



Annual Report for the 2019 Appraisal Year

Jefferson Central Appraisal District

Summary of its Operations, Values, Appeals, and Statistical Comparisons





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The Annual Report for 2019 Appraisal Year of the Jefferson Central Appraisal District is being prepared pursuant to Section 6.5.1 of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) Standard on Public Relations.

The objective of this report is to summarize the District's activities and accomplishments and to provide statistical information. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the enclosed data is accurate in all material respects.

The mission of the District is to develop and maintain appraisals of the property located in Jefferson County in a fair and equitable manner, ensuring the accuracy and uniformity of all appraisals; to ensure that the appraisals are performed by professionals in the property tax field, and to promote the education of said professionals; to develop procedures that grant the taxpayers due process in protesting said appraisals; to furnish to the taxing entities an accurate appraisal roll in a timely manner; and to continually improve our operations and policies in order that we may provide more efficient service to the taxpayers and taxing entities in Jefferson County.

The District successfully passed the Methods and Assistance Program (MAP) review conducted by the Property Tax Assistance Division of the State Comptroller's Office in compliance with new legislation enacted in 2009. The District was reviewed in odd years between 2011 and 2019, and with the exception of 2019, each year passed all mandatory requirements and exceeded the requirements for its activities in the areas of governance; taxpayer assistance; operating procedures; and appraisal standards, procedures, and methodology with a total point score 100 percent or higher. The 2019 review indicated a

Board of Directors



Allison Nathan Getz
Eugene Landry
Lauren Williams Mason
Dr. Louis Reed, Jr.
Terry Schwertner

TAXING ENTITIES SERVED

Jefferson County
Beaumont ISD
Hamshire-Fannett ISD
Hardin Jefferson ISD
Nederland ISD
Port Arthur ISD
Port Neches-Groves ISD
Sabine Pass ISD
City of Beaumont
City of Bevil Oaks
City of Groves
City of Nederland
City of Port Arthur
City of Port Neches
City of Taylor Landing
Sabine Neches Nav District
Port of Beaumont
Port of Port Arthur
Port of Sabine Pass
Drainage District #3
Drainage District #6
Drainage District #7
Emergency Services Dist #1
Emergency Services Dist #2
Emergency Services Dist #3
Emergency Services Dist #4
Northwest Forest MUD
Trinity Bay Conservation Dist
Water Control & Imp Dist #10



scored of 96 percent in Operating Procedures stating that the District needed to ensure that the required forms for tax agents are obtained on all accounts. The District has instituted a review of all accounts with tax agent designations to ensure compliance.

Goals

- The Jefferson Central Appraisal District is expected to arrive at equal and uniform values for the District, so that the cost of government shall be spread among all the taxpayers in an equitable manner. In addition to the equality factor, the values arrived at by the District are expected to approach market value. The District shall perform tests against the values to ensure equality and the quality of the work product.
- The Board of Directors of the Jefferson Central Appraisal District, as well as its staff, shall support and reinforce the Appraisal Review Board process in such a manner to ensure that the property owners receive a fair and unbiased hearing on their protest, and that the findings of the Appraisal Review Board shall be made known to the protesting party in an expeditious manner.
- Continue to improve electronic protest system as well as computerized system for handling all property owner contacts during the Appraisal Review Board process.
- Provide mapping information in the form of aerial photography, planimetric line maps, and digital parcel maps to be used by Jefferson County taxing entities as a base map for their geographic information systems.
- To continue to provide updated appraisal roll information, forms, information about a property owner's rights, and general information about the Appraisal District to the public through the District's website.
- Enhance the District's website to provide public announcements about ad valorem tax issues to the public, continue to make the website more user friendly for the public, and enhance the online electronic filing system to include additional forms in addition to the homestead exemption applications, agriculture-use special appraisal applications, and business personal property renditions.
- Reevaluate the needs of the District and develop new strategies to ensure that the District's Information System keeps up with new technology and operates in an efficient and expeditious manner.
- IT Department will work with the Appraisal Department as needed to assist in the design of and provide new valuation schedules for land or for other properties as requested.

