

THE WOODFORD SUN

MANAGEMENT

Ben Chandler — Publisher
 Scott White — Managing Editor, scott@woodfordsun.com
 Bill Nave — Business Manager
 Lucie Chandler — Asst. Business Manager
 (859) 873-3211
 News — news@woodfordsun.com
 Display Ads — adsales@woodfordsun.com
 Classified Ads — comp@woodfordsun.com
 Circulation — circulation@woodfordsun.com
 www.woodfordsun.com

STAFF

Reporting/Photography — Bob Vlach
 Copy Editor/Contributing Writer — Melissa Patrick
 Sports — Bill Caine
 Circulation Manager — Brenda Stone
 Ad Sales Manager — Lucie Chandler
 Layout / Ad Design — Tamara McSorley

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$50, Woodford County residents
 \$38, Woodford County senior residents
 \$60, Kentucky residents
 \$65, out of state

Increased Woodford County Property Values

By JOHN PAUL COYLE
 WOODFORD COUNTY PVA

Editor's Note: At our request, Woodford County Property Valuation Administrator John Paul Coyle wrote the below column to explain the property valuation process he and his office are required to use in assessing and re-assessing property for tax purposes in Woodford County in April 2024. The valuation of Midway properties was just completed, and the new assessment notices were mailed to residents on May 2. Since, Coyle and his staff have been pilloried and attacked by a small group of people on social media, at their office, at the Midway administrative office, and even at The Woodford Sun. Because of this, it seemed useful to reprint Coyle's column, with some updating, in this week's Sun. As Midway Mayor Grayson Vandegrift said at the council meeting on Monday, PVA Coyle is a good man, his office evenly and dispassionately applies the law as required by the Kentucky Constitution, and does not deserve the attacks recently levied against them.

If you want to contest your valuation, by Kentucky law, you must notify the PVA office and have what is called a "Conference with the PVA Office" no later than May 19. You can present evidence demonstrating the valuation is wrong. If the valuation remains the same, then you can appeal by May 20 to the PVA Appeals Board by filing an appeal with the Woodford County Clerk at his office. Both the PVA and the county clerk are in the Courthouse in Versailles.

I was honored to be elected as the Woodford County Property Valuation Administrator in the 2022 general election. As the timing cycle would have it, I was immediately tasked with a duty that likely has had a significant financial impact on residential owners in this great county we call home. Please allow me to explain.

All of Kentucky's 120 PVAs are required by our state Constitution to assess all real estate at fair cash value. Section 172 of the Constitution states: "All property, not exempted from taxation by this Constitution, shall be assessed for taxation at its fair cash value, estimated at the price it would bring at a fair voluntary sale..."

The various classes of real property are residential, commercial, farm and exempt. The most effective method for the PVA Office to determine fair cash value is by comparing recent sales of similar and comparable homes to each reassessed property.

PVAs operate on what is called the "Quad Plan." The PVA splits the county into fourths, and reassesses each classification of property at least once every four years. As a result of that approach, not every type of property gets reassessed on an annual basis.

The 2025 reassessment was focused on residential and commercial real property in and around Midway and various subdivisions in Versailles. If you were one of those property owners subject to this mandated reassessment, the fair cash value assigned to your property may be significantly higher than it was when your property was last reassessed in 2020 (or earlier).

In order to determine how much the PVA is required to increase residential values each January 1, the Department of Revenue (DOR) performs an annual sales study of the prior years "at arm's length" sales, and determines what the total level of assessment residential property must be set. This evaluation is based on what properties are selling for compared to the current PVA assessments.

All Woodford County residential properties were assessed at \$2,365,642,000 for 2025. All Woodford County commercial properties were assessed at \$475,385,245 for 2025. All Woodford County farm properties were assessed at \$721,347,253 for 2025.

For 2025, these three property classes increased by \$3,562,374,498 from 2024 to obtain the DOR's required Woodford County Level of Assessment. This 13 percent total increase includes all new growth/new construction, all real estate sales occurring throughout the year, and all reassessment work done during the year by the PVA Office.

Here's a snapshot of how quickly the median price of a single-family residence has increased in Woodford County since 2020, according to the Bluegrass Realtors Association:

2020: \$260,250
 2021: \$275,000
 2022: \$300,000
 2023: \$320,000
 2024: \$375,000

That is a 44 percent increase since 2020. Yes, values rose by almost a half, a staggering amount. As a result, property owners who were reassessed this year, and previously reassessed in 2020 (or before), may have seen a large increase.

Woodford County home sale values are high because it is such a desirable place to live and work. Like here, housing values are increasing all over the country due to inflation and a low supply of available houses for sale because of high interest rates.

Once the DOR certifies the Woodford County Level of Assessment, the taxing districts will be responsible for setting their rates based on the assessments. The taxing districts set their tax rates each year, and they include the School Board, Fiscal Court, Versailles City Council, Midway City Council, Fire Board, Library Board, Health Board and Ag Extension Board. Each district's budgets dictate what they can set their tax rate at, using the PVA assessments. Based on assessments and House Bill 44, this limits the amount of additional revenue that the districts can receive this year compared to the property tax revenue they received last year.

