

Assessment News

Scholarship winners announced

The Board of Directors of the Municipal Assessment Agency are pleased to announce the inaugural winners of the Clar Simmons Scholarships. A professional accountant, Clar Simmons worked in the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador for more than thirty-five years. Clar was the Business Manager for the Municipal Assessment Agency from 1998 until his untimely passing in 2004. The winners are:

Brian Peach Brian is the son of Michelle Peach, Director of Corporate Services, City of Mount Pearl. Brian received his award from Board Chair Fred Best.

Paula Allen Paula is the daughter of Deborah Allen, Director of Valuation Services, Municipal Assessment Agency. Paula received her award from Board Vice-Chair Dean Ball.

Brandon Baker Brandon is the son of Cynthia Baker, Town Clerk, Birchy Bay. Brandon received his award from Board Chair Fred Best and Central Board Representative Randy White.



Randy White, Brandon Baker and Fred Best



Brian Peach and Fred Best



Dean Ball and Paula Allen

Providing news about the Municipal Assessment Agency to our clients throughout Newfoundland and Labrador



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No Change in Assessment Fee

The Agency's Board of Directors met on December 3, 2010 in St. John's. Following the meeting, the Board announced that the fee for assessment services will remain unchanged for the next year. "We are pleased that we can absorb our cost increases for the year and hold the line on fees we charge our municipal clients," said Dean Ball, Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee. "The budget process can be

quite challenging," said Board Chairperson Fred Best, "And, as a board, we were pleased that the Finance Committee was able to contain expenses."

The Municipal Assessment Agency provides real property assessment services to 227 municipalities across Newfoundland and Labrador. The Agency is fully funded by its fees for service.

"We were able to absorb our cost increases for the year and hold the line on the fees we charge our municipal clients." Dean Ball, Chairperson, Finance and Audit Committee.

New Construction Continues Record Growth

The 2011 annual assessments saw the value of new construction and renovations continue to grow across the province. The total value of new construction/renovations was \$717 million. Of this total, more than \$607 million was the value of taxable property added since the last annual roll.

"The province continues to see record growth in the value of new construction and renovations," said Sean Martin, CEO of the Municipal Assessment Agency. "This will be positive news for many municipalities when it comes time to set the 2011 tax rates"

In addition, the value of business tenants grew by more than 5% in the last year.

Public Consultations

The Agency, through its CEO, Sean Martin, has conducted public consultations about the assessment process across the province. Ten sessions were held, but public participation rates were low. "While I was disappointed with the attendance numbers, I was impressed with the quality of the discussions and the interest of those who did attend," said Mr. Martin. "Some important issues were raised and the quality of our dialogue with the public will improve as a result."

Some of the concerns property owners raised included:

- The level of taxation in their community.
- Tax relief for those on fixed incomes.
- Fear of an increased assessment if they appealed. Concern that they had not seen an assessor visit their property.
- Equity of assessed values with the community.
- Increasing assessed values.

In response to the feedback from these sessions, the Agency has developed a property owner's version of "A Guide to Property Assessment in Newfoundland and Labrador." A copy has been forwarded to all client municipalities and additional copies are available from our regional offices.



“Great interaction and dialogue between the participants,” said Wayne Rossiter, Manager of Residential Valuation and course leader for the Bay Robert’s session.

Bay Robert’s training session



Municipalities Participate in Assessment Training

Greg Rumbolt, Director, Data Services, reported that there was a good response to the “Moving Forward” assessment workshops held across the province recently. Training sessions were held in:

- Labrador West, November 15
- Bay Roberts, November 17
- Corner Brook, November 18
- Clarenville, November 18

More than 70 participants representing 50 municipalities participated. “My thanks to the other course leaders, Debbie Allen, Wayne Rossiter and Sid Harris, who made these sessions possible,” said Greg Rumbolt. “We plan to schedule more sessions in 2011. If anyone has any suggestions for topics or areas for future sessions, please let me know.” Greg can be contacted by e-mail at grumbolt@maa.ca or by telephone at (709) 651-4464.



