

# City and Town

Navjeet K. Bal, Commissioner • Robert G. Nunes, Deputy Commissioner & Director of Municipal Affairs



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## The Good Old Days

Scott Santangelo, Bureau of Local Assessment

In the fast-paced life most people now live in, you sometimes find yourself thinking back not so long ago when roadways were not so congested, when air travel was actually enjoyable, or perhaps when you could speak to a real customer service person instead of hearing a recorded message. But before you get too nostalgic and move to a rural outpost in Montana, you might want to consider how the "Good Old Days" might not have always been so good. How did people survive before cell phones, microwave ovens or the internet? A bigger question, or at least more suitable for this discussion, is how property taxes could annually and reliably reflect full and fair cash value for every parcel in every community in the entire commonwealth? Especially now, most people are painfully aware how dramatically the real estate market can fluctuate in various uses of properties, in different locations, in different price levels and in relatively small increments of time. The real estate market is unlike all other markets. There is a finite amount of land; nobody is going to create more of it. Supply cannot quickly meet demand. Even the fastest construction processes take a good deal of time to complete. People need a relatively large amount of purchasing power to acquire property, which is the center of much controversy nowadays. Yet with all these variables to consider, the Bureau of Local Assessment ensures all property in the commonwealth reflects full and fair cash value annually. Even more importance is placed on this responsibility considering that the property tax levy is the largest source of revenue

most communities have available, usually accounting for 50 percent of their revenue. This daunting task of getting to full and fair cash value did not occur immediately or without its share of evolutionary growing pains.

**No one likes taxes but they expect them to be fair.**

The assessment standard of fair cash value dates back to the Colonial era, with annual tax acts referring to "just" valuation. The term "fair cash valuation" was first codified into Massachusetts tax statutes in the early 1800's. Over the years, there was a long history of non-compliance with the fair cash value standard. Most communities were unwilling or unable to perform systematic property revaluations. As time went on, assessments in some communities were deliberately manipulated to reduce or maintain the share of taxes paid by selected groups, i.e. to benefit residential over business taxpayers, older over new residential taxpayers or farms and open space over other properties to preserve the character of a rural community. This type of practice was doomed for failure. No one likes taxes but they expect them to be fair.

In 1961, commercial taxpayers in the City of Springfield were able to prove that their properties were deliberately over assessed relative to other properties, prompting the state Supreme Ju-

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Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.





**DLS  
Commentary**

The Municipal Affairs Coordinating Cabinet is hitting the road again this summer and fall. These sessions provide an invaluable opportunity

for local and state officials to share ideas, to raise issues and to problem solve, and to keep open the lines of communication between local government and the administration of Governor Deval Patrick and Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, who typically chairs the meetings.

While precise locations are not yet nailed down, the cabinet will appear in the Town of Harwich on July 9 in the Community Center from 10:30 to 12:00 noon; in the Town of Plymouth's Town Hall from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. on July 17 with special guest Senate President Therese Murray, and in Greenfield on July 23. We will have fall dates from September through the end of November coming shortly.

Additionally, in July the Municipal Cabinet website will be released as part of [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

These cabinet meetings give local appointed and elected officials the chance to meet and discuss issues with some of the top policy makers in the Executive Office for Administration and Finance in the areas of technology, purchasing, civil service, human resources, health insurance and capital asset management. Representatives from other branches of state government may attend some of the sessions as well.

Bring your questions, your comments and your ideas.

**Robert G. Nunes  
Deputy Commissioner &  
Director of Municipal Affairs**

## DLS' 2009 New Officials Finance Forum

Seventy some newly elected officials heard from Department of Revenue Commissioner Navjeet K. Bal, Deputy Commissioner for Local Services Robert Nunes and Administration and Finance Director of Local Policy Pam Kocher, in addition to presentations from DLS staff on the basics of municipal finance. All spoke to the importance of strengthening the partnership between the commonwealth's 351 cities and towns and state government with special attention paid to current fiscal trends.

Presentations and hands-on exercises followed the opening speakers. Daniel Murphy, Tax Counsel for the Bureau of Municipal Finance Law kicked these off by outlining the various roles played local officials in municipal finance; Joe Markarian, supervisor for the Technical Assistance Section, strongly recommended annual audits in his presentation on the budget process and sources

for local revenue; Kathleen Colleary, Chief of the Bureau of Municipal Finance Law, explained the state's Proposition 2½ law; Jim Paquette, program analyst for the Bureau of Local Assessment, spoke on the role of new growth and property certification; Anthony Rassias, deputy director of the Bureau of Local Accounts, sparked the afternoon discussion with candy while outlining the process for setting the tax rate; and F. Ellis Fitzpatrick, an accounting and audit policy analyst in the Bureau of Accounts spoke on reserves and free cash.

