

Public Relations Plan

Wheeler Central Appraisal District

The purpose of the Wheeler Central Appraisal District is to provide and maintain equity as we discover, appraise and assess all taxable value within the jurisdictions served by the appraisal district. A significant element of this mission is to establish and maintain effective public relations by implementing a pro-active communications program. The program includes reaching out to property owners, civic and professional organizations, lending institutions, developers, attorneys, real estate appraisers and brokers, governmental agencies and policy makers, tax representatives and especially, the media. The success of this program is best guaranteed by working in partnership with the news media.

Wheeler CAD's public relations plan and policies are driven by the *IAAO's Standard on Public Relations*. The International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) is the internationally recognized leader and preeminent source for innovation, education, and research in property tax policy, according to its web site <http://www.iaao.org>.

Wheeler CAD has implemented and maintains a number of tools to create a resourceful relationship with the public. These include:

- Customer Service - The district will maintain customer service with trained staff to answer general inquiries and assist taxpayers who visit the appraisal district office. The appraisal district staff will also assist taxpayers via phone and email. If an unhappy taxpayer appears in the office, we will calmly ask them what the problem is, sit with them to go over the situation, find the solution if possible. If the office staff is unable to please the unhappy taxpayer, the chief appraiser will intervene and take control of the situation.
- Public Interest Materials – The district shall create letters, brochures, flyers handouts and other materials to provide general information to the public describing the function of the district's policy and procedures and other matters of interest to the public.
- Press Releases – The Chief Appraiser is responsible for press releases with the news media. The district utilizes the information packet published by the Comptroller Property Tax Assistance Division to release all mandatory news notices for print media. Recommendations from the packet are also developed into useful public information.
- Speaking Engagements and Public Outreach Meetings – The district will work in conjunction with government agencies to provide information to constituents on matters related to property tax policy. This may include attending hearings, meetings or other events scheduled by the government body. This district will provide interviews and promotional material on public access stations operated by government agencies. The district will also participate in meetings with neighborhood associations, professionals and

other organizations. The employees who are at the speaking engagements or public meetings must wear business attire.

- Internet – Wheeler CAD recognizes the internet as a growing and effective way of informing the residents, businesses, taxing units and other customers of the appraisal district. The website can help the appraisal district overcome misconceptions and prejudices and at the same time, educate the public on the district's records, policies, services and procedures. The website is www.wheelercad.org. The site also offers several links to assist tax payers and property owners as well all of the public. One link that is currently being created is the CAD's interactive GIS Map. This project is currently 95% complete, but it still allows public access.
- Identification- The appraisal district staff must have a name tag on their desk visible to the public. If an appraiser is out in the field, a magnet on the car with the Appraisal district information must be visible on the car.
- Communication- The Appraisal districts goals is to provide as much information as possible to the public, to explain any situation that the public has a question on, and if we are unable to answer that question, we will reach out to whomever can help. Our goal is to have the public knowledgeable about what is going on in the Appraisal district and with the reappraisals in the county.
- Records Retention – Our records retention policy is located in the office and is followed up every year.

The Wheeler CAD has specific tasks that are performed at certain times during the year. The following timeline is flexible in order to leave room for improvement and unexpected occurrences:

- January-December – The chief appraiser shall attend Chapter meetings, commissioner's court, city council, school board other governmental body and special district meetings and meetings of other constituent groups as invited, to provide information and testimony on matters related to property tax policy.
- January – Review and development of public information on brochures and other materials related to property exemptions, renditions and special appraisal. Care and attention will be paid to updates for internal procedural changes and/or changes prompted by legal opinion and/or new legislation. Publish notice in local newspapers and the electronic media. Publish notice in local newspaper about requirements and availability of applications, renditions and agricultural appraisals.
- February – March – The district shall provide Open Meeting and Public Information Training for Board of Directors. Training may include videos and on-line courses from Attorney General's Office or the Property Tax Division of the State Comptroller's Office. The board is reminded each year with a specific item on an agenda. Training is also utilized thru chapter meetings. The appraisal staff typically receives open meetings training through continuing education courses North Plains Chapter TAAO Meetings. .
- March-April – Review and development of public information materials related to appraisal procedures, notices and protest and evidence production.

Care and attention will be paid to updates for internal procedural changes and/or changes prompted by legal opinion and/or new legislation.

- April-May – Publish notice in local newspaper about requirements and availability of applications for deferral, homestead exemptions, renditions and agricultural appraisals. Submit to all taxing entities preliminary estimated values. Prepare press release for notices of appraised values and protest process. Publish notice in local newspaper about taxpayer protest and procedures.
- June-July – The chief shall provide updates and final certification on values for the upcoming tax year.
- July –August – During strategic planning sessions-evaluations, review and planning/implementation of customer service and communication recommendations.
- September – Provide public notice of hearings for reappraisal plan and annual budget.
- October – Coordinate staff meetings to review answering questions that arise annually due to tax bill mailing.
- November-December – Review, update and development of website content, specifically sections explaining appraisal district policy and procedures, tax information, forms district statistics, and property information.

The Chief Appraiser shall establish a communication review process to review and evaluate organizations wide communication efforts and implement improvements indicated. The review process can include review of the WCAD policy manual and procedures. As customer surveys are implemented on WCAD's website, the appraisal staff will utilize suggestions and requests from the assessments.

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