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## Washington Moves to Annual Revaluations

*By Scott Donald, Irvine*

BY JANUARY 1, 2014, ALL WASHINGTON COUNTIES MUST REVALUE REAL PROPERTY EVERY year. Substitute [Senate Bill 5368](#), passed by the House and Senate in April, also requires a physical inspection of all properties at least once every 6 years. Previously, the schedule varied from annual revaluations in King and Snohomish Counties to revals every 4-5 years in other counties. However, even when valuations were conducted every year, they were not based on individual properties; they were cluster valuations. Thus, definitions were loosely interpreted. For example, counties were required to “see” properties but due to staff limitations, it was often only a drive-by inspection.

While annual revaluations statewide will help eliminate the sticker shock that comes with less frequent revaluations, the change also has a down side. It creates more opportunities for assessors to raise values instead of just rolling them over in appreciating markets. In down markets, roll-over values are typically appealed, so that is not an issue.

The Department of Revenue will conduct a pilot project this year in at least one county to develop the expertise necessary to make the conversion. The DOR will also operate a grant program to replace counties’ outdated computer systems and provide them with the guidance and training needed to conduct annual revaluations.