NOFF is held each year in **Worcester** in June. Registration begins in March. Visit our website for more information about NOFF or to read the NOFF manual "[A Guide to Financial Management for Town Officials.](#)"

More pictures from NOFF are on page 14. ■



**DLS' Kathleen Colleary, F. Ellis Fitzpatrick and Anthony Rassias were featured speakers at the New Officials Finance Forum held in June.**

## Legal

## LLC Ineligible for Real Estate Exemption

James Crowley, Esq., Bureau of Municipal Finance Law

A limited liability company (LLC) is a relatively recent form of business entity. It is an unincorporated organization which may be formed to conduct any lawful business, trade, profession, purpose or activity. As such it can hold title to real and personal property. Other legal forms of ownership include corporations, trusts and partnerships. LLCs are particularly popular due to their limited liability feature and their treatment for federal corporate income and state corporate excise tax purposes. In March, the Supreme Judicial Court ruled that LLCs cannot qualify for tax exemption as charitable organizations under M.G.L. Ch. 59 § 5 Cl. 3 since they are not corporations or charitable trusts. The decision is *CFM Buckley/North, LLC v. Board of Assessors of Greenfield, John Adams Nursing Home, LLC v. Board of Assessors of Quincy, and Longmeadow of Taunton, LLC v. Board of Assessors of Taunton*, 453 Mass. 404 (2009).

Each of the three taxpayers was the assessed owner of a nursing home for indigent elderly and infirm patients. Each was formed as a single member LLC under Delaware law with its sole member being ElderTrust of Florida, Inc. (ElderTrust), a Tennessee nonprofit corporation formed for the purpose of owning and operating elder care facilities. ElderTrust also enjoyed federal tax exempt status. Under the certificates of formation and operating agreements for the LLCs, ElderTrust had full and complete authority in the management and operation of the nursing homes. The assessors in the three communities taxed the nursing homes and each LLC filed for exemption as a charitable organization. When the three boards of assessors denied their exemption claims, the LLCs appealed to the Appellate Tax Board, which also denied the exemptions. On direct appeal, the case was heard by the Supreme Judicial Court.

Central to the taxpayers' claim was M.G.L. Ch. 59 § 5 Cl. 3, which exempts the real and personal property of a "charitable organization" defined by the statute as having been "incorporated in the Commonwealth" or being a charitable trust. As assessors are well aware, a foreign corporation formed outside of Massachusetts, if properly registered with the Secretary of State, is also eligible on constitutional grounds to receive a charitable exemption. *Mary C. Wheeler School, Inc. v. Assessors of Seekonk*,

**The court rejected the taxpayers' argument that the function of the organization and not its form should be determinative of its eligibility for a charitable exemption.**

368 Mass. 344 (1975). In this instance, however, the Supreme Judicial Court noted that the three assessed owners were not incorporated. Under M.G.L. Ch. 156C § 2(5), LLCs are defined as "unincorporated" organizations with one or more members. According to the court, exemption statutes must be strictly construed. The court rejected the taxpayers' argument that the function of the organization and not its form should be determinative of its eligibility for a charitable exemption. In the court's view, a "functional test" could not be used to supplant the Clause 3 requirement of incorporation.

The court observed that in its prior decisions the legal form of the entity was held to be essential to a valid claim for exemption. For example, in *RCN-Beco-Com, LLC v. Commissioner of Revenue*, 443 Mass. 198 (2005), the court denied

an exemption under M.G.L. Ch. 59 § 5 Cl. 16(1) to a telecommunications service provider since that statutory exemption applied only to an incorporated utility. Although Clause 16(1) pertained to utilities and banks and Clause 3 applied to charitable entities, the court stated that a term used in one provision of M.G.L. Ch. 59 § 5 should be afforded the same meaning in another provision of the same statute in the absence of an express contrary legislative directive. According to the court, the corporate status of the taxpayer is critical for exemption under both exemptions provisions.

The Supreme Judicial Court also distinguished the case at hand from *H-C Health Services, Inc. v. Assessors of South Hadley*, 42 Mass. App. 596 (1997). In the *South Hadley* case, the Appeals Court granted the taxpayer an exemption under Clause 3 even though it was organized as a for profit M.G.L. Ch. 156B business corporation (rather than as a nonprofit M.G.L. Ch. 180 corporation). Although a functional test was used to determine eligibility for a Clause 3 charitable exemption, the Appeals Court held that the taxpayer had to be incorporated, but did not have to be incorporated under a specific statute. Adhering to the holding in *H-C Health Services*, the Supreme Judicial Court held that the taxpayers had to be incorporated to receive the charitable exemption.

