

# Property Appraiser's Office



## **2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

Statistics from the 2013 Assessment Roll

**GARY R. NIKOLITS, CFA**  
**PROPERTY APPRAISER**



View along the Intracoastal Waterway west from downtown West Palm Beach to Palm Beach. Our Geographical Information Services keeps track of all properties in Palm Beach County, not an easy task. See Page 14 for more information about our highly specialized GIS staff.

# GARY R. NIKOLITS, CFA

## Palm Beach County Property Appraiser



### *Mission Statement*

Our Mission is to prepare a fair and equitable tax roll according to Florida statutes, administer all exemptions and serve the public in a courteous manner.

**Dear Taxpayer:**

This 2014 Annual Report is designed to provide you with insight and data about the job performed by your Property Appraiser's Office.

As Palm Beach County continues to grow, the job of Property Appraiser is always challenging and ever-changing. Keeping track of the owners, values and exemptions on **629,345** properties valued at **\$171.9 billion**, requires the efforts of a highly skilled staff of dedicated public employees who strive to reach the highest standards in public service. Implementing new laws adopted by the Legislature, or passed by voters, ensures one constant: Nothing is constant!

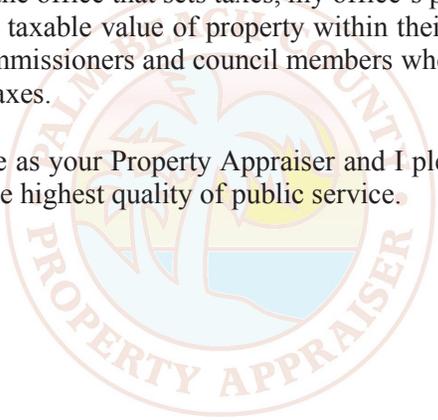
I am proud that since my first election in 1992, my office has achieved 21 consecutive tax roll approvals without defect. This is significant because it shows the policies and procedures within my office often exceed those required by the Florida Department of Revenue, the agency that oversees the operations of all Property Appraisers in the state.

Although often mistaken for the office that sets taxes, my office's primary function is to report to the various taxing authorities the taxable value of property within their jurisdictions. It is these elected, and sometimes appointed commissioners and council members who set the tax rates and decide how much each of us will pay in taxes.

It has been my honor to serve as your Property Appraiser and I pledge to continue to do my best to provide you, our customer, the highest quality of public service.

Sincerely,

Gary R. Nikolits, CFA



***We Value Our Community***



# Mark Your Calendar

## 2014 Key Dates for Property Owners

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>January 1</b> | Property values and exemptions are established.  |
| <b>March 1</b>   | Deadline to apply for Homestead exemptions, Portability and Agriculture classifications. Please note: In 2014, because March 1 falls on a Saturday, the deadline is March 3, 2014.   |
| <b>April 1</b>   | Deadline to file completed Tangible Personal Property Tax Returns.   |
| <b>June 1</b>    | Estimated taxable property values for 2014 released to local taxing districts.   |
| <b>July 1</b>    | Denial notices for exemptions and Agriculture classifications are mailed.  |
| <b>July 1</b>    | Preliminary Tax Roll submitted to Florida Department of Revenue.   |
| <b>Aug. 1</b>    | Deadline to file appeals of denied homestead exemptions and Agricultural classifications to the Value Adjustment Board.  |
| <b>Aug. 21</b>   | On behalf of Palm Beach County taxing authorities, Notices of Proposed Property Taxes are mailed to property owners. The information includes tax rates, market, assessed and taxable values for the current and previous year, exemptions applied to your property, taxes as proposed by the various taxing authorities and public hearing dates for their budgets. |
| <b>Sept. 15</b>  | Deadline to appeal market values to the Value Adjustment Board.<br>Deadline to appeal to the Value Adjustment Board for late applications for homestead exemptions and Agricultural classifications.   |
| <b>Nov. 1</b>    | The Tax Collector's Office mails annual tax bills.   |

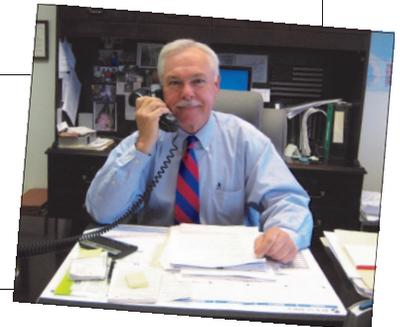
# ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2013

*Under Property Appraiser Gary Nikolits, the office continued its high standards of professionalism and integrity in service to our taxpayers.*

- The Tax Roll was approved by the Florida Department of Revenue without defect for the 21st consecutive year, a mark of on-going professional excellence by our staff.
- Recognized by the International Association of Assessing Officers as having “the largest number of Certified Professional designees of any single jurisdiction in the world.”
- Recovered \$1,125,038 from taxpayers claiming an improper exemption. (see Chart, Page 10)
- Processed 16,360 new exemption applications, including 4,815 E-Files, and 1,429 new senior exemption applications.
- Value appeals totaled just .69% of all parcels and accounts, the lowest among the state’s three most populous counties: Miami-Dade (69,000), Broward (17,000) and Palm Beach (4,800). These low numbers reflect the “Get it right the first time” principle of our office.



