Current Status of Ad Valorem Tax Reform

by William H. Lowry

January 1, 1989

NOTE: Since the submission of this article, State Question 614 has been withdrawn by the Legislature from state-wide vote. On January 20, the OLA Executive Board voted to recommend funding of HB 1750.


HB 1750 created a new ad valorem tax code combining old and new provisions. Many sections in the new code (Title 68, Articles 28 and 29) remain unchanged, only rearranged. The contents of other sections have been changed in significant ways. These call for a new, computer-assisted, mass appraisal system, annual revaluations and the visual inspection of taxable property at least every four years. Educational requirements are strengthened for personnel in the assessor's office, the appeal process for taxpayers is improved and county boards of equalization are separated from county excise boards.

State Question 614 proposes constitutional changes and is scheduled for a state-wide vote March 14, 1989. If approved, the present fractional assessment system would be replaced by assessment at 100% of fair cash or use value. Millages would be rolled back to approximately 10% of their current rate to prevent an increase in taxes during the year the new system was implemented (1992/93). Millage caps would be increased for most taxing jurisdictions including common schools and public library systems. This could eventually lead to higher taxes in communities that vote increased support for schools, libraries and other local services. But millage rate increases would be limited to 10% annually for each taxing jurisdiction and would require a vote by the people. The annual property tax would be limited to 1-1/2% of fair cash or use value, sinking fund levies excepted.

Unfortunately both of these measures are now in trouble. The Legislature failed to fund HB 1750 when they approved it. Its implementation requires additional funds from both the state and local sources. Efforts will be made to fund this new legislation during the coming legislative session, but it is not at all certain that this can be accomplished because of the fear that reform will result in higher taxes. SQ 614 is in difficulty because of some technical problems in its language and should be recalled for correction. There is also serious opposition to several of its important provisions from the Governor and many members of the Legislature.

So the future of both of these reform measures is in doubt and one cannot predict the outcome at this time. I believe that it is an appropriate time to review the question of what constitutes ad valorem reform so that we might better understand the problems and judge the outcome of this struggle.

The ad valorem tax is unpopular. This is at least partly due to the fact that it has been so poorly and unfairly administered in many of our counties for many years. Opponents fear that reform will bring higher taxes and while this can, though not necessarily, happen the chief objective is to restore integrity, equity and fairness to the ad valorem tax system. What are the necessary elements in reform to assure that this will be accomplished?

1. SIMPLIFICATION - SQ 614 simplifies the tax by eliminating the fractional assessment system and assessing taxable property at 100% of its fair cash or use value. This enables property owners to understand the taxable value of their property which is difficult to do under the present system.

2. UNIFORMITY - Property should be assessed in the same way throughout the state. This means that appraisal techniques should be uniform and not that similar property will have the same taxable value regardless of its location. HB 1750 requires each county assessor to use “accepted mass appraisal methodology.”

3. ANNUAL REVALUATION - Currently revaluation is on a five year cycle which has resulted in infrequent but large tax increases. Computer-assisted mass appraisal methodology, called for in HB 1750, allows annual revaluation. Also required is individual visual inspection of all taxable property
The Immigration Reform and Control Act After Two Years
by Richard E. Rea, Personnel Manager
Metropolitan Library System

Since November 1986, employers have been subject to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. The purpose of the legislation was to preserve jobs for those who are legally entitled to them: American citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in this country.

Now after two years of compliance, the tears and gnashings of those who protested the complications of compliance seem unfounded. The Handbook for Employers (Instructions for Completing Form I-9) sent to employers by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service provides step-by-step guidance with picture samples of documents acceptable for proof of eligibility.

From the personnel office point of view, there have been only minor inconveniences created by the act. Prospective employees have had to dig out their social security cards which were long ago buried in some box of important papers that each of us keep. Some people even realized that they hadn't ever changed their social security records when they married, although they had been using the new surname for years. Others brushed the dust off their birth certificates or had to order new ones. Some people located their passports or social security cards which were long buried.

When completing the employer's section of the I-9, besides looking for altered or fraudulent documents, watch to see that you aren't accepting some document that isn't on the approved lists. Remember List A documents establish identity and employment eligibility while a List B document (identity) must be used in conjunction with a List C document (employment eligibility). When all else fails, the Immigration and Naturalization Service provides a toll-free number for employer information: 1-800-777-7700.

Once you have the I-9 completed, retain it for at least three years. If the person works more than three years, retain the form for one year after the person leaves. This should not really be any problem since most libraries retain personnel files for at least that long, if not indefinitely.