In their second legal argument, the LLCs claimed that they held the properties in trust for the benefit of the single member charitable corporation, ElderTrust. The Supreme Judicial Court dismissed that argument since ElderTrust did not itself own or occupy the properties as required by Clause 3.

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## Focus on Municipal Finance

# Equalized Valuation on the Move 1998 to 2008

Donna Demirai and Marilyn H. Browne, Chief of the Local Assessment Bureau

Every two years we write an article about the outcome of the most recent biennial equalized valuation study (EQV). This year we will look at the 2008 EQV study as well as what has occurred across the state over the last five studies.

### 10 Years of EQVs

Have you ever gone to an amusement park where they have mutoscopes, an old-fashioned hand-operated machine that lets you crank through to see a series of sequential photographs giving you the illusion of a moving picture? We developed a series of five maps showing percent change over the past five EQV studies (10 years) that strikingly display valuation change across the state, so much so that it immediately brought to mind the moving pic-



tures of childhood amusement parks. The wave of change across the commonwealth from the east to west is so obvious that little explanation is needed; however we will highlight some of the interesting changes that we observed over that time.

In this multiple map analysis all the EQVs reviewed were divided into approximately the same number of communities for the sake of comparison consistency. The maps validate our long held beliefs, albeit not previously documented, that value change goes in a westward direction. These maps also dispel the myth held by some that values do not change much in the western

part<sup>1</sup> of the state. Actually, values have increased an average of 115 percent in the west over the past 10 years.

From 1998 to 2000 communities with the greatest amount of change were located in eastern Massachusetts (see Map 1). The northeast section of the state, particularly Suffolk and eastern Middlesex Counties, saw large percent increases, whereas the least percent change occurred in Berkshire, Hampden and Hampshire Counties. 2000 to 2002 saw the greatest percent changes of the five EQV studies reviewed with the resort areas of the state showing significant increases on Cape Cod and the islands of Dukes and Nantucket Counties as well as in the western resort communities of Berkshire County (see Map 2). The largest increase happened in Dukes County and the smallest increase was in Franklin County. The increases generally appear to be predominant within the Route 128 belt and along the coastline of Barnstable County and the North Shore and, of course, the islands in Nantucket Sound. The biggest percent change from 2002 to 2004 was in Barnstable County with Bristol close behind and the least in Franklin County (see Map 3). Meanwhile, note the considerable increases along the New Hampshire border and in Bristol County. A huge wavelike action happened in the 2004–2006 EQV where large percent increases moved into Worcester County and seemed to leave Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex County areas (see Map 4). However, the increases in Barnstable and Bristol Counties remained strong. The flow across the state seems to complete itself between 2006 and 2008 with nearly all of the sizeable increases happening in western area of Worcester County and in the western Massachusetts, a notable exception being Suffolk County in the east (see Map 5).