Appraised Value Data

(Based on County-Wide Values)

Market/Taxable Value Comparisons

	<u>Tax Year 2017</u>	<u>Tax Year 2018</u>	<u>Tax Year 2019</u>
Market Value (before exemptions)	\$32,498,950,744	\$31,344,800,264	\$33,517,642,968
Net Taxable Value (after exemptions)	\$24,278,452,932	\$23,115,213,135	\$24,471,489,894

Taxable Values:

Residential Properties, Real	\$ 5,811,643,925	\$ 5,722,111,812	\$ 6,186,157,187
Commercial & Industrial Prop, Real	\$11,610,829,319	\$10,092,321,688	\$10,572,067,519

Number of Accounts	151,167	150,461	150,010
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Top 10 Taxpayers

TAXPAYER	2017 TAXABLE VALUE	TAXPAYER	2018 TAXABLE VALUE	TAXPAYER	2019 TAXABLE VALUE
Motiva	\$4,278,815,410	Motiva	\$2,771,823,700	Motiva	\$2,703,604,925
ExxonMobil	\$1,974,313,022	ExxonMobil	\$2,168,748,002	ExxonMobil	\$2,393,655,980
Valero	\$ 859,688,998	Valero	\$ 900,729,386	Valero	\$1,122,445,569
Total Petrochemicals	\$ 522,451,770	Total Petrochemicals	\$ 593,578,730	Total Petrochemicals	\$ 529,340,050
Sunoco	\$ 464,311,937	Huntsman	\$ 432,711,927	Sunoco	\$ 501,344,290
Huntsman	\$ 420,278,577	Sunoco	\$ 427,121,420	Huntsman	\$ 433,035,872
Golden Pass LNG	\$ 379,516,490	Golden Pass LNG	\$ 353,614,320	Enterprise TX Pipeline	\$ 363,319,840
Entergy	\$ 348,844,780	Enterprise TX Pipeline	\$ 343,939,230	Entergy	\$ 338,918,780
Enterprise TX Pipeline	\$ 332,738,550	Entergy	\$ 329,618,030	Golden Pass LNG	\$ 337,630,080
Chevron Phillips	\$ 309,493,060	Chevron Phillips	\$ 320,508,060	Chevron Phillips	\$ 289,861,500

New Construction Values

2019 Market Value	2019 Taxable Value
\$353,452,530	\$319,576,817



Property Types Defined

The District codes each piece of property based on how it is used. These codes are called Property Use Codes and are abbreviated PU Code. Property is classified as either real or personal. Real property is defined as land, improvements, mines or quarries, minerals in place, and standing timber. Personal property is defined as all property that is not real, such as business inventory, furniture and fixtures, machinery and equipment, vehicles, supplies, etc. Only personal property that is used to produce an income is taxable. Personal property is defined as tangible and intangible. All property that can be perceived through the senses (seeing, weighing, measuring, and feeling) is tangible. If you cannot perceive the property itself, it is intangible.

The Property Use Codes are defined as follows:

PU Code A - Real Property, Residential, Single-Family:

Single-family houses and the land they are situated on, including townhouses, condominiums, and mobile homes located on land owned by the resident.

PU Code B - Real Property, Residential, Multi-Family:

Residential properties containing two or more residential units under single ownership including apartment complexes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. This category does not include motels or hotels (see PU Code F).

PU Code C - Real Property, Vacant Platted Lots and Tracts:

Vacant tracts of land which usually are described in terms other than acreage, commonly by means of lot and block numbers plus subdivision name. They are usually located either within municipalities or in adjacent or otherwise proximate territory. This category includes platted lots and/or subdivided tracts.

PU Code D - Real Property, Farms and Acreage:

Larger vacant tracts of land including timberland, ranches, recreational acreage, idle land, and waste land. Major criteria are rural location and description in terms of acreage. However, it is possible for farms to be located within city limits.

PU Code E - Real Property, Farm and Ranch Improvements:

Improvements associated with land reported as Category D property, including residences, barns, silos, sheds, garages, and other improvements associated with farming or ranching. These tracts of land must be over 5 acres.

PU Code F - Real Property, Commercial and Industrial:

Land and improvements associated with commercial and industrial properties, including: stores, office buildings, hotels and motels, gasoline service stations, commercial garages, parking lots, warehouses, theater buildings, financial institutions, finance companies and insurance companies, clinics and nursing homes, refineries, chemical plants, manufacturing companies, etc.

PU Code G - Real Property, Oil, Gas and Other Mineral Reserves:

Producing oil and gas wells, and all other minerals being mined including coal, ores, metals, etc. This category also covers non-producing wells and non-mined minerals including mineral rights. This category does not include the value of the surface land being produced.