Although there are cases of employers knowingly violating the law and some violating from a lack of understanding of it, compliance is not difficult and should not present a problem for any employer or any individual who has the legal right to work in this country.
This column identifies government publications that are of special importance to librarians, i.e., those that discuss library problems, reference works, etc. These publications may be available in any of the U.S. or Oklahoma Depository libraries throughout the state or may be borrowed on interlibrary loan. U.S. documents that are for sale may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

For State of Oklahoma publications you must contact the issuing agency. Key: "Sudocs" is U.S. Superintendent of Documents; "OPC" is the Oklahoma Publications Clearinghouse. Annotations for State of Oklahoma publications are written by Vicki Sullivan, OPC.


Designed to provide companies with a summary of Oklahoma's business taxes and investment incentives, this guide is divided into three sections: business taxes and incentives, investment incentives, and investment opportunities. Available tax credits, tax exemptions, city and county sales tax rates, and descriptions of other taxes applicable to business are included.


Proceedings of Commission hearing on a proposed classification system for information that is not classified as secret, but as "sensitive". This was first proposed in 1987 and rescinded. However, there are still proposals under consideration that would create the "sensitive" classification. Among the problems it would create for libraries is that it would require librarians and their staff members to use their judgement in providing sensitive information to foreign nationals.


Prepared to provide students, clients, counselors, and other interested persons with information about the occupations which require licensing and certification in the state of Oklahoma, this handbook includes a brief job description, licensing requirements, examination information, education/training requirements, fees, licensing agency, and Standard Occupational Classification Manual code numbers for each licensed and certified listing.


Volume 1 not sold by GPO; Stock number for Volume 2 065-000-00348-1, Price $11.00

A compilation of articles that examines the current state of the library profession and identifies an agenda for library research in the 1990s. It includes articles on information policy issues, librarian education and training, library preservation, library funding, and the role of the librarian. Note: Volume 1 is a summary of Volume 2.


Comprehensive guide to major information products created by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. It describes the data that each information product provides and how to acquire it.

EODLS AWARDS

In December, Eastern Oklahoma District Library System's traditional holiday dinner for Managers and Board ended with the 1988 Awards Ceremony. Each year, an Awards Committee selected from the Board with the assistance of one Administrator examines ten service criteria for library service and selects the recipients of the Awards for Outstanding EODLS Branch along with several variations on the theme of excellent programming, publicity and greatest improvements in service. The awards are not always the same because special circumstances or a particular event which is noteworthy may be recognized each year.

EODLS' 1988 Awards included a repeat performance for Outstanding Branch Library by the Eufaula Memorial Library, Librarian Marguerite Schmidt and Eufaula's representative on the EODLS Board of Trustees, Dorothy Follansbee, received the engraved plaque with the advice to "create an Awards Wall in the Library" from Executive Director, Marilyn Hinshaw. Hinshaw had already handed Schmidt another award for Most Innovative Program and Public Relations Event of 1988 for an Essay Contest requiring students to write on "What the Constitution of the U.S. Means to My Future." 1700 community residents convened in the school football stadium to hear the winning essays read, followed by a patriotic program presented by the American Legion chapter. Hinshaw commented that the program had probably the largest attendance in the history of Oklahoma libraries, which resulted in a photo of the event in the most recent ALA Yearbook of Library and Information Services.

The Award for Most Improved Branch Library, 1988, was received by Jim Lucas Memorial Library, Checotah, which boasted a whopping 38% circulation increase, a new one-year record for the Library System. Community Librarian, Nina Stewart, received the Library's Plaque, with local board members Madalyn Davis and Gretchen Payne.

Continued on page 4
The citation for Most Innovative Library Service of 1988 asked the rhetorical questions, when its 10 p.m. on Saturday night at Grandma's house, and a seven-year-old asks for a bedtime story, who does she call? When you're a Board President, checking out the library's need for a new telephone line for this new idea the staff has in mind and you just can't believe it could be busy that much, who do you call? When you've had the same phone number for twelve years and suddenly you are having hundreds of rings per day, and you pick up the phone to hear a child's voice pleading for a story, who were all these calls for? In answer to the questions, Muskogee Public Library's Dial-A-Story won the award, received by Marion Bryant, Librarian, and Dorothy Moore, Children's Coordinator. In presenting the award, Hinshaw commented that the service was so successful the Library was considering adding a second line to handle the overflow calls, and to be sure one retired lawyer, past Board President, who has memorized the number, could get a call through...for his grandchildren, of course.

The Best Library Program of 1988 Award was received by Patsy Clifford, Friends of the Library President for Tahlequah Public Library, the organization which co-sponsored the Library's Birthday Party for the Constitution. Members of the Friends wore costumes representing George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and other statesmen and women, "who came to life again for a birthday party celebrating a special blend of language and thought, not a person's life, but a country's credo." A crowd estimated at 200 people stopped by for the Library's festivities where costumed volunteers greeted guests, served cake and talked among themselves of how vast a country their original thirteen colonies had become.