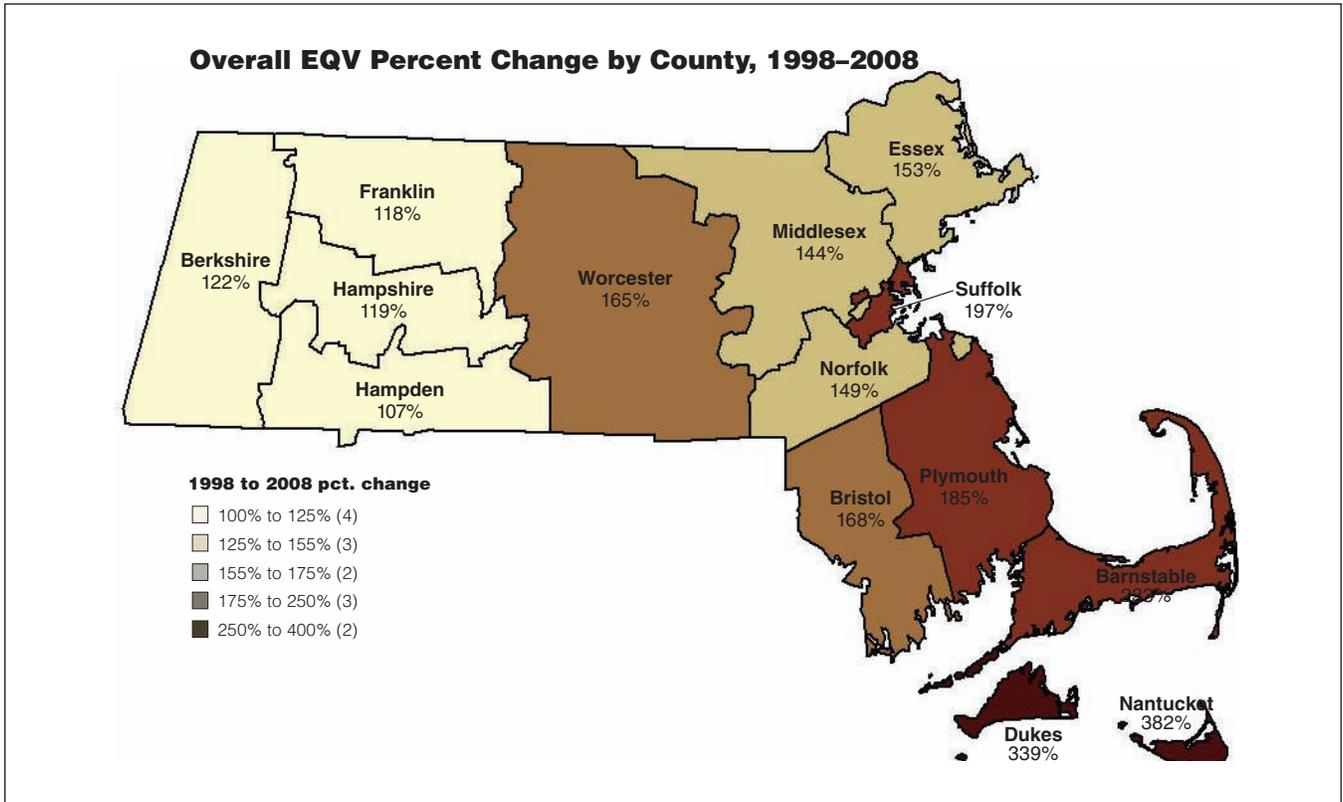
It is interesting to note that the county with the largest increase by far over the 10 years, five EQV studies, was Nantucket at 382 percent or 220 percent adjusting for inflation (see Map 6). Dukes County came in second with a 339 percent increase or 191 percent adjusting for inflation followed by Barnstable County increasing 233 percent or 121 percent after inflation. The counties with three lowest percent increases were Hampden County going up 107 percent (37 percent after inflation), Franklin County jumping only 118 percent (45 percent after inflation), and Hampshire County climbing 119 percent or 46 percent after inflation.

One of the most remarkable observations over the 10-year EQV review was the sheer size and consistency of increases in Nantucket, Dukes and Barnstable Counties. They are almost off the charts when you compare them to the rest of the state. For the entire 10 years those three counties were well above inflation and had not suffered a real estate downturn.