PU Code H2 - Tangible Personal Property, Goods in Transit:

The personal property stored under a contract of bailment by a public warehouse operator and identified according to Property Tax Code Section 11.253.

PU Code J - Real and Tangible Personal Property, Utilities:

The real property and the machinery, fixtures, and equipment of all types for railroads, electric and gas companies, telephone companies, water systems, TV and cable companies, pipelines, microwave towers, etc.

PU Code L - Tangible Personal Property, Commercial and Industrial:

The furniture, fixtures, equipment, supplies, and inventory of commercial businesses. A commercial business is any business that provides items for sale or service to the public. It also includes the machinery and equipment, computers, trucks, heavy equipment, inventory stock, drilling rigs, portable tools, furniture and fixtures, raw materials, goods in process, and finished goods of industrial businesses. An industrial business is any business that adds value to a product through development, manufacture, processing, or storage of that product.

PU Code M - Other Tangible Personal Property:

Aircraft and watercraft that is owned by an individual that is used to produce an income. It also includes mobile homes on leased land.

PU Code O - Residential Inventory:

Residential real property that is held as inventory. To qualify under this category the property must be under the same ownership, be contiguous or located in the same subdivision or development, be held for sale in the ordinary course of business, be subject to zoning or deed restrictions limiting it to residential use, have never been occupied for residential purposes, not be presently leased or producing income, and be listed as business inventory.

PU Code S - Special Inventory:

Certain personal property of businesses that provide items for sale to the public, such as; dealer's motor vehicle, heavy equipment, vessel and outboard motor, or retail manufactured housing inventory. These personal property items are appraised based on total annual sales in the prior tax year.



Below is a breakdown of the **2019** Values by State Code:

State Code	2019 # of Accounts	2019 Market Value	2019 Taxable Value
A: Single-Family Residential	81,541	\$8,300,125,464	\$6,186,157,187
B: Multi-Family Residential	1,261	\$725,230,353	\$721,710,535
C: Vacant Lots	25,476	\$272,877,716	\$272,817,102
D: Rural Land: Farms and Acreage	4,782	\$470,715,656	\$44,586,714
E: Farm and Ranch Improvements	3,069	\$339,361,844	\$305,818,719
F: Commercial & Industrial Improvements	6,810	\$14,349,218,276	\$10,572,067,519
G: Oil, Gas, and Minerals	2,802	\$87,965,662	\$87,965,662
H: Tangible Pers Prop, Goods in Transit	1	\$1,880,880	\$0
J: Utilities	2,131	\$1,005,101,060	\$1,005,101,060
L: Commercial & Industrial Personal Property	13,246	\$5,167,274,032	\$5,155,051,442
M: Other Tangible Personal Property	1,651	\$24,367,970	\$20,657,085
O: Residential Inventory	582	\$17,970,850	\$17,970,850
S: Special Inventory	161	\$81,563,400	\$81,563,400
X: Totally Exempt Accounts	6,497	\$2,673,989,805	\$22,619
TOTALS:	150,010	\$33,517,642,968	\$24,471,489,894

State Comptroller's Studies

The Property Tax Assistance Division (PTAD) of the State Comptroller's Office conducts two different studies on appraisal districts on an alternating basis. Jefferson CAD receives a Property Value Study in even years and a Methods and Assistance Program (MAP) review in odd years. Each study is described in detail below.

PROPERTY VALUE STUDY

The Property Value Study is conducted by PTAD to determine the market value of all taxable property within each school district and appraisal levels within each appraisal district. This study is basically a report card on how close to market value each appraisal district appraises the property within its jurisdiction.

The Appraisal District component of the study, commonly referred to as the "ratio study," provides each appraisal district with a measure of how well it applies appraisal techniques. The PTAD's field appraisers select sample properties and compare the District's appraised value with the sales price of the same property. They calculate a ratio for each property in the sample by dividing the District's appraised value by the sale price. If sufficient sales data is not available, the PTAD's field appraiser will perform appraisals on randomly selected properties. For example, if the District appraises a piece of property at \$50,000, and this same property recently sold for \$55,000, then the District is appraising the property at 91% of market value ($\$50,000/\$55,000$). The Comptroller then finds the median, or middle, ratio for the properties sampled. If 3 properties are tested indicating ratios of 105%, 92%, and 90%, then the median ratio of appraisal is 92%.