In a decision to create a Special Award, the EODLS Board's Awards Committee noted that 1988 was a year of crisis for the Library System, when the news was revealed that someone had forgotten to include the Library System's new tax levy on the tax bills to Muskogee County. After visits with the County Commissioners, long conver-
Reference Roundup
Joyce W. Bergin
Linscheid Library
East Central University

Librarians at East Central University’s Linscheid Library have added six CD-ROM databases and are awaiting the arrival of a seventh. Patrons have access to DIALOG’S ERIC, Grolier’s Academic American Encyclopedia, Silverplatter’s GPO, and Information Access’s InfoTrac II (Academic Index). The staff has sole access to Bowker’s Books-in-Print Plus and Silverplatter’s AV Online. Silverplatter’s PsychLit should arrive within the next few weeks and be available to all patrons. To date, patrons and staff have been delighted with the databases. Online database searches—especially in ERIC—have decreased in number, but librarians report that those searches performed for faculty and students are far more sophisticated than in the past. Students and faculty have reported their appreciation for the end-user searching capabilities offered through CD-ROM.

Instruction in the use of the databases is enhanced greatly by the databases built-in help screens and guides. The automation librarian at Linscheid Library prepared small signs with helpful hints which have been attached to the CD-ROM work stations. The reference librarian on duty is also available to answer questions and offer helpful advice to patrons. Overall, the introduction to this new form of information storage and retrieval has been smooth and rewarding.

Linscheid Library does not charge patrons for the use of the CD-ROM databases. For information about Linscheid Library’s venture with CD-ROM databases, call Joyce Bergin at (405) 332-8000, extension 587 or 490.

Karen J. P. Rowden of Collinsville Middle School offers this item for Reference Roundup.

Being a school librarian is something like the Oklahoma weather! If you don’t like what’s happening, just wait and something different will happen! That is also the reason I love being a librarian in a school library, and I especially love helping the students do their research. Middle School students search for an amazing variety of subjects. Everytime they do a research project, I learn something new. In the past two or three years, I have had the opportunity to help students by placing them in contact with an oil company (I had to go pick up the material!), a solar energy company for some specific material (I did a lot of calling for that one!), and even with a dermatologist on the subject of “Why Some People Have a Worse Body Odor Than Others”. But, my favorite was the subject of “Funeral Hearses”! You may think that funeral hearses are very much alike, but I assure you, they are different and expensive! One of our 8th grade boys was having a difficult time deciding on a topic. After much discussion, I learned that he was really interested in hearses. He had little, if any, information for him, but we not only found such information, we also got to take a private tour of a funeral business nearby, and he was able to completely check out, first hand, the hearses. It was really exciting for him, especially since he was not a good student and seldom received special privileges like legitimately getting out of class for a field trip, or receiving a very good grade on a paper well done! It was very special for him, and made the extra time worthwhile!
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF SERIALS
by Carolyn Hust with Jean Mackey

Approximately sixty people attended the OLA Automation Roundtable and Technical Services Roundtable serials workshop at ODL on September 30, 1988. The program covered the major issues of serials management and serials automation.

Andrew Peters, Automation Coordinator at Pioneer Library System, gave an overview of the problems associated with the serials format as a cataloged item in the library. The problems of collecting, describing, title and numbering changes can be traced to the publishers who have an entirely different perspective on the serial than do librarians. To the publisher, the serial is a marketing and economics problem. The serial is formatted and packaged to be used in response to its acceptance in the market.

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Solutions to these problems include the MARC format that provides a standardization of description for a fickle publication; vendors of automating systems that help keep better control of the serials (OCLC, Ebsco, Faxon, Brodart); and vendors that interface with local systems of libraries providing integrated searching, verification, ordering, accounting, and claiming. State-of-the-art technology, however, still does not solve the problem of in-house handling of the serials in matters of circulation, bar coding, shelving, binding or microforms. Each library must come up with solutions appropriate to its own situation.

Linda West, Coordinator of Data Initiative at Northeastern State University, spoke on retrospective conversion of serial bibliographic records. The purpose of retrocon projects is to produce computer manipulated information and records; it is not recataloging or reclassifying; it is getting a MARC record in usable format. Retrospective conversion of serials cannot be completed with the speed and routine of monographic retrospective conversion. It is important to reassess the project periodically.

Several questions must be considered in serials retrocon projects. Should the library: utilize a vendor (considering costs, affordability, merging abilities of multiple vendors with a local system)? use a full MARC record? use the shelf list? or consult other holdings information? update the tape periodically or make just a one-time entry? Also, are necessary AACR 2 changes affordable? What people or level of staff will be used? How complete is the original record? What is or should be the form of the holdings?