Taxing districts do not set property assessments, nor do their budgets or planned projects have any influence on property value assessments or fair cash value. The one silver lining is that the tax rates for these districts are unlikely to rise, and could even result in a lower tax rate this year.

My office and I understand the strain and burden that increasing prices are having on individuals, families and small businesses. As a way to reduce some of the financial burden, I encourage all eligible individuals to apply for the homestead exemption in order to reduce your taxable assessment by \$49,100 for 2025. It saves you about \$490 when you pay your tax bill in the fall. We have applications throughout the county, at pharmacies, physical therapists, libraries and in various offices in the Courthouse. The amount is adjusted every two years, again for 2027.

You do not have to reapply unless you move. To qualify, you must either be at least 65 years old or deemed permanently and completely disabled. You must also own the house and use it as your primary residence. Only one (1) exemption is allowed per household. You can also talk about the tax rates with your tax district board members, and other elected officials including the school board, city council or magistrates as they are setting their various tax rates.

In Kentucky, all taxes on property (real estate and vehicles) are based on value (*ad valorem*), and while that may be deemed as subjective, the PVA Office utilizes as much data and comparable sales as possible to be fair and equitable in the assessment process to reach the 100 percent fair cash value constitutional requirement.

If, in the future, property sales in Woodford County were to indicate that house values were decreasing, my office would follow the Constitution and decrease property assessments to the new fair cash value. This has happened in the past in Woodford County after the 2007 housing crisis.

We need to remember the taxing districts must use real property tax revenue to pay for firefighters, police officers and teachers, and the job of the PVA is to do our work right so those districts have funding to provide all essential services to our citizens... services we can all agree make our county the wonderful place it is. When viewed in this light, we have a shared pain for a common gain — a safe, productive community to serve all of our many needs.

Please feel free to stop by the PVA Office in the Courthouse if you ever have any questions, or call us at (859) 873-4101.

Letter to the Editor

Time for moratorium on development?

Woodford/Versailles/Midway Planning and Zoning seems to have a large amount of development projects at various stages of review and approval. There are several very big housing developments on the south, east and west of Versailles that could change the nature of our small town and community. Besides housing development there is the Edgewood property project, industrial land acres issue and in family conveyance issue.

Meanwhile the new comprehensive plan is already two years in the making and potentially needs another two years to complete according to the recent article in the Woodford Sun May 1, page 4 — Update on Comp Plan Chapters. The predicted completion of the Economic Development chapter is in 2025,

and the Land Use Chapter in 2026).

Developers want to develop, that's what they do. I suspect a large part of the community (especially South Woodford), is not in favor of further development.

It seems like P&Z is confronted with a run-away train and may not have the braking power to stop it. No doubt it is easier said than done but could a moratorium on developments be declared until the new comprehensive plan is written, reviewed and done? That will give P&Z more time to focus on the comp plan and give concerned citizens a chance to have more input into plans that affect everyone's quality of life.

Jim Mansfield
 Versailles

From Our Files

10 Years Ago

May 7, 2015

The new Kroger Marketplace is set to open on July 16 with an increased workforce of 350, up from 180. The store is 35,000 square feet and will include an in-store dining area of 60 seats with televisions and a fireplace.

The Midway City Council will hold a public comment event on the proposed Fairness Ordinance it expects to vote on shortly. The ordinance will include LGBTQ+ persons within the protected class in regards housing, employment, and public accommodations this week. Mayor Grayson Vandegrift described the event as a listening session for council. Also related to the proposal, the Commonwealth Policy Center held a "Religious Freedom" forum at Woodford County Middle School attended by about 150 people. The Center describes itself as "dedicated to bedrock values of life, marriage, and fiscal responsibility in Kentucky."

Richard Nelson, the group's executive director, said "The (Midway ordinance) would clearly be able to be abused," and would promote sexual liberty over religious liberty. Saxony Farm held a Derby Party at which it raised nearly \$100,000 for the Woodford Humane Society and other non-profits. The cost to attend ranged from \$250 per person or \$350 per couple.

Woodford County Schools spelling bee champion Gavin Willoughby, a student at Southside Elementary, was honored at this week's school board meeting. Natalie A. Williams, a WCHS alum, graduated with honors from LSU College of Law, and is now a member of the Louisiana Bar Association. She resides in New Orleans.

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Company honored Courtney Roberts, manager of its Woodford County agency, as its manager of the year at its annual convention in Louisville.

Woodford County Judge-Executive John "Bear" Coyle proclaimed May 9 as "Letter Carrier Food Drive Day."

Letter carriers from all over the county, including in Woodford County, will collect non-perishable food items during their routes and deliver the goods to local food pantries. This is the nation's largest one-day food drive.

The Lady Jackets softball team kept its dream season rolling with four wins in two days over East Jessamine, Pope John Paul II High School from Tennessee, Taylor County and Henry Clay. The team is now 23-3 and undefeated in region and district play. The boys and girls WCHS track teams both won the Danville All-Comers Meet.

25 Years Ago

May 11, 2000

Woodford Fiscal Court magistrates are upset about possible cuts in the City of Versailles budget for programs such as recycling, recreation, and the health department.