If the District values are at a level either above or below what the PTAD’s study reports as market value, this may be an indication that a reappraisal is necessary to get values closer to 100 percent of market value.

The PTAD conducted a review of the District’s 2018 values. Below are the results of that study:

2018 RESULTS

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY	MEDIAN LEVEL OF APPRAISAL
Single Family Residential	97%
Multi Family Residential	79%
Farm and Ranch Improvements on Non-Qualified Land	100%
Commercial Real	91%
Utilities	93%
Commercial Personal	100%
OVERALL	97%

METHODS AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP) REVIEW

In the Methods and Assistance Program (MAP) review, PTAD reviews the District’s governance; taxpayer assistance; operating standards; and appraisal standards, procedures, and methodology. The District was eligible for a limited scope review for the first time in 2017 since it received the International Association of Assessing Officer’s Certificate of Excellence.

Below are the findings from the 2019 MAP Review:

2019 RESULTS

Mandatory Requirements	Pass/Fail
1. Does the appraisal district have up-to-date maps?	PASS
2. Is the implementation of the appraisal district’s most recent reappraisal plan current?	PASS
3. Are the appraisal district’s appraisal records up-to-date and is the appraisal district following established procedures and practices in the valuation of property?	PASS
4. Are values reproducible using the appraisal district’s written procedures and appraisal records?	PASS

Appraisal District Activities	Rating
Governance	MEETS ALL
Taxpayer Assistance	MEETS ALL
Operating Procedures	MEETS
Appraisal Standards, Procedures, and Methodology	MEETS ALL

APPRAISAL DISTRICT RATINGS:

Meets All – the total point score is 100

Meets – the total point score ranges from 90 to less than 100

Needs Some Improvement – the total point score ranges from 85 to less than 90

Needs Significant Improvement – the total point score ranges from 75 to less than 85



Unsatisfactory – the total point score is less than 75

Review Area	Total Questions in Review Area (Excluding N/A Questions)	Total “Yes” Points	Total Score (Total “Yes” Questions/Total Questions) X 100
Governance	16	16	100%
Taxpayer Assistance	11	11	100%
Operating Procedures	23	22	96%
Appraisal Standards, Procedures, and Methodology	30	30	100%

The District received a “no” in the Operating Procedures section regarding agent authorization forms being on file and complete in accordance with PTC Sec. 1.111(b). The District has one year to receive a “yes” on this matter, and has instituted a review of all accounts with tax agent designations to ensure compliance.

Exemption Data

All real and tangible personal property is taxable unless it is exempted by a federal or state law. An absolute exemption excludes the entire property from taxation. A partial exemption removes a percentage or fixed dollar amount of a property’s value from taxation. The District administers all exemptions. Below is a summary of the major categories of property that are exempt from ad valorem taxation:

Absolute Exemptions

- Public property owned by a local, state, or federal agency
- Cemeteries that are dedicated exclusively for the purpose of human burial
- Associations that promote religious, educational, and physical development for boys, girls, young men, and young women
- Religious organizations
- Schools and colleges
- Hospitals
- Low income housing projects
- Personal property and mineral interests with a value less than \$500
- Associations providing assistance to ambulatory health care centers
- Organizations engaged primarily in performing charitable functions
- 100% disabled veterans residence homestead
- Motor vehicles leased for personal use

Partial Exemptions

- Residential homesteads (other than 100% disabled veterans)
- Disabled veterans



- Pollution control property
- Goods in Transit (Freeport and Super Freeport)

Abatements and Limited Appraised Value Agreements

A tax abatement is a local agreement between a taxpayer and a taxing unit that exempts all or part of the increase in the value of the real property and/or tangible personal property from taxation for a period not to exceed 10 years. Tax abatements are an economic development tool available to cities, counties, and special districts to attract new industries and to encourage the retention and development of existing businesses through property tax exemptions or reductions. School districts may not enter into abatement agreements, but they may enter into Limitation on Appraised Value agreements that are similar in nature to tax abatements.