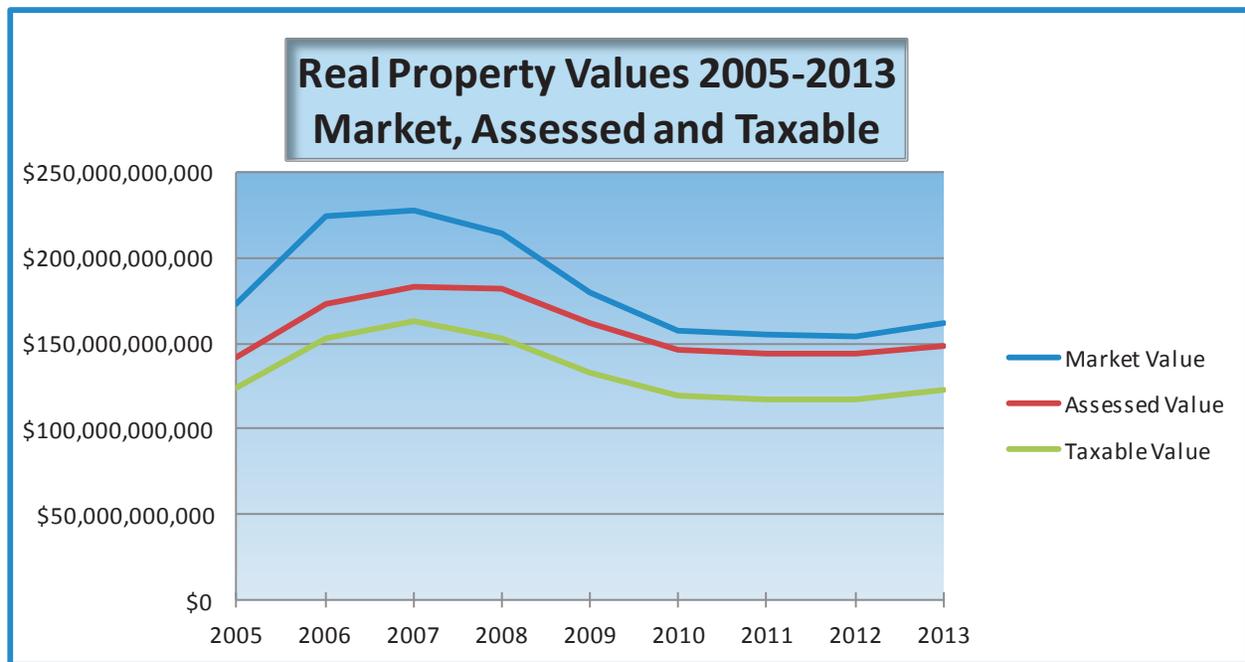
*Chief Deputy Property Appraiser Dorothy Jacks, AAS, CFE, and Assistant Property Appraiser Tom Barnhart, MAI, SRA, CFE, meet regularly with Property Appraiser Gary Nikolits to implement policy and ensure a fair and equitable tax roll.*



## 2014 GOALS

- ▶ Prepare the 2014 Tax Roll without defect for the 22nd consecutive year.
- ▶ Enhance our website, [pbcgov.com/PAPA](http://pbcgov.com/PAPA), with new links to municipal property data.
- ▶ Continue to provide excellent public service in our five Service Centers

# Property Breakdown



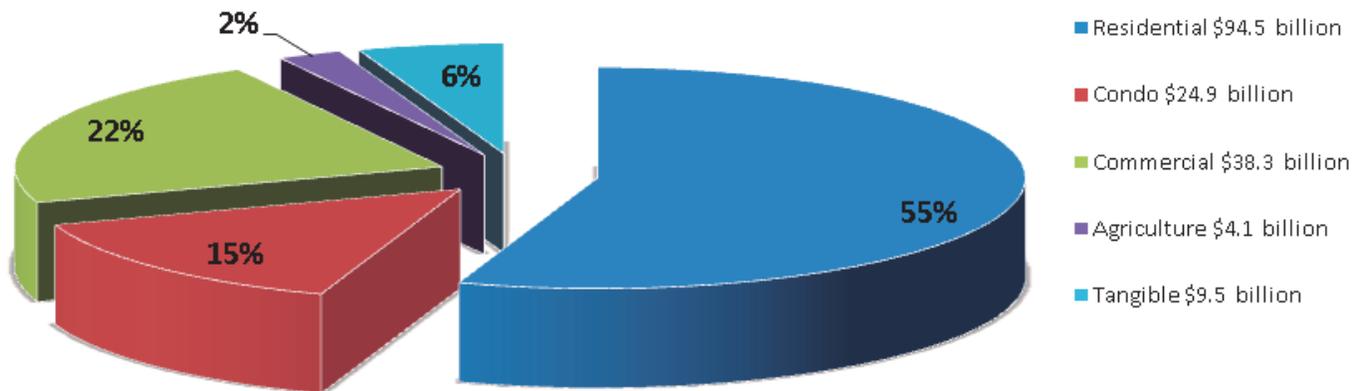
Tax Year	Market Value	Percentage Change	Assessed Value	Percentage Change	Taxable Value	Percentage Change
2005	\$172,998,067,874		\$141,349,480,800		\$123,590,203,461	
2006	\$224,270,741,425	29.64	\$173,471,747,698	22.73	\$153,357,762,093	24.09
2007	\$227,776,306,453	1.56	\$183,213,014,027	5.62	\$162,507,533,303	5.97
2008	\$214,359,046,468	-5.89	\$182,171,134,860	-0.57	\$152,940,046,126	-5.89
2009	\$179,889,858,323	-16.08	\$161,813,196,426	-11.18	\$133,319,986,721	-12.83
2010	\$156,942,754,115	-12.76	\$146,129,919,809	-9.69	\$118,976,614,477	-10.76
2011	\$154,601,156,502	-1.49	\$143,660,180,227	-1.69	\$117,208,842,011	-1.49
2012	\$153,643,398,661	-0.62	\$143,434,665,483	-0.16	\$117,313,273,608	0.09
2013	\$162,295,099,223	5.63	\$148,572,462,765	3.58	\$122,249,135,356	4.21

