

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

I know most of you recently voted for the amendment to increase the allowance for property tax exemption, and so did I. It passed by a considerable margin. So, that is a good thing.

I want to warn my readers not to be fooled by this ploy to make it look like the State Legislature is cutting your taxes. They are not. What they are doing is making it look like that. But THEIR property tax system is the culprit of your ever-increasing taxes and, accordingly, your property values. The appraisal districts are THEIR program and THEIR creation. THEIR system will cause this lowering of taxable value on your homestead to increase the “no new tax rate,” or effective tax rate, diluting your new deduction. THEIR system is so flawed that it will take drastic measures to fix it, and I have found no legislators with the gumption to do so. Remember that property tax and its onerous rules belong only to THEM—your state legislature. The only analogy I can think of is to imagine someone (the State) withholding water from us and making us very thirsty, and then they give us a drink and say, “Look, see how nice we are.” It is disingenuous. The State and only the State is your property tax problem creator.

I do wish to announce some good news in that area. When we had a modest increase in valuation for 2020, I was hopeful that we were coming out of the valuation freefall that has been jacking up all our citizens’ property taxes. Then we went down in 2021, which bumfuzzled and frustrated me. But then, in 2021, our valuations went down by almost \$300 million, for goodness sake. This created a complex problem for us in the budget to fight against the need to raise taxes because of the related (state-governed) increase in the “no new tax rate.” We made it past that. The good news I am talking about is that for 2022 our valuations are up to \$902 million. This should mean a tax reduction. I cannot say how much until we have the final numbers and begin our budget calculations. I am pleased that we are moving in the right direction.

Thank you for listening, and God bless us all.