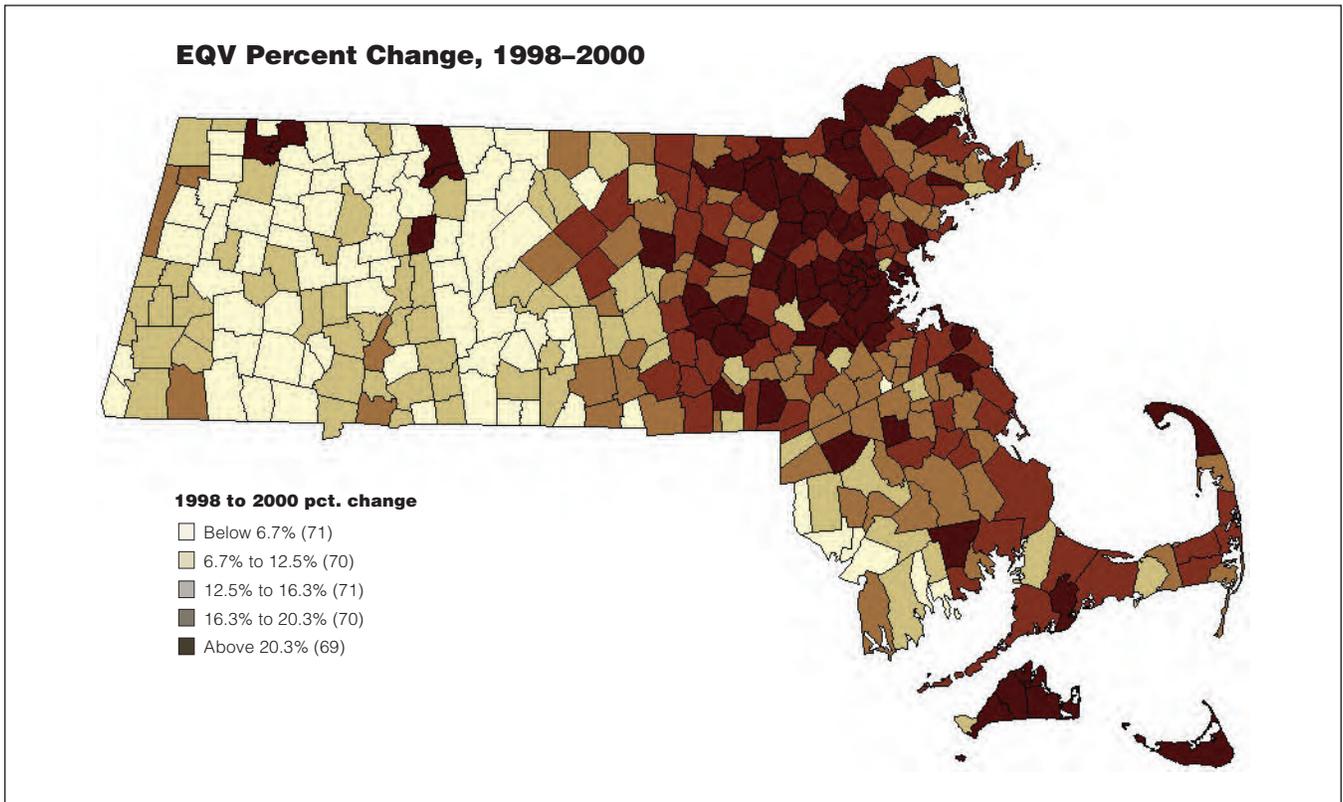
### EQV Uses

Before we discuss the most recent 2008 EQV study, let us explain briefly the EQV. The Bureau of Local Assessment determines the level of assessment as of January 1 for every community in even numbered years as required by MGL ch.58, §10C. Because only one-third of communities are certified in any year, the study adjusts for differences in local assessing practices and revaluation schedules and puts all cities and towns on an even footing. This is done so that Cherry Sheet receipts and charges are equitably handled in certain formulas. On the receipt side EQVs are a part of the lottery, public libraries municipal equalization grants and Chapter 70 local aid formulas. Con-