**In Palm Beach County, property market values increased 5.6 % in 2013 from 2012**

## Real Property Description

### 2013 Market Values

\$171.9 billion



#### REAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Single Family Residential, Townhouses, Zero-Lot Lines  
 Mobile Homes  
 Miscellaneous Residential  
 Vacant Residential  
**Total Residential Properties**

#### MARKET VALUE

\$91,649,323,151  
 \$133,282,149  
 \$629,027,901  
 \$2,514,169,905  
**\$94,925,803,106**

#### TAXABLE VALUE

\$70,917,571,173  
 \$91,835,556  
 \$456,297,323  
 \$2,299,389,401  
**\$73,765,093,453**

Condominiums

Cooperatives

**Total Condominium Properties**

\$24,119,484,654

\$771,103,603

**\$24,890,588,257**

\$20,001,124,323

\$623,823,757

**\$20,624,948,080**

Commercial

Multi-Family

Institutional/Governmental/Other

Industrial

**Total Commercial Type Properties**

\$17,074,925,340

\$5,023,531,064

\$11,785,463,347

\$4,465,364,219

**\$38,349,283,970**

\$16,414,911,740

\$4,574,860,226

\$1,417,807,180

\$4,361,728,739

**\$26,769,307,885**

**Total Agricultural Properties**

**\$4,129,423,890**

**\$1,089,785,938**

**Total Tangible Properties**

**\$9,477,302,398**

**\$7,844,036,930**

**Centrally Assessed**

**\$111,666,592**

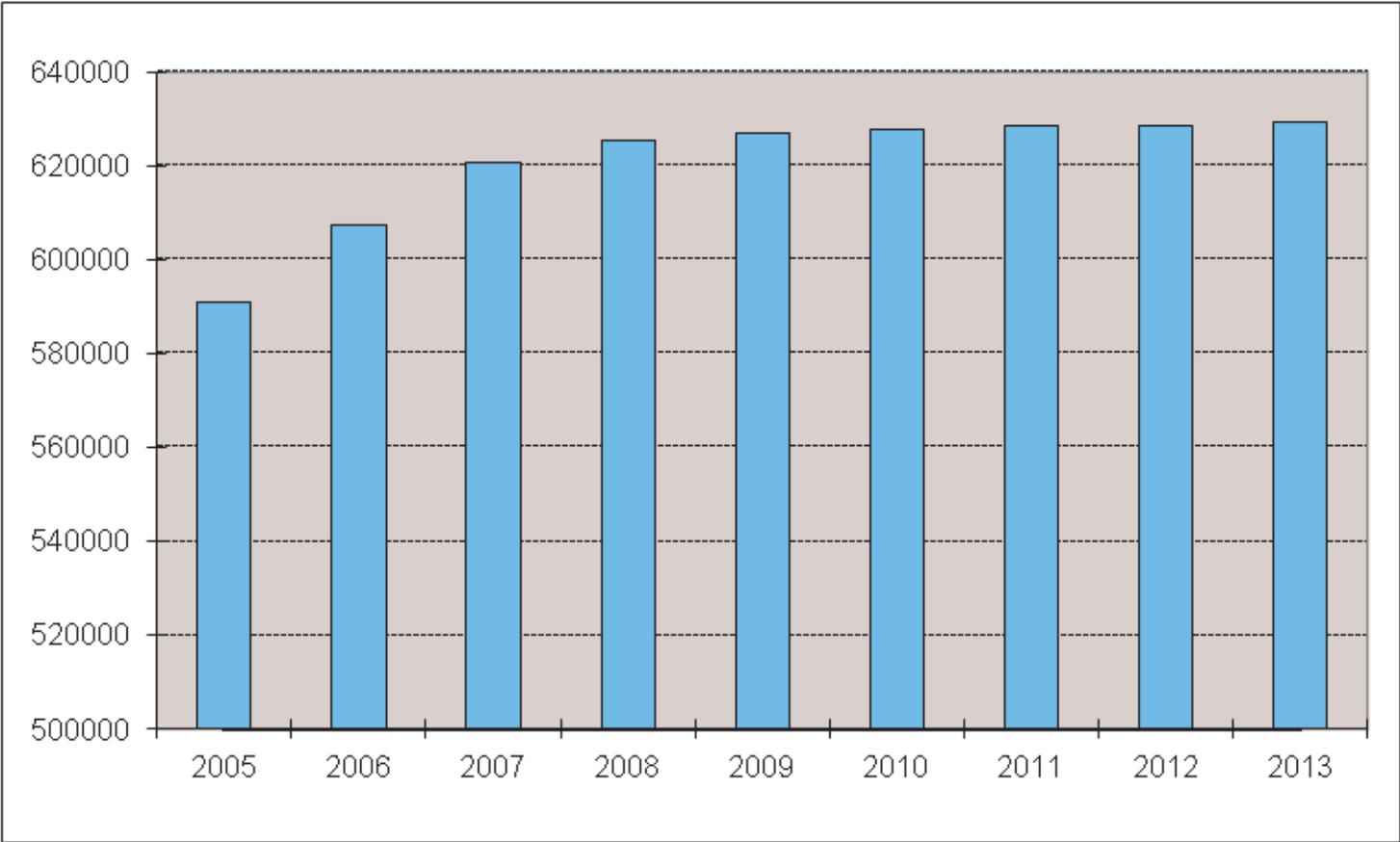
**\$108,009,142**

**Total Value**

**\$171,884,068,213**

**\$130,201,181,428**

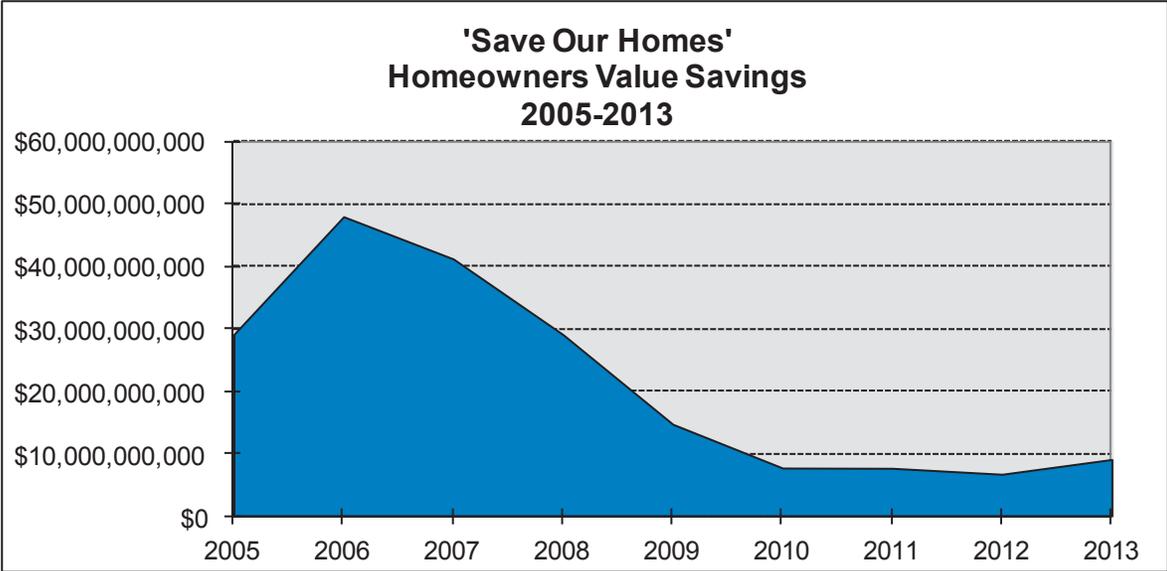
# Palm Beach County Real Property Parcel Count 2005-2013



From 2005 to 2007, the number of new parcels increased by nearly 5%. Since 2007, the number of new parcels grew by just over 1.4%.

Year	Total Parcels
2005	591,103
2006	607,533
2007	620,672
2008	625,448
2009	626,918
2010	627,790
2011	628,456
2012	628,754
2013	629,345

# Save Our Homes

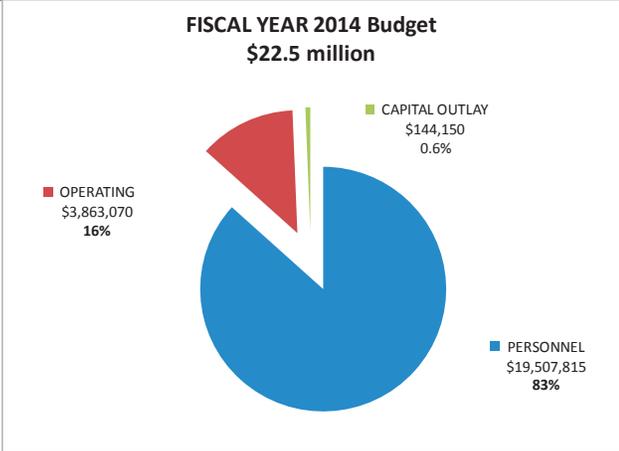


The difference between Market and Assessed value is the value of a homesteaded property that is not subject to taxation as a result of the Save Our Homes assessment cap. Since Jan. 1, 2006, the downturn in the market has eroded the SOH savings by nearly 81%.