Homestead Exemptions

A homestead exemption removes part of the value of a residence from taxation and lowers the taxes. In order to qualify for the homestead exemption, property owners must own their homes as of January 1 of the tax year and use the home as their principal residence. Property owners with more than one house can only get exemptions for their main or principal residence. There are four types of homestead exemptions:

General Homestead:

For all homeowners

Over-65 Homestead:

In addition to the general homestead exemption, once property owners become 65 years of age, they are entitled to the over-65 homestead exemption that exempts an additional amount from the value of their home. This exemption becomes effective on the owners' date of birth and applies to the taxes for the entire year in which they turn 65. Once property owners receive the over-65 homestead exemption, they get a tax ceiling for their school taxes. In addition, Jefferson County and the City of Port Arthur also grant a tax ceiling. The taxes for the entities granting the tax ceiling cannot increase above the lesser of the amount of taxes that would have been due the year the property owners turn 65 based on a full year with the over-65 exemption or the amount of taxes paid in the following year. For property owners moving into a new residence after turning 65, this tax ceiling is transferable.

Disability Homestead:

A person with a disability may get an additional exemption. A "disability" means either (1) the person cannot engage in gainful work because of a physical or mental disability or (2) the person is 55 years of age, blind, and cannot engage in their previous work because of blindness. Persons receiving disability benefits under the Federal Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Program administered by the Social Security Administration will qualify for this exemption.

Disability benefits from any other program do not automatically qualify a property owner for this exemption. Information on disability ratings from the civil service, retirement programs or from insurance documents, military records, or a doctor's statement may be needed.



Property owners may receive the disability exemption in addition to the general homestead exemption but not in addition to the over-65 homestead exemption.

A tax ceiling is also offered on the disability exemption by the school districts, Jefferson County, and the City of Port Arthur, and it is transferable with certain restrictions.

Surviving Spouse Over-65 or Disability Homestead:

If the spouse who was receiving the over-65 or disability homestead exemption dies, this exemption will transfer to the surviving spouse providing the spouse is 55 years of age or older and maintains ownership of the home. The surviving spouse must apply for this exemption.

Disabled Veteran:

Another type of exemption granted is the disabled veteran exemption. Property owners are entitled to an exemption for a portion of the appraised value of any property they own if they are either (1) a veteran who was disabled while serving with the U. S. armed forces or (2) the surviving spouse or child (less than 18 years of age and unmarried) of a disabled veteran or of a member of the armed forces who was killed while on active duty. You must be a Texas resident. Below is a table of the exemptions granted:

Exemption Amount	Disability Rating of:
\$ 5,000	10% - 29%
\$ 7,500	30% - 49%
\$10,000	50% - 69%
\$12,000	70% - 100% OR 10% or more AND Over 65
EXEMPT	100% and unemployable

100% Disabled Veteran Homestead:

If you are a disabled veteran who receives from the US Department of Veteran Affairs (1) 100% disability compensation due to a service-connected disability; and (2) a rating of 100% disabled or of individual unemployability, you are entitled to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of your residence homestead. This benefit has been extended to the surviving spouse upon the veteran's death with certain restrictions.

Surviving Spouses of Members of the US Armed Services Killed In Action:

The surviving spouse of a member of the US armed services killed in action is allowed a total (100%) property tax exemption on his or her residence if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the armed services member.

Surviving Spouses of First Responders Killed in the Line of Duty:

The eligible surviving spouse of a first responder killed in the line of duty is allowed a total (100%) property tax exemption on his or her residence if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the first responder.

Exemption applications, other than the over-65 homestead exemption, must be filed between January 1 and May 1 of each tax year. The over-65 homestead exemption can be filed once you turn 65 years of age.

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Below are the amounts of exemption granted by the taxing entities for each type of homestead exemption for the 2019 Tax Year:

Taxing Entity	Homestead Exemption	Over-65 Exemption	Disability Exemption
Jefferson County	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Beaumont ISD	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Hamshire-Fannett ISD	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Hardin-Jefferson ISD	15% + \$25,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Nederland ISD	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Port Arthur ISD	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Port Neches-Groves ISD	20% + \$25,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Sabine Pass ISD	20% + \$25,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
City of Beaumont	\$0	\$17,500	\$17,500
City of Bevil Oaks	20%	\$20,000	\$20,000
City of Groves	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
City of Nederland	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
City of Port Arthur	20%	\$25,000	\$25,000
City of Port Neches	20%	\$16,600	\$16,600
City of Taylor Landing	\$0	\$17,500	\$17,500
Sabine Neches Navigation District	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Port of Beaumont	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Port of Port Arthur	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Port of Sabine Pass	20%	\$30,000	\$30,000
Drainage District #3	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Drainage District #6	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Drainage District #7	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Emergency Services District #1	\$0	\$0	\$0
Emergency Services District #2	\$0	\$0	\$0
Emergency Services District #3	\$0	\$0	\$0
Emergency Services District #4	\$0	\$0	\$0
Northwest Forest MUD	20%	\$40,000	\$40,000
Trinity Bay Conservation District	20%	\$60,000	\$60,000
Water Control & Imp District #10	20%	\$20,000	\$10,000