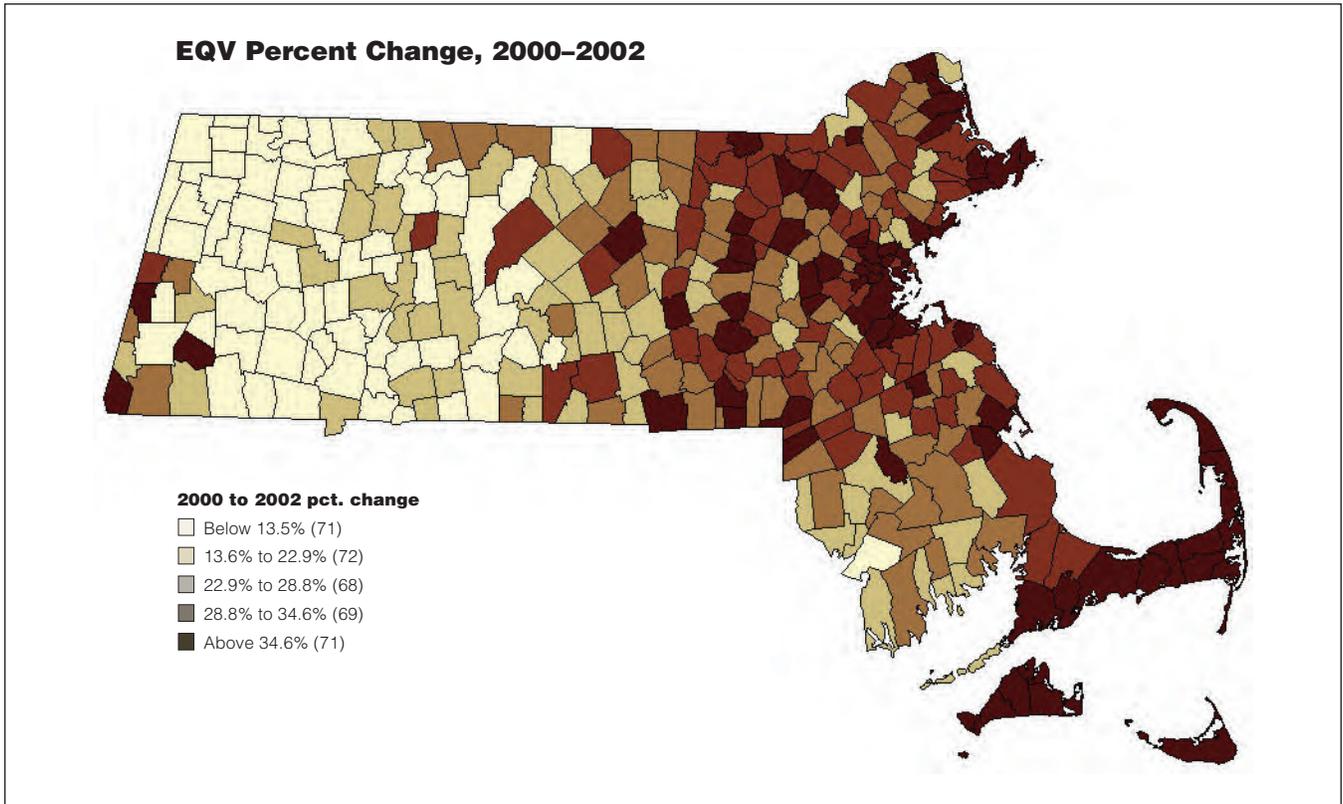
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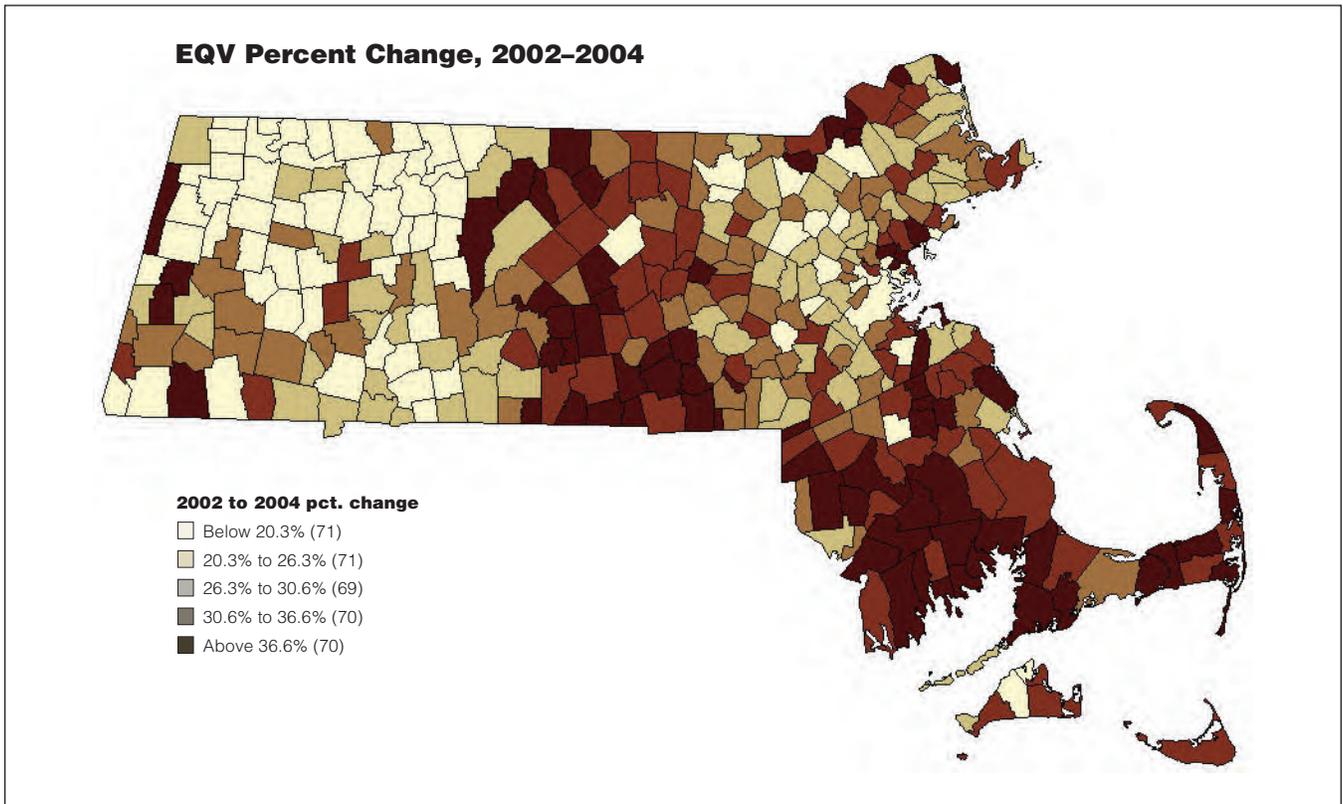
Map 1