Year	Value not subject to taxation
2005	\$29,014,000,000
2006	\$47,834,000,000
2007	\$41,074,000,000
2008	\$28,970,000,000
2009	\$14,645,000,000
2010	\$7,650,000,000
2011	\$7,609,000,000
2012	\$6,656,000,000
2013	\$9,023,000,000

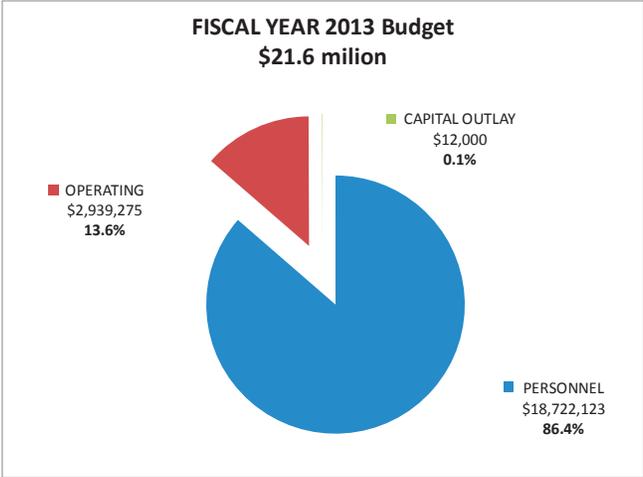
In 2013 there were 330,249 residential properties with a Homestead Exemption.

In response to economic conditions, the Property Appraiser reduced staff and delayed certain operating expenses, which allowed the Property Appraiser to return a budget savings of \$1.5 million.



**BUDGET YEAR 2014**  
Oct. 1,2013-Sept. 30, 2014

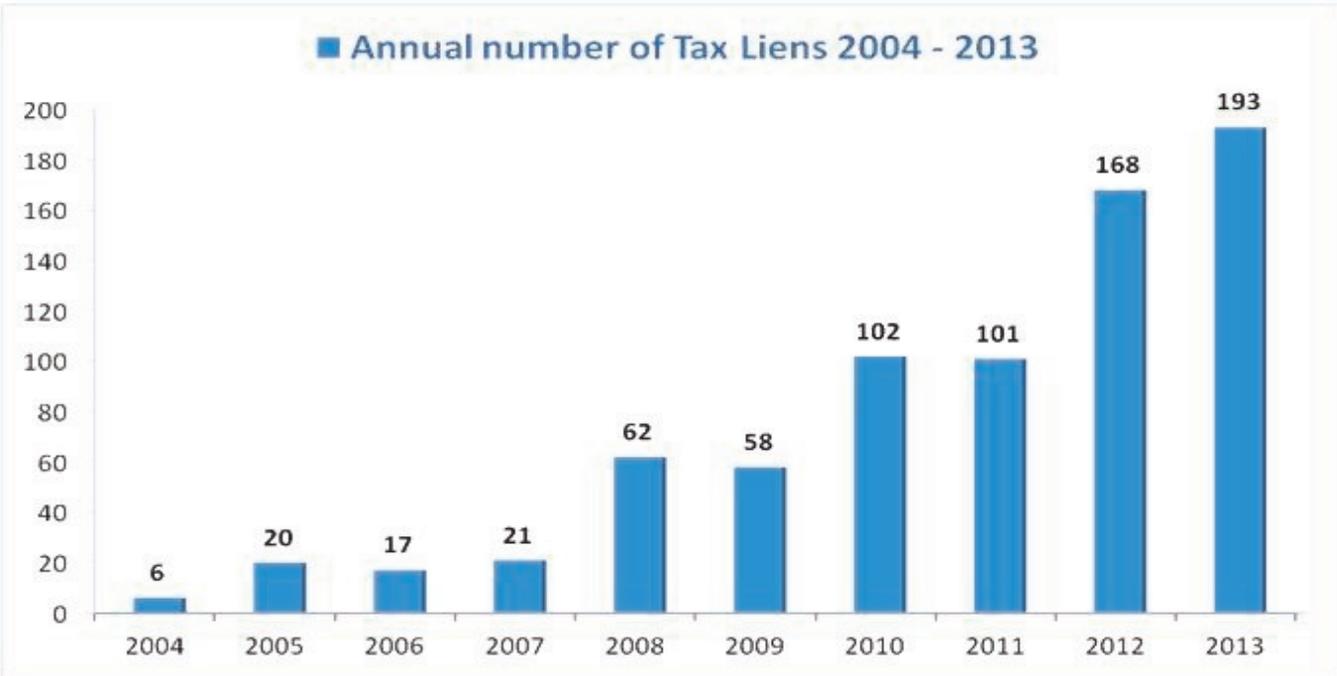
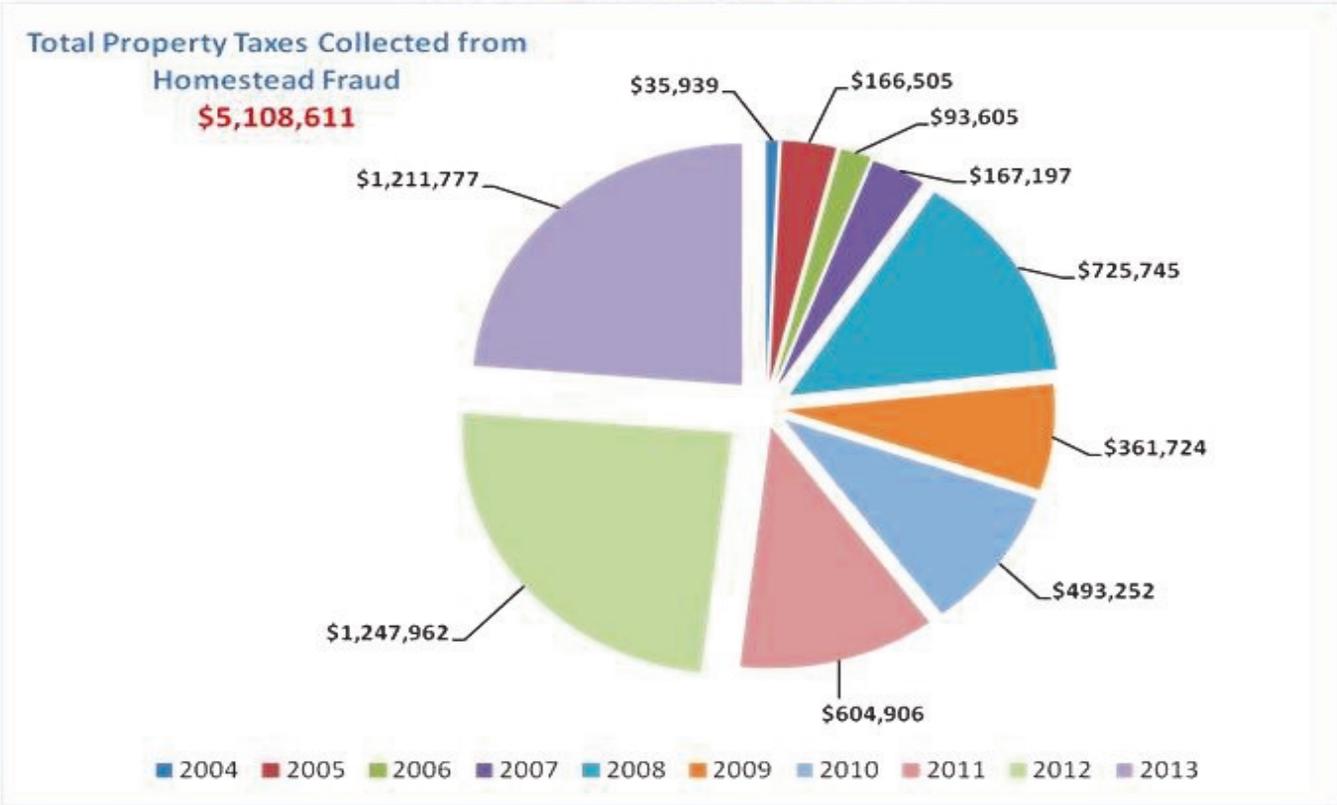
Total Budget	\$22,515,035
Personnel	\$19,507,815
Operating	\$ 2,863,070
Capital Outlay	\$ 144,150