It is essential to have and follow written guidelines. The Northeastern staff decided to follow AACR 2; to use the shelf list as the record source and to create MARC records with full cataloging and holdings; to maintain linked manual files, necessitating multiple changes; and to enter separate successive entries for each title in the collection affected by title changes.

The most important advice for planners of retrospective conversion projects is: To think ahead to the on-line use of the records entered, and to make certain all call numbers are correct.

Susan Bradley, Cataloger/Reference Librarian at Rose State College LRC, spoke on retrospective conversion of serial holdings in MARC format. There have been three recent developments in the automation of serials holdings.

1) The American National Standards for Serial Holdings Statements was published in 1986. It defines the data to be recorded and displayed in serial holdings statements.
2) The MARC format for holdings was begun in 1981 and published in 1984. This format is specifically intended for the distribution and communication of holdings data and location information; it is a standard for communicating.
3) The Serials Industry Systems Advisory Committee—SISAC was created by the publishing industry to produce a standardized code for the unique identification of serial issues and articles. The code for serial issues includes the ISSN, date of the issue, and enumeration. The data in bar code is placed on the lower left hand corner of the front cover. SISAC will allow automatic check-in.

Some questions to consider before converting manual to automated holdings records concern the purpose for the conversion. Is it to communicate holdings data for a union list? for some other cooperative project? Is it primarily to support in-house functions such as check-in or binding control? Also, what serials in the collection will you convert? Periodicals only? continuations and annuals? Then, which level of the ANSI standard for serial holdings statements should be used? There are five levels of specificity. The lower levels require less information; for example, Level 1 requires only identification of the serial and the institution code, and could be used for serials that have ceased publication. The highest level of specificity might be used for current serials. Some library systems might require a certain level to support serials functions.

Other important questions concern the record or holdings information source to use, and whether the record will be integrated with the circulation system.

Roberta Hamburger, Seminary Librarian at Phillips Graduate Seminary, addressed the topic of serials acquisitions, using the system at Phillips as an example of serials acquisitions management. At Phillips, serials are cataloged on OCLC and are included in the Oklahoma Union List of Serials. The library maintains 1,346 serial titles on a small budget, which requires careful selection and planning. Claiming is done throughout the year; microfilm is used for replacement of missing issues, but not for all retrospective holdings at this time.

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The system used is Serials Control System—Professional Software. The system is IBM compatible; Phillips uses the M300 hard disk. The program is designed for 600 titles. However, it actually held only 450 titles. This created an unforeseen problem. The solution was to load the program in three different sub-directories and divide the collection alphabetically. The program provides three different files: the Department files to manage information in various files; the Serials Description file which includes one record for each journal title, and is the file that generates the check-in card which appears on the screen in the format of a kardex card; and the Subscription file which holds the working information about each journal. Renewal, claiming, holdings, and check-in operations are done in this file.

The program generates lists of missing and late issues arranged by title, or agent, or department. A printed list can be produced for patron use, as well as a variety of other lists as needed. It is a menu-driven system.

Francine Fisk, Head of Reference Services at the University of Tulsa, spoke on public access of serials, focusing especially on the needs of the user. Users want results. User needs are: 1) to find an article on a subject; 2) to find the location of that article; and 3) to find the issue now. Problems in fulfilling these needs include collection failure (i.e., failure to provide immediate access to a serial article), system failure (for example, subscription lapses and bindery lags), and user failure. User failure can result from expecting to find the item in the catalog, or not correctly interpreting the citation, or problems in locating a bound or microform volume.

Users want up-to-date information on all statuses of a journal: the latest issue checked in; missing issues; volumes at bindery; retrospective holdings, etc. Users want in-house and remote access; key word searching, searches by subject of journals, for example, education journals. Users are now looking for full text of articles on-line. The catalog is not necessarily the most effective source for information on serials.

Two sessions of table discussions in the afternoon were led by each of the morning speakers on their topics. Workshop participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss problems in depth. An additional table discussion topic was led by Beverly Jones, Chief Planning Officer at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, on The Oklahoma Union List of Serials Project. There are now 38,560 titles in the data base with 80,024 holdings statements. There are sixty-one profiled participants and twenty-seven paid participants. A microfiche version of OULS is provided each September to all paid participants. All holdings are available on OCLC and may be viewed by any OCLC library in Oklahoma. However, non-OCLC libraries can (and do) participate. To find out more about participation, contact: Beverly Jones, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, (405) 521-2502 or 1-800-522-8116.

Each workshop participant received a folder of hand-outs which included a list of serials resource persons, an annotated bibliography on serials prepared by Lacreta Skrdle, Cameron University Library; and a list of serials control systems available for microcomputers prepared by Andra Lupardus, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa.

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