

Colorado Constitution to ensure that all assessors value property at the same level of value, using standardized procedures and statistical measurements. The study is conducted by an independent auditing firm contracted by the Director of Research, Colorado Legislative Council, § 39-1-104(16), C.R.S. The study and the resulting orders of reappraisal are the primary means of achieving statewide equalization.

The importance of the state board's equalization function is due in part to the relationship that exists between assessed values and state aid to schools. Generally, if the property in a school district is under-assessed, it is likely that the district will receive more state revenue than it is entitled. When the results of a reappraisal order indicate that the affected school district(s) received too much state revenue, the state board will order the county (not the school district) to pay back the excess funding. During the 1980s and early 1990s, this occasionally required the repayment of substantial revenue to the state. In more recent years, significant improvements in the quality of county assessments have resulted in far fewer reappraisal orders and smaller repayments of excess state aid to schools.

The state board also reviews county Abstracts of Assessment, decisions of county boards of equalization (county boards) and the policies and recommendations of the Property Tax Administrator.

STATE BOARD ENFORCEMENT

The following is a brief history of recent enforcement actions by the State Board of Equalization.

2008 Enforcement and Repayment

On October 8, 2008, the state board met to review the findings and conclusions of Rocky Mountain Valuation Specialists, Inc., annual study contractor for Legislative Council. Based on these findings, the state board issued no orders of reappraisal.

They also reviewed the status of their 2005 recommendation for Jackson County. The 2005 recommendation asked Jackson County to implement a five-year cycle for physical inspections of rural outbuildings. The Jackson County Assessor indicated that she only had four physical inspections left to complete the project.

2007 Enforcement and Repayment

On October 10, 2007, the state board met to review the findings and conclusions of Rocky Mountain Valuation Specialists, Inc., annual study contractor for Legislative Council. Based on these findings, the state board issued no orders of reappraisal. They did, however, review the status of a prior reappraisal order given to Costilla County.

On October 11, 2006, the state board determined that the 2005 ordered reappraisal of single-family residential property was successfully completed by Costilla County, and ordered the county to payback the state aid to schools as well as the supervision reimbursement costs by the end of 2007. At the October 2007 state board hearing, the Costilla County Deputy Assessor provided the state board with a document detailing the County's 2007 expenditures. Although the entire \$17,964.97 had not yet been spent, the remaining portion was slated to be used for education of assessor personnel and a list of proposed courses was submitted.

The board reviewed the progress of their 2005 recommendations for both Rio Grande and Jackson Counties. The state board's 2005 recommendation asked Rio Grande County to determine the productive capability of agricultural land by implementing the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey by 2007 for 2008. At the 2007 hearing, it was reported the county completed the soil survey. This was verified by Carl Ross of Rocky Mountain Valuation Specialists, Inc.

The state board also reviewed Jackson County's progress toward implementing a five-year cycle for physical inspections of rural outbuildings. The Jackson County Assessor indicated that as of October 10, 2007, 45 percent of the inspections had been completed.

2006 Enforcement and Repayment

On October 11, 2006, the state board met to review the findings and conclusions of Rocky Mountain Valuation Specialists, Inc., annual study contractor for Legislative Council. Based on these findings, the board issued no orders of reappraisal. They did, however, review the results of the reappraisal order given to Costilla County in 2005 for all single-family residential properties in the county. The board determined that the reappraisal

was successfully completed, and ordered the county to make the following payback and reimbursement.

<u>County</u>	<u>Supervision Reimbursement</u>	<u>State Aid To Schools Payback</u>
Costilla	\$17,964.97	\$968.09*

* + interest on state aid payback based on the rate set by the Colorado Banking Commissioner, which can be reduced by three percent under the authority of the state board.

The board approved Costilla County's request to repay the excess state equalization payments to schools by the end of 2007. In addition, the state board approved a reduction of three percentage points, resulting in an interest rate of six percent.

The board also approved the county's request to employ the "Bledsoe Plan" for the repayment of the supervision costs allowing the county to choose an alternative method of repaying the costs associated with the state's supervision of the reappraisal. The Bledsoe Plan authorizes counties to increase the assessor's budget by the supervision reimbursement money for expenditures that will enhance their operational effectiveness.

2005 Enforcement and Repayment

On October 11, 2005, the state board met to review the findings and conclusions of Rocky Mountain Valuation Specialists, Inc., annual study contractor for Legislative Council. Based on the findings, the state board issued a reappraisal order for the single-family residential property subclass in Costilla County. The board recommended that Rio Grande County comply with a procedural requirement to use a soil survey conducted by the United States Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) when classifying and valuing agricultural land, and it recommended that Jackson County submit a plan for detailing the methodologies and time frames the county will use to physically inspect agricultural outbuildings.

The board also reviewed the results of a reappraisal order issued to Fremont County in 2004. Pursuant to the reappraisal, it ordered the repayment of excess state aid to schools and ordered the repayment of the cost of supervising the reappraisal.

The county commissioners requested the state board allow them to apply the

supervision reimbursement money to the assessor's budget for 2006. The alternate repayment method, referred to as the "Bledsoe Plan" authorizes counties to increase the assessor's budget by the supervision reimbursement money for expenditures that will enhance their operational effectiveness. The county requested the funds be used to purchase a variety of computers, various types of software and maps. The board approved the county's request to employ the "Bledsoe Plan" for the repayment of the supervision costs.

The board approved Fremont County's request to repay the excess state equalization payments to schools by the end of 2006. The state board approved a reduction of three percentage points, resulting in an interest rate of four percent.

<u>County</u>	<u>Supervision Reimbursement</u>	<u>State Aid To Schools Payback</u>
Fremont	\$54,751	\$131,263

+ interest on state aid payback based on the rate set by the Colorado Banking Commissioner, which can be reduced by three percent under the authority of the state board.

2004 Enforcement and Repayment

On October 4, 2004, the state board met to review the findings and conclusions of Rocky Mountain Valuation Specialists, Inc., annual study contractor for Legislative Council.

After considering all evidence and testimony, the state board concluded that the Fremont County commercial/industrial property classes were out of compliance and issued an order of reappraisal to the county.