**BUDGET YEAR 2013**  
Oct. 1,2012-Sept. 30, 2013

Total Budget	\$21,673,398
Actual Amount Spent	\$10,228,945
Excess Fees	\$ 1,508,796

### Exemption Services Tax Lien Overview 2004 - 2013





# Frequently Asked Questions

## What are the duties of the Property Appraiser?

Florida's Constitution mandates that all property must be assessed at its market value as of January 1 of each year. Market value is what a property would sell for in an open and competitive market.

Your Property Appraiser **Gary R. Nikolits** has a legal duty to annually produce a "fair and equitable" tax roll and administer various property tax savings programs, the most common of which is Florida's Homestead Exemption.

The Property Appraiser also is charged with the responsibility of maintaining updated ownership records, including maps, for every property in Palm Beach County.

## How is property appraised?

Each property in Palm Beach County is inspected by a deputy appraiser at least once every five years. Between inspections, a property's value is adjusted annually to reflect recent sales activity in the neighborhood. By Florida law, only sales transactions that occurred during the previous year can be used to establish values as of January 1 of the current year.

There are three approaches used to appraise property:

- ▶ The **cost approach** estimates the cost to reproduce the building in its current condition.
- ▶ The **sales comparison approach** compares sales of similar properties and adjusts for any differences.
- ▶ The **income approach** capitalizes a commercial property's income stream to estimate its value.

Each of these three approaches is considered when property is valued.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the 3% Cap?

By Florida's Constitution, the 3% cap, also known as *Save Our Homes*, limits the annual increase in the assessed value of a qualified Homestead property to the lesser of 3% or the percentage change in the prior year's National Consumer Price Index (CPI). The 2013 cap was 1.7%. The cap for 2014 is 1.5%. If the assessed value of a homesteaded property in any given year is less than its market value, Florida law requires the Property Appraiser to increase the assessed value by the lesser of 3% or the percentage change in the prior year's CPI, even when the property's market value decreases.

## What is Portability?

Portability relates to Florida's Save Our Homes 3% cap on a homestead property's assessed value. With the Portability benefit, you can transfer up to \$500,000 of your actual assessment cap savings to your new property. Keep in mind Portability applies only to homesteaded property. Of the 330,249 residential properties that qualified for homestead exemption in 2013, only 1,704 had an SOH benefit. In 2013, our office approved 3,639 applications for portability.

