



Mindy Schaefer

Union County Assessor
300 N Pine Street Suite #8
Creston, IA 50801
641-782-1735

mschaefer@unioncountyiowa.gov

Joel Lamb
Chief Deputy Assessor

Joni Cook
Assistant to Assessor

Date: March 20, 2023
To: Union County Property Owners
From: Mindy Schaefer, Union County Assessor
Re: 2024 Residential Reappraisal Project

Union County Assessor, Mindy Schaefer, is announcing the reappraisal of all Residential and Ag Dwelling properties in Union County began July 2022. Data Collectors finished in all the cities in Union County. In the rural areas, they are finishing in Lincoln, New Hope, Douglas, and Dodge Townships. Later this week, they will be starting in Union Township. The county-wide reappraisal process will continue through the end of 2023. The Union County Conference Board approved this reappraisal in 2020 and authorized our office to contract with Vanguard Appraisal, Inc of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The last door-to-door reappraisal of residential property in Union County was done in the 1980's. **The Iowa Department of Revenue recommends having a complete revaluation every 10 years.**

Periodic inspections and reappraisals are necessary to update information and adjust for market conditions which affect property values. Some properties physically deteriorate faster than others and many have had improvements made. Also, properties in different areas of the county will differ in value due to economic factors. Please keep in mind that the purpose of a reappraisal is not to increase assessed value but to establish equitable assessments that represent the market value of each specific parcel.

Beginning the first week of July 2022 and continuing through 2023, data collectors from Vanguard Appraisals, Inc will begin the process of visiting each property in Union County to collect both exterior and interior information. Each Vanguard employee has undergone a full background check and will have a photo ID signed by the Union County Assessor identifying them as such. All law enforcement agencies will be aware of Vanguard employees' names, auto license numbers, and activities within Union County. Data collectors' names and photos can be found in the Assessor's section of Union County's website <https://unioncountyiowa.gov/departments/assessor/>.

When visiting your property, inspectors will review/collect exterior information such as measurements, type of construction, age of structure(s) and physical condition as well as interior condition and type/amount of finish. A complete sales analysis, a study of local construction costs, and economic conditions will also be used as factors to determine a fair market value for each property. **No estimate of value will be given at the time of inspection.** Completion of this project is expected to be early 2024. Notices of estimated market value will be sent near that time along with options for appeal should you feel that the value is either not equitable or more than the market value. **New assessed values will be effective January 1, 2024 for taxes payable Fall 2025/Spring 2026.**

With the volume of properties, it is not feasible to know when we will be at a specific property. If an owner is not present, an external review will be done and a door hanger will be left after the second attempt letting you know how you can assist with listing the interior of your property. Property owners are encouraged to cooperate with data collectors by either answering questions they may have or allowing an interior inspection of the property. This will help to arrive at a fair, equitable, and correct assessment of your property. We understand this could cause privacy concerns for some. Before you decline aiding with this project, please know that new market values will be estimated for every home, regardless of owner participation. Refused assistance will not stop a new value from being estimated, only cause it to be less precise. Additionally, accurate, up to date information minimizes the chances an appeal will be needed after new assessed values are established. If your property has tenants, please make them aware of this project and communicate with them the importance of cooperating with the data collectors.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the reappraisal project, please contact the Union County Assessor's Office at the number or email address shown above or visit the Assessor page on the Union County website to find additional information about the Assessor Office and the assessment process: <https://unioncountyiowa.gov/departments/assessor/>.

We thank you for your cooperation as we begin this reappraisal project.

Sincerely,

Mindy Schaefer
Union County Assessor

PRESS RELEASE

Union County Assessor, Mindy Schaefer, is announcing that door-to-door inspections of all residential properties in Union County started at the beginning of July 2022 and will continue through December 2023. For photos of the data collectors, please go to <https://unioncountyiowa.gov/departments/assessor/>. Vehicle information has been given to local law enforcement and each data collector has an ID signed by the Assessor.

What to expect when data collectors are in your neighborhood.

Data collectors will take photos of the front of each house in the neighborhood. This will typically be done from the road or right-of-way. They will knock on the door in an attempt to make contact with the occupants of the home. Then measure the exterior of the dwelling and any other buildings on the parcel the first time they visit the property. If there is no contact, a second attempt will be made then a yellow door tag will be left if no one is home on the second attempt. Data collectors will ask to inspect the inside of the home if an adult occupant is at home.

For what purpose do data collectors need to see the inside of the home.

Property values are required by Iowa Code 441.21 to be at market value. To establish market value of a property, data collectors need to look at a number of items including the quality of construction and the condition of the home. A more accurate condition can be established by viewing the interior. There are times when the outside of the home may not match the condition inside. The type of finish in the kitchen and bathrooms, for example, help determine the quality of the construction. The amount and to what extent of basement finish also goes to market value. There are indicators inside the home that point to the condition of the foundation, which helps determine the overall condition of the home. These items cannot be determined by viewing just the exterior of the house.

Are property owners required to allow an interior inspection of the home.

No; however, property owners are encouraged to cooperate by allowing a complete inspection of their property and/or providing accurate information so that a fair and equitable assessment may be determined for each property. We understand this could cause privacy concerns for some. Before you decline aiding with this project, please know that new market values will be estimated for every home, regardless of owner participation. Refused assistance will not stop a new value from being estimated, only cause it to be less precise.

The purpose of this Residential Reappraisal.

The Iowa Department of Revenue recommends having a complete reappraisal every 10 years. The last reappraisal for Union County residential properties was in the 1980s. The purpose of a reappraisal is to establish fair and equitable assessments that represent the market value of each specific parcel through the collection of data for each specific parcel and sales analysis, a study of local construction costs, and economic conditions for our local jurisdiction. It is not to increase the assessed value of properties or the taxes property owners pay.

Where to go for information or questions.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the reappraisal project, please contact the Union County Assessor's Office at 641-782-1735 or send an email to mschaefer@unioncountyiowa.gov. Additional information can be found on the Union County Assessor's website: <https://unioncountyiowa.gov/departments/assessor/>. We thank you for your cooperation as we continue through this reappraisal project.