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Below is the value of property exempted from the appraisal roll for Jefferson County for the 2019 tax year. The amount of certain exemptions will vary based on the taxing entity.

Type of Exemption	2019 Value Exempted
General residential homestead	\$1,220,606,390
Over-65 residential homestead	\$ 739,793,323
Disability residential homestead	\$ 81,143,127
Disabled veterans exemption	\$ 93,473,831
Abatements	\$2,866,898,917
Pollution control property	\$ 923,308,797
Governmental property/charitable orgs/religious orgs/hospitals/etc.	\$2,602,655,224
Private schools	\$ 41,208,900
Primarily charitable organizations	\$ 5,065,810
Interstate commerce	\$ 1,880,880
Youth organizations	\$ 9,690,130
Minerals and personal property less than \$500	\$ 25,515
Public property for housing indigent persons	\$ 2,892,810
Organizations providing economic development	\$ 2,441,480
Community Housing Organizations	\$ 3,115,817
Miscellaneous	\$ 6,871,500
TOTAL:	\$8,601,072,451

While all values are being reported on a county-wide basis, due to the variation of exemptions granted by the taxing entities, below is a summary of exemptions by entity:

Abatement/Chapter 313	2019 Value Exempted
Jefferson County	\$2,866,898,917
Beaumont ISD	\$1,760,037,400
Nederland ISD	\$ 177,444,100
Port Arthur ISD	\$ 144,633,900
Port Neches-Groves ISD	\$ 237,623,000
City of Beaumont	\$ 111,435,100
City of Port Arthur	\$ 1,167,660
Port of Beaumont	\$2,145,605,059
Port of Port Arthur	\$ 841,663,910
Sabine Neches Navigation District	\$3,281,033,649
Drainage District #6	\$ 50,760,040
Drainage District #7	\$1,131,011,110



Property Owner Appeal Data

The District mailed out 147,595 Notices of Appraised Value. The Appraisal Review Board (ARB) began protest hearings on May 23, 2018 and approved the appraisal records on July 17, 2018. The ARB was in session for 12.5 days, and while the ARB offered one evening session, no protesting party requested an evening meeting.

Below is a history of protest activity for the past three years:

	2017	2018	2019
Number of accounts appealed	5,930	6,335	6,755
Number of accounts settled informally with a signed value agreement	2,706	3,824	3,953
Number of accounts with protest hearing canceled	1,578	1,191	1,022
Number of accounts not appearing for protest hearing	871	694	1,060
Number of accounts presented to ARB	775	626	720
No Show/Cancel rate of formal protest hearings	86.93%	90.11%	89.34%

Lawsuit Data

Property owners who appeared before the ARB and do not agree with the ARB's decision may file an appeal to District Court. In 2019, 61 lawsuits were filed. As an alternate, property owners may file a request for arbitration on appraised or market value issues on their homestead with no limit on value or on any other property with a value under \$5 million. Eight requests for arbitration were filed in 2018, with one being settled by Joint Motion before being sent to the State Comptroller's Office, and another one being dismissed by the Comptroller based on an error in filing. An appeal to State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) is available on properties valued at more than \$1 million. The District did not receive any SOAH appeals in 2018.