## How do I qualify for Homestead Exemption?

A residential property may be eligible for Florida's standard \$25,000 Homestead Exemption tax benefit under certain circumstances, including:

- ▶ You must be a permanent Florida resident and you must own the residence on January 1 of the qualifying year.
- ▶ You may apply at any time throughout the year, but the deadline to apply for all **new** exemptions is March 1 of the qualifying year.
- ▶ You may file online for Homestead Exemption by visiting our website: [pbcgov.com/PAPA](http://pbcgov.com/PAPA). You may also apply in person at any of our five convenient Service Centers.
- ▶ An additional Homestead Exemption benefit up to \$25,000 relates only to properties with an assessed value greater than \$50,000. The additional exemption applies to all tax levies except school districts.
- ▶ For the convenience of taxpayers, Property Appraiser Gary Nikolits has elected to automatically renew **existing** Homestead exemptions on January 1 each year.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## How is farm land appraised?

Agricultural Classification is given to properties that qualify as a bona fide commercial agricultural use of the land. The taxable value of the land is based on income earned from the rental of the land for agricultural purposes or from the commercial sale of produce that is grown or livestock that is raised on the land. Deputy appraisers analyze soil quality, location characteristics, rent, production, income and expenses that are typical of each agricultural category to determine a market-supported value per acre. Taxable value of the land is determined by multiplying the rate by the number of acres and adding the value of the improvements. To qualify for Agricultural Classification, property owners must file an application between January 1 and March 1. The Property Appraiser’s Office may grant or deny an Agricultural Classification.

In 2013, Palm Beach County had 461,000 farmland acres. The main crops were:

- 400,000 acres--Sugar cane
- 27,000 acres -- Row crops, including sweet corn, tomatoes and lettuce
- 20,000 acres -- Cattle and horse ranches and pastureland for dairy and livestock
- 6,500 acres – Nurseries
- 1,618 acres -- Timber farms
- 630 acres -- Citrus groves, including orange and grapefruit
- 30 acres -- Peach groves

Palm Beach County continues to be Florida’s largest producer of agricultural products.

## Is Personal Property taxed in Florida?

Household goods are not taxed. In business, tangible personal property is assessed annually at fair market value. Tangible personal property includes furniture, fixtures, machinery, equipment, appliances, tools, signs, supplies and leased equipment. The first \$25,000 in value is exempt from taxation. An initial Tangible Personal Property Return must be filed to claim this exemption. In 2013, there were 57,380 tangible personal property accounts in Palm Beach County, with a total value of \$9.6 billion.

2013 Top 10 Personal Property Accounts	
Company	Taxable Value
Florida Power & Light*	\$3,705 billion
AT&T Florida *	\$ 278 million
Comcast Cable*	\$ 164 million
Publix Super Markets*	\$ 77 million
United Technologies	\$ 66 million
Sugar Cane Growers Co-Op	\$ 65 million
Verizon Wireless*	\$ 59 million
Florida Public Utilities*	\$ 52 million
Florida Gas Transmission*	\$ 51 million
Gulfstream Natural Gas*	\$ 46 million

\*Multiple locations



# By the Numbers

Property owners often ask us how the Property Appraiser's Office keeps track of all that land in Palm Beach County. Geographically, Palm Beach County is Florida's largest county, at 52 miles east to west and 44 miles north to south. That's a lot of land and its diversity is unmatched anywhere in the state. The properties range from waterfront estates along our eastern shores, to farm and ranch lands out west.



We depend on our Geographical Information System (GIS), to help our deputy appraisers keep track of the parcels, which numbered 629, 345 in 2013.

Fifteen mapping technicians work in GIS. More than half have earned the professional Cadastral Mapping Specialist (CMS) designation awarded by the International Association of Assessing Officers. Highly specialized, the mapping technicians work on old and new parcels to delineate new plats and

buildings, such as condominiums.

In 2013, GIS's Ownership Services processed 78,535 deeds, a 15 percent increase over 2012's 68,079 deeds. The staff is skilled at keeping track of property deeds and updating names and addresses.

You can view an aerial photo of any parcel of land in the county on our award-winning website: [pbcgov.com/PAPA](http://pbcgov.com/PAPA). When you have selected the property record you wish to view, simply click "View Map." Additional information or copies of more specialized mapping data can be ordered at any of our Service Centers.

## Property Appraiser Public Access (PAPA)

Detailed property records are available on our award-winning interactive website: [pbcgov.com/PAPA](http://pbcgov.com/PAPA).





The Property Appraiser's Office is committed to serving our community and we proudly display appreciation plaques presented to us for our community service. Our employees give their time and money to important local events and every year we participate in four major health-care walks. In April 2013, we raised **\$3,658** for the March of Dimes. In September 2013, we raised **\$4,340** for the Sickle Cell Foundation. In October 2013, we raised **\$4,627** for the American Heart Association and **\$4,080** for the American Cancer Society.



**In April 2013**, we presented five \$1,000 scholarships to college-bound high school seniors in our community. Since starting the program in 1993, the Property Appraiser's Office has awarded \$119,000 in college scholarships. The annual program is funded by voluntary employee contributions for Casual Dress Fridays.

**In November 2013**, we held our 14th annual Holiday Food Drive. Our employees brought in nearly 9,000 pounds of canned food, which we donated to a local community center that operates a soup kitchen and food pantry.