Corner Brook training session



Our Board of Directors

Chairperson

Mayor Fred Best, Clarenville
Eastern Director

Vice-Chairperson

Mayor Dean Ball, Deer Lake
Western Director

Mayor Elizabeth Moore, Clarke’s Beach
Avalon Director

Mayor Randy White, Comfort Cove-
Newstead
Central Director

Deputy Mayor Terry Hancock, Forteau
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Seldom
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Councillor Lucy Stoyles, Mount Pearl
MNL Representative

Mr. Bruce Borden, Corner Brook
Taxpayer Representative

Mr. David Manning, Torbay
Taxpayer Representative



Municipal Assessment Agency

877-777-2807
info@maa.ca

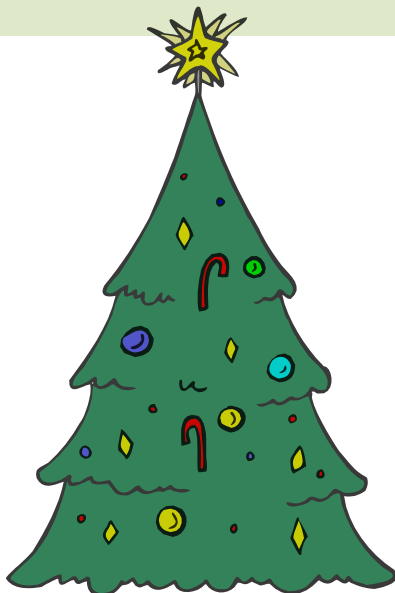
Find us on the Web:
www.maa.ca



Our favorite kids' Christmas joke:

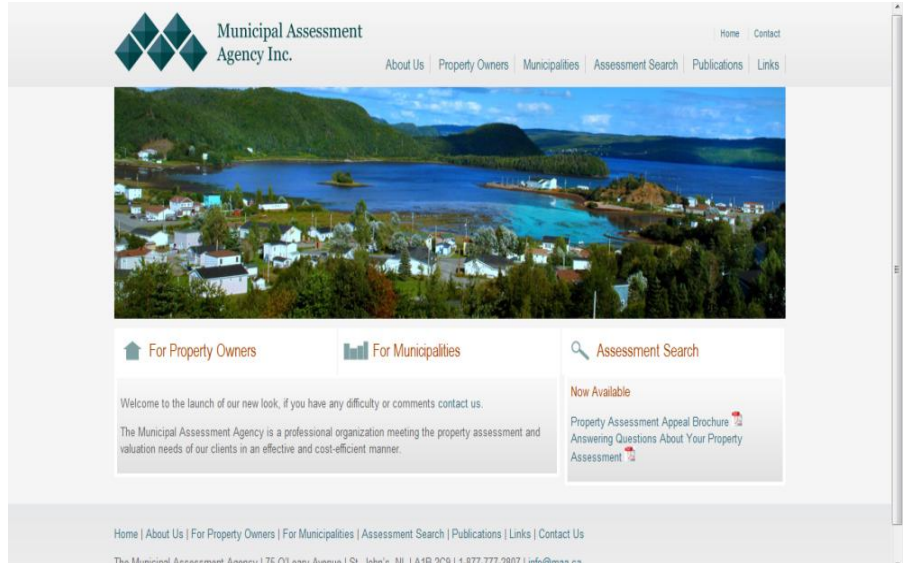
What do you call a person who is afraid of Santa Claus?

Claustrophobic!



Agency Launches Updated Website

The Agency launched a new look to its website on November 18, 2010. Changes were made to make the site more user-friendly and hopefully to make it easier for municipalities and property owners to locate information. Visit the site at www.maa.ca and let us know what you think!



Our new look on-line

Appeal Numbers Down

The appeal numbers have declined significantly for the 2011 annual assessment versus last year. There are 960 appeals filed against the 2011 assessed values, as compared with 5601 last year. "While we expect to see the decline during a non-reassessment year, it is still surprising to see such a large drop," said Debbie Allen, Director of Valuation Services for the Agency. "Our employees are working to resolve the appeals and we hope to have all appeals reviewed and the results to property owners by the end of December." All municipalities have been notified of the number of appeals that have been filed. Municipalities with no appeals are notified as well.

Property Values Continue to Increase

Canada Mortgage and Housing says recent price growth and an increasing supply of unsold homes will likely have a moderating effect on the St. John's area housing market over the coming months despite growth in population, income and employment. CMHC's Housing Market Outlook for the area was released on Monday. CMHC says housing starts in the area are expected to end 2010 at 1,600 units, with 1,475 starts forecasted for 2011. The report indicates the resale market will post 3,650 sales by the end of this year and reach the 3,350 unit level in 2011. The average MLS(R) house price is expected to end 2010 at \$247,500 and increase marginally to \$255,000 in 2011.