Below is a history of the lawsuits filed for the past three years:

	2017	2018	2019
# Lawsuits Filed	24	62	68
# Accounts	236	92	118
Appraised Value	\$236,597,600	\$3,930,570,700	\$4,073,540,660
# Lawsuits Settled	21	57	30
# Accounts	233	85	57
Original Appraised Value	\$232,803,870	\$3,885,359,800	\$3,712,459,280
Settled Appraised Value	\$196,244,163	\$2,515,762,649	\$2,417,939,987
Value Loss:	\$36,559,707	\$1,369,597,151	\$1,294,519,293
% of Value Loss:	15.70%	35.25%	34.87%
# Lawsuits Pending	3	5	38
# Accounts	3	7	61
Appraised Value	\$3,793,730	\$45,210,900	\$361,081,380
# Arbitrations filed	3	8	12
# Settled Prior to Hearing	2	2	12
# Found in favor of JCAD	0	2	N/A
JCAD Value	\$834,250	\$9,146,880	N/A
Taxpayer's Opinion of Value	\$500,000	\$5,826,445	N/A
Final Value	\$556,172	\$7,574,950	N/A
Value Loss:	\$278,078	\$1,571,930	N/A
% of Value Loss:	33.33%	17.19%	N/A



Business Administration

District Departments and Personnel

The Office of the Chief Appraiser is primarily responsible for overall planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, and controlling District operations as required by the Texas Property Tax Code. This Department is also responsible for scheduling all property owner protests before the Appraisal Review Board, handling all inquiries regarding protests and ARB scheduling, posting agendas and preparing meeting packets for both the ARB and Board of Directors, and administering abatements. The Administration Department's function is to plan, organize, direct and control the business support functions relating to human resources, budget, finance, purchasing, capital assets, facilities, and postal services. This Department has 4 employees.

The Appraisal Department is responsible for the valuation of all property in the District. The Appraisal Department divisions include commercial, residential, and business personal property. This Department also works with the District's industrial appraising firm, Capitol Appraisal Group, for its industrial, mineral, and utility property valuations. Informal property owner appeals, special-use appraisals, in-house ratio studies, and market analyses are also handled in the Appraisal Department. This Department handles permits and blueprints received from the cities, administers the Records Management Program, and prepares evidence in response to evidence requests submitted by the public during protest period. This Department has 20 employees.

The main function of the Roll Department is customer service. The staff in this Department is the customer's first contact, and they must be able to answer a multitude of questions and be able to transfer customers to the proper department for assistance. This Department assists the general public in filing exemptions, name and address changes, and processing of renditions. This Department also assists tax agents in filing Appointment of Agent forms and ensuring that the accounts are coded for the proper authority. All changes to the appraisal roll after certification flow through this Department and reports of changes for the Appraisal Review Board's action are prepared. This Department has 6 employees.

The Mapping and GIS Department oversees the creation and maintenance of digital and hard copy property ownership maps. The staff makes decisions on property boundary line discrepancies, researches ownership issues, reads metes and bounds descriptions as well as other documents relating to change of property ownership, receives and reviews property information from the County Clerk's office, updates the appraisal roll for name and ownership changes, updates hard copy of maps using engineering scales, creates accounts for new subdivisions and/or replats filed in map records, redesignates accounts for future annexation or deannexation, and responds to inquiries from the public requesting information or copies of maps. This Department has 6 employees.

The Data Processing Department oversees the installation, testing, administration, and maintenance of the information systems. The staff assesses user needs through direct communication and system analysis, performs routine troubleshooting of the PACS software, oversees the scheduling of tasks, and assists in user training. The staff is also responsible for ordering and installing new computer equipment and analyzing the PACS software to find more efficient methods for the users to perform their job duties. The staff produces queries, Excel reports, and Crystal reports to meet the needs of the users; keys and generate letters as needed; oversees the daily and weekly backup of data; loads the mineral and industrial appraisal changes from the industrial appraisal firm; exports data files to the FTP site for the public; and prepares the Property Value Study reports for the Comptroller's Office. This Department has 3 employees.



Professional Staff Designations

Level I Appraiser	1
Level II Appraiser	4
Level III Appraiser	1
Registered Professional Appraiser (RPA)	18
IAAO Assessment Administration Specialist (AAS)	2
IAAO Residential Evaluation Specialist (RES)	5
IAAO Cadastral Mapping Specialist (CMS)	2
State Certified General Real Estate Appraiser	1

Budget

The Administration Department published a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for submission to the Chief Appraiser, Board of Directors, and the executive officers of the taxing units served by the District pursuant to Property Tax Code Sec 6.063. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded a certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the District for this report for 10 consecutive years. The purpose of this report is to provide citizens, agencies, and other interested parties with reliable information concerning the financial condition of the District.