# Services Directory

Telephone Guide - All Area Code 561

## Administration

<b>Property Appraiser Gary R. Nikolits, CFA</b>	<b>355-2861</b>
Receptionist	355-3230
Human Resources	355-2850
Tax Roll Coordinator	355-2681
Media Relations	355-3512
Legal Services	355-3668
Taxpayer Advocate	355-4021
Community Outreach	355-4021

## Division of Appraisal Services

Residential Appraisals	
Central County	355-2883
South County	276-1201
North County	624-6795
Mid-West County & West County	784-1210
Agricultural Appraisals	355-2781
Commercial Appraisals	355-3988
Condominium Appraisals	355-2690
Personal Property Appraisals	355-2896

## Division of Taxpayer Services

### Exemption Services

Main Office, West Palm Beach	355-2866
South County Service Center, Delray Beach	276-1250
North County Service Center, Palm Beach Gardens	624-6521
Mid-West County Service Center, Royal Palm Beach	784-1220
West County Service Center, Belle Glade	996-4890
Institutional Exemptions	355-4523

### Public Records Services

Mapping Counter	355-2881
Property Appraiser Records	355-2881

# at Your Service

We have five conveniently located Service Centers open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Each is fully staffed and many of our employees are bilingual. All our Service Centers are wheel-chair accessible and we provide computers at each office for the public's use to research property records. Need directions? Go to our award-winning website, [pbcgov.com/PAPA](http://pbcgov.com/PAPA)



**West Palm Beach Service Center**  
301 N. Olive Ave., 1st Floor  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
**(561) 355-3230**  
**Pay to Park**



**South County Service Center**  
14925 Cumberland Drive  
Delray Beach, FL 33446  
**(561) 276-1250**  
**Free Parking**

**North County Service Center**  
3188 PGA Blvd., 2nd Floor  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  
**(561) 624-6521**  
**Free Parking**



**Mid-West County Service Center**  
200 Civic Center Way  
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411  
**(561) 784-1220**  
**Free Parking**



**West County Service Center**  
2976 State Road 15  
Belle Glade, FL 33430  
**(561) 996-4890**  
**Free Parking**



We are proud that 75% of our full-time employees have earned the professional Certified Florida Evaluator (CFE) designation, awarded by the Florida Department of Revenue. In addition, many staff members hold other professional designations, making the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser's Office the most professionally staffed appraiser's office in the state.

# Exemption Services We Are Here To Help



**Downtown Service Center West Palm Beach**



◀ **South County Service Center  
Delray Beach**



**West County Service Center  
Belle Glade**



**North County Service Center  
Palm Beach Gardens**

**Mid-West County Service Center ▶  
Royal Palm Beach**

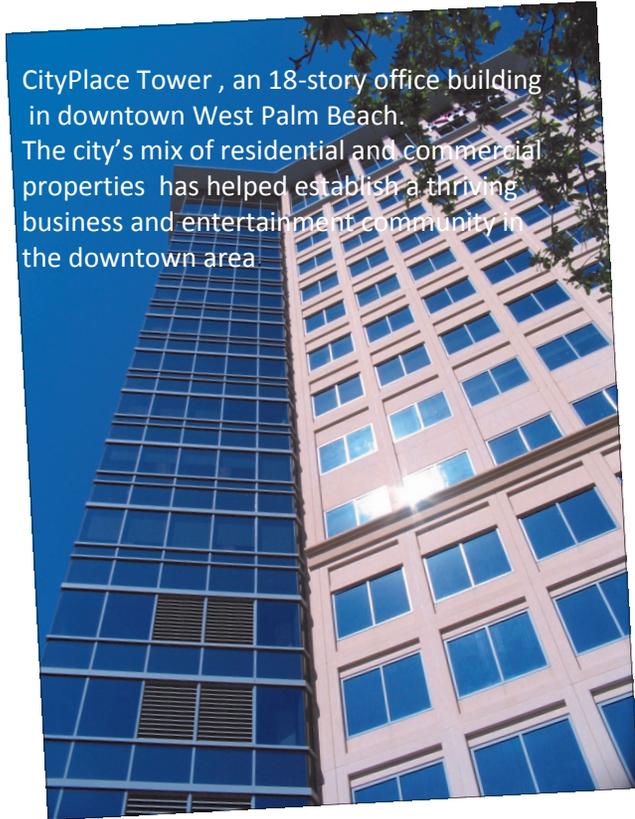


We are proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer and a drug-free workplace

## PALM BEACH COUNTY'S DIVERSE REAL ESTATE

The county covers 2,200 square miles, almost all experiencing explosive growth. Our Appraisal Services Division includes 89 deputy appraisers who are out in the field every day checking new and existing residential, commercial and agricultural properties.

CityPlace Tower , an 18-story office building in downtown West Palm Beach. The city's mix of residential and commercial properties has helped establish a thriving business and entertainment community in the downtown area



Sugar cane field in Belle Glade ▼

In 2013, 393,545 acres were devoted to sugar cane, which continues to be the county's largest crop. The acreage devoted to sugar cane in 2013 was a 1.4 percent increase over 2012's 387,972 acreage.



This single family home ▼ is in Central Palm Beach County. Built in 1939, the small house is an example of West Palm Beach's residential character in the 1930s and '40s.



This oceanfront condominium ▲ in Boca Raton is typical of South County's Florida-style architecture.