local committee to classify all land.

2. Has the assessor maintained an accurate, up-to-date file on commodity prices for farm and ranch products, farm and ranch operating costs (landlord's share), and have both prices and costs been averaged over the required ten-year period?

Yes  x  No



Remarks

3. Has the 11 1/2 percent capitalization rate been applied correctly?

Yes  x  No

Remarks

4. By utilizing representative field inspections as well as reviewing records in the assessor's office, the study shall determine if all agricultural building improvements not included in the valuation of the agricultural unit (as prescribed by law) are listed on an appraisal card including an accurate, up-to-date description of physical features necessary to appraise the property?

Yes  x  No

Remarks

5. Was the Property Tax Administrator's Commercial and Industrial Manual (Section III on Special purpose Structures for 1977) used by the assessor in valuing agricultural improvements effective January 1, 1983?

Yes   No  x

Remarks

The 1973 manual was used and factored to the 1977 level.

Summary

To totally comply with existing statutes pertaining to the valuation of agricultural land and improvements the assessor should:

1. Recompute all agricultural improvements from the Property Tax Administrator's 1977 manuals or other approved manual.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

As requested, we have conducted a 1% audit of natural resources property located in Pitkin County, Colorado. These resources fall into the categories of coal - producing (629 acres), coal nonproducing (9,066 acres), metalliferous - producing (123 acres), and metalliferous nonproducing (17,508 acres).

To sample these properties, we were allowed to review 1% of the required declaration schedules.

As a result of the 1% sample we find the following:

1. Coal production is valued per the royalty rate formula.
2. Gravel production is valued at \$1,000.00 per acre.

PERSONAL PROPERTY AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE  
(as answered by Assessor)

1. Do you require the taxpayer to furnish an itemized list of the price paid for each item and the date of acquisition?  
Yes   x   No

2. If the answer is yes, indicate the percent of taxpayers in your county who comply with the confidential report (39-5-120) required by statute.  
Not a good return (50%)

3. What is the number of employees assigned to your personal property department?  
1 Full Time and limited.

4. Do you conduct a physical audit annually of selected taxpayers?  
Yes   x   No             
Limited Number

5. Do you calculate personal property values according to trend tables and life tables for depreciation?  
Yes   x   No

6. What do you consider to be the major problem in assessments of personal property for your county?  
Taxpayer & complaints lack of ability to enforce compliance

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7. How do you handle taxpayers who do not comply with proper listing of personal property returns?

Arbitrary assessments-using comparable properties.

8. Do you charge a penalty to taxpayers who do not file or do not file a proper return?

No

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MOBILE HOME AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE  
(as answered by Assessor)

Recognizing that recent changes in law and regulation have required a new method of valuing mobile homes, we hope you will answer the following questions. With your help, we hope to provide an accurate reflection of the manner in which mobile homes are assessed.

- (1). Are mobile homes being valued in the manner prescribed for 1983 by the Property Tax Administrator?

Yes   x                        No       

If answer is no, please answer the next two questions.

- (2). If no, please explain briefly how you are assessing mobile homes.

- (3). If no, do you intend to follow the published guidelines for mobile home valuation in subsequent years?

Yes                             No