The first back payroll checks have been handed out to former employees of Woodford Hospital.

The outgoing principal of Southside Elementary School, Vernell Devine, 44, has been indicted on five counts of felony theft and two counts of misdemeanor theft, totalling \$3,472.49, allegedly occurring in June, October and November of last year.

Dr. John Buckner, currently principal of Lexington Traditional Magnet School, has been employed as Southside's new principal.

A public hearing will be held June 1 in Harrodsburg on a proposed marina on the Kentucky River in Mercer County across from Cummins Ferry Road in Woodford County.

Heather Allison Ping, 14, of Versailles is a state finalist

in the Miss Kentucky American Junior Teen Pageant July 8-9 in Lexington.

Joyce C. Threlkeld, 80, of Versailles, a former home economist and teacher, died May 9.

40 Years Ago

May 9, 1985

Anthony Atwood, a junior at Woodford County High School, won first prize in the district and second in the state in a student art contest sponsored by the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs.

Stony's Restaurant in the Versailles Center held its ribbon-cutting ceremonies Monday morning.

Stewart Miller, a native of Versailles, is a member of the Lexington-based Metropolitan Blues All-Stars, which will perform at Harrah's Casino in Lake Tahoe July 29 through Aug. 11.

Pegi Karsner Ivancevich, a native of Versailles now living in Spring, Texas, was the national winner of an essay on "What my DAR Membership Means to Me." She was honored at the National Society DAR's Continental Congress in Washington, D.C.

Earl Tilghman, 73, a retired Versailles furniture store owner, died Saturday.

Stephan's Odyssey, trained by Woody Stephens, formerly of Midway, ran second in the Kentucky Derby Saturday. Chief's Crown, owned by Star Crown Stable and Three Chimneys Farm of Woodford County, was third. The winner was Spend-A-Buck.

Matt Fisher of Midway will graduate from the University of Kentucky Dental School Saturday.

The WCHS boys' track team won the K&C meet held here Saturday. The 400-meter relay team, Scott Goodlett, Glen Campbell and Kevin White, set a new school record of 45.5. In girls' competition, Woodford finished third.

Clippings from our past...

Editor's Note: This week's Clippings marks the beginning of excerpts from the Woodford Weekly (WW), which was published in Versailles from sometime in 1869 through 1874. It is not directly in the ownership lineage of the Sun, but, was a competitor of the Sun. James Hill was the publisher/editor until it closed. These excerpts are "as is", warts and all, and will include pejorative terms for not only Black-Americans but other ethnicities and nationalities used at that time by those in power and control of societies institutions. Our purpose is to reprint what was happening here at that time, to give contemporary readers as accurate a historical sense as possible. Please bear this in mind when reading this.

The Woodford Weekly

May 16, 1870

Typical of its time, the WW published a literary or travel item on its front page obtained from a national newspaper or magazine. This week it published an article titled "Paris by Sunlight and Gaslight, a work descriptive of the Mysteries and Miseries, the Virtues, Vices, Splendors, and Crimes of the City of Paris for those with the means and time to visit."

Title, "White & Black": Some of the wisest heads of the Democracy and the country are settled in the conviction that the course of the Radical Party in passing the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and thus attempting to make the white and black race politically equal will fail. We [the editors of the WW] believe this course must fail, and we rest our conviction upon the Scriptures of Truth and the Book of Nations. It is useless to attempt to reproduce the same arguments adduced from the scriptures everybody knows; but, we all know that the Bible

throughout, and Moral law in particular, proceed upon the idea of purity of races. If Negroes were proselyted into the Jewish community, the thing must have been rare. Even the poetry of the Bible — the beautiful figures of Solomon — gives you the idea of the inferiority of the Negro. [Historical Note: The 15th Amendment ensures the rights of all persons to vote and cannot be denied on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. It was passed by Congress on February 16, 1869, and was the last of the three "Reconstruction Amendments" to be ratified, when the necessary number of States accepted it in February 1870, two months before this editorial was published in the WW. Kentucky, itself, did not formally ratify it until March, 1976 after originally being rejected in March, 1869.]

An outrageous assault was perpetrated in Savannah, Georgia, by three Negroes on a widow lady. One of them seized her hair and held her, while another beat her in the face with his fist. Whilst this

was going on, the third villain collected all of the clothing of the lady and her children with which they left the lady's house. Her eyes are nearly closed from the assault.

Sen. Julian's proposed suffrage amendment to grant women the vote is being called the "sweet sixteenth."

Surviving officers of Gen. Stonewall Jackson have published an appeal for funds to place a monument over his remains in Lexington, Va., and to say that such a memorial of love and respect, more than all others, meets with the cordial approval of Mrs. Jackson, his widow.

Sublett & Wasson, grocers on Main Street, offer wholesale and retail prices on liquors and hardware.

The Democrat candidates for Town Marshal have issued a small town convention to settle their claims by a nomination of a candidate. The Convention will meet at the Court House on the afternoon of May 7, tomorrow, at 4:00 p.m. It is of the highest importance to our citizens that