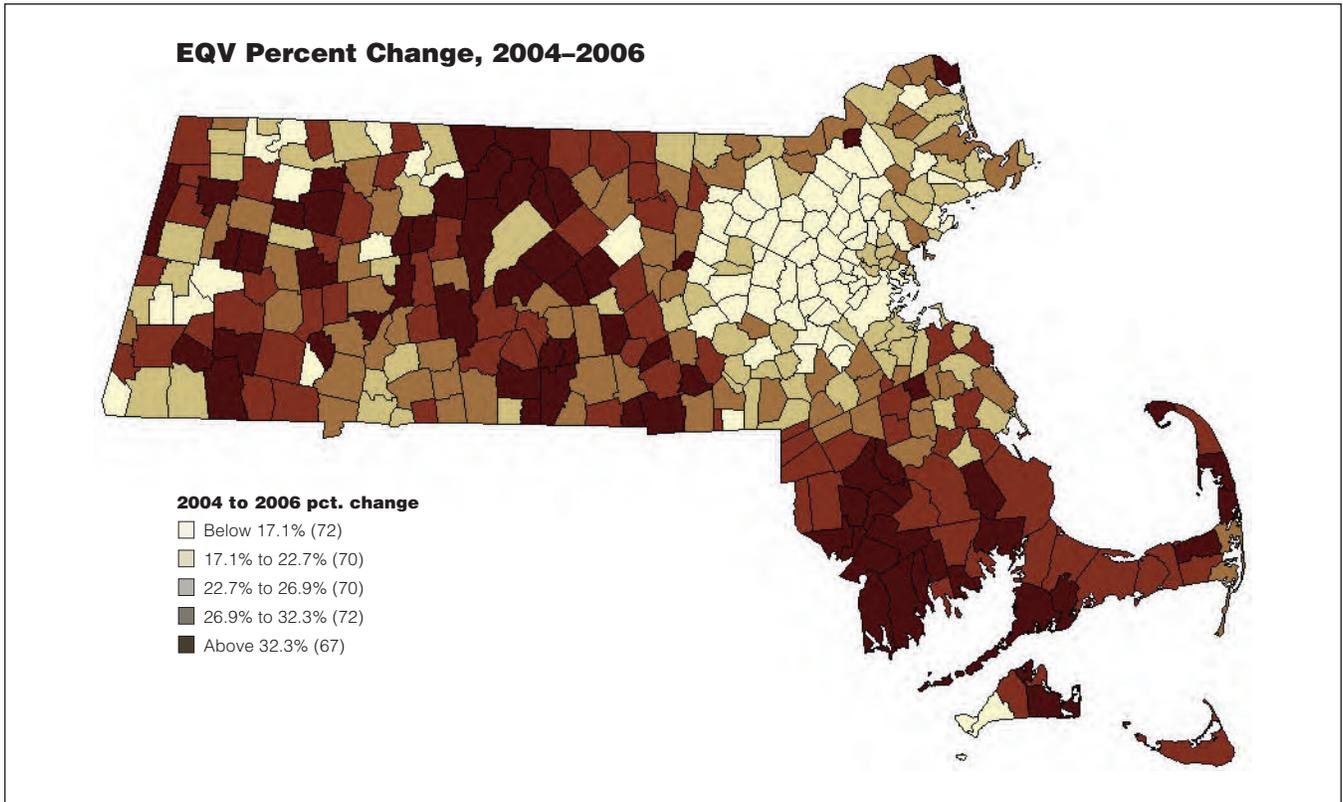
Map 2



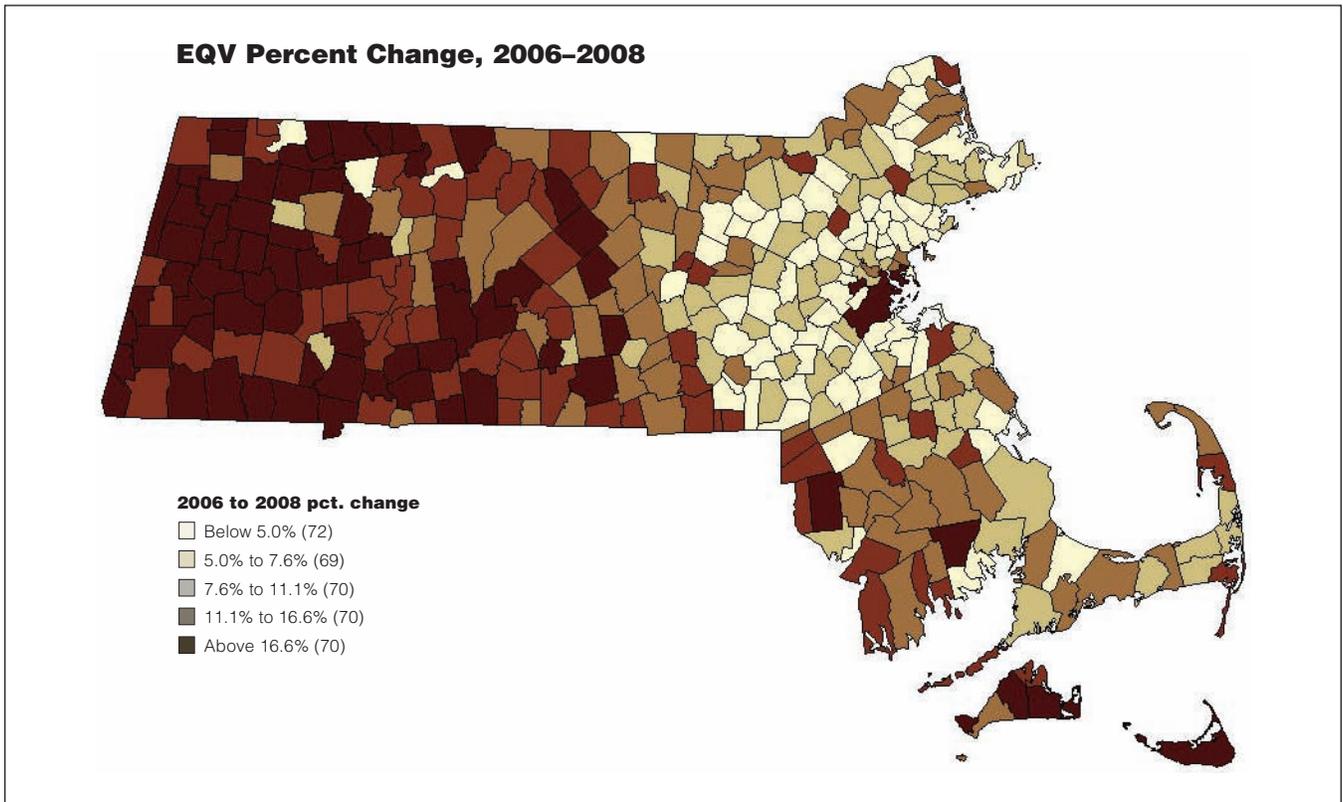
Map 3



Map 4



Map 5



Map 6

**Equalized Valuations — 1998 to 2008** continued from page 4

versely, EQV is calculated into charges issued for the Boston Metropolitan Transit District, county tax, mosquito control projects and air pollution control districts. Also, cities and towns have municipal debt limits of 5 percent of their most recent EQV. The 2008 EQVs will be used in FY2010 and FY2011 Cherry Sheets.

EQVs are determined through statistical analyses of residential sales in all 351 communities as well as commercial and industrial appraisals in municipalities with a significant amount of these properties.

**2008 EQV**

EQV statewide total went from the billions in 2006 (991,189,369,000) to a landmark of more than one trillion, (1,081,810,885,500) in 2008, an increase of over 90 billion (90,621,516,500) or approximately 9.1 percent.

Generally speaking, inflation has increased approximately 50 percent between 1998 and 2008; the remaining increases in EQV can be attributed to property valuation increase due to the real estate market. Looking at Figure 1 we see a 165 percent increase in actual dollars from 1998 to 2008, but a 76 percent increase after adjusting for inflation. In constant dollars, which are actual dollars adjusted for inflation, the largest percent change in value was between 2000 and 2002 at 25 percent, followed by 19 percent going from 2002 to 2004. The increasing trend stopped in 2008 with a one percent decline from 2006.

Table 1 provides you with the 2006 and 2008 EQVs by community along with percent change, per capita value and also ranks communities to distinguish highest to lowest in the past two years. Communities that experienced the greatest percent increase during the period were all in western Massachusetts with the exception of **Aquinnah** on Martha's Vineyard. Aquinnah saw a 30.3 percent change followed by increasing percentages in **Worthington** (30.6), **Becket** (31.0), **Alford** (32.7) and