Below is a summary of the District's financial status:

	2019 Adopted	2018 Audited Budget	2017 Audited Budget
Revenues			
Entity Allocations/Fund Balance	\$7,286,898	\$4,160,175	\$5,502,633
Investment Income	\$5,000	\$18,499	\$8,205
Other Income	\$0	\$207,518	\$223
Total Revenues	\$7,291,898	\$4,386,192	\$5,511,061
Expenditures			
Salaries and Benefits	\$3,568,653	\$3,184,007	\$3,189,059
Services	\$2,796,428	\$1,145,460	\$1,003,294
Supplies	\$169,200	\$16,635	\$86,807
Capital Outlay	\$30,000	\$505,234	\$57,664
Equipment Replacement	\$75,000	\$0	\$0
Other Operating	\$652,617	\$376,675	\$402,755
Total Expenditures	\$7,291,898	\$5,228,011	\$4,739,579
EXCESS(DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	\$0	(\$841,819)	(\$771,4823)



Customer Service Survey Analysis

The District places Customer Service Survey cards throughout the office and also allows the public to complete a survey on its website. Below is an analysis of the survey results:

2019 Overall Performance – Level of Service Rating	
Excellent Service	100.00%
Good Service	0.00%
Improvements Needed	0.00%
Unsatisfactory Service	0.00%
TOTALS:	100.00%

2019 Overall Categorical Percentages				
Category	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
Wait time for assistance	94.74%	5.26%	0.00%	0.00%
Professionalism and helpfulness	97.37%	2.63%	0.00%	0.00%
Knowledge of staff	94.74%	5.26%	0.00%	0.00%
Staff listened to my concerns	97.37%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Staff treated me in a fair manner	94.74%	2.63%	0.00%	0.00%

Highlights of 2019 Tax Year

Commercial Evidence Manual

Working as a team, the Appraisal Department developed a Commercial Evidence Manual that contains the data used to develop the commercial appraisal schedules along with maps indicating the location of any sold properties that were used. This manual is also used at the Appraisal Review Board level to defend our values at protest hearings and as evidence for protesting parties.

Appraisal Software Enhancements

The Appraisal Department developed refreshable Excel spreadsheets to use for all income producing properties to allow the appraisers quick access in developing equity grids to ensure equal and uniform appraisal of these properties.

New technologies offered in the Asset Manager module of the personal property software allowed the appraisal staff to increase their efficiency and productivity in 2019. The staff was able to quickly enter and work the 11,853 renditions received from January – May, 2019 using this new technology.

Over 65 Homestead Exemption Verifications

The District reviewed 3,675 accounts with the over 65 homestead exemption. During the review, this exemption was removed on 142 accounts since the property owner was deceased. In addition, the District mailed out 134 letters to property owners requesting that they file a new over 65 homestead exemption application to verify



eligibility status. Of those exemptions verified, only 1 exemption was removed since the property owner did not qualify for the exemption.

Online Forms

2019 was the second year the District used BIS Consulting’s new Online Forms system allowing property owners to file their homestead exemption applications, ag-use special appraisal applications, and business personal property renditions online.

Below are the number of forms filed for both the 2018 and 2019 tax years:

Form Type	2018	2019
Ag-Use Application	19	36
Homestead Exemption Applications	350	557
Business Personal Property Renditions	481	688

Legislative Changes

Various bills were passed in the 2019 legislative session, but none had more effect on appraisal districts than SB 2. Some of the major changes to our operations include:

- Email value notifications are now required upon request from residential property owners. Protesting parties can now request that their notice of protest hearings be emailed or sent by certified mail at their expense.
- Heir property owners now qualify for homestead exemptions with the required documentation. A probated will or filed deed are no longer required.
- The Local Administrative District Judge now appoints ARB officers instead of the Board of Directors.
- Disaster reappraisal provisions were deleted and replaced with a temporary exemption based on the level of damage.
- The rendition filing deadline was changed back to April 15th from April 1st. This is a reversal of legislation passed in 2017.
- Notices of appraised value will no longer include estimated taxes starting in 2021. Now, appraisal districts must maintain a Truth in Taxation website that includes value and tax information for all entities. Appraisal districts must send a letter to property owners by August 7th of each year informing them of this website.
- Protesting parties can now request a joint motion, or topline agreement, to settle a protest. While the protesting party does not appear for the protest hearing, an appealable ARB order must be sent on these motions.

GFOA Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting

The District’s comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018 qualified for the Government Finance Officers Association’s (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment. The District has received this award for 19 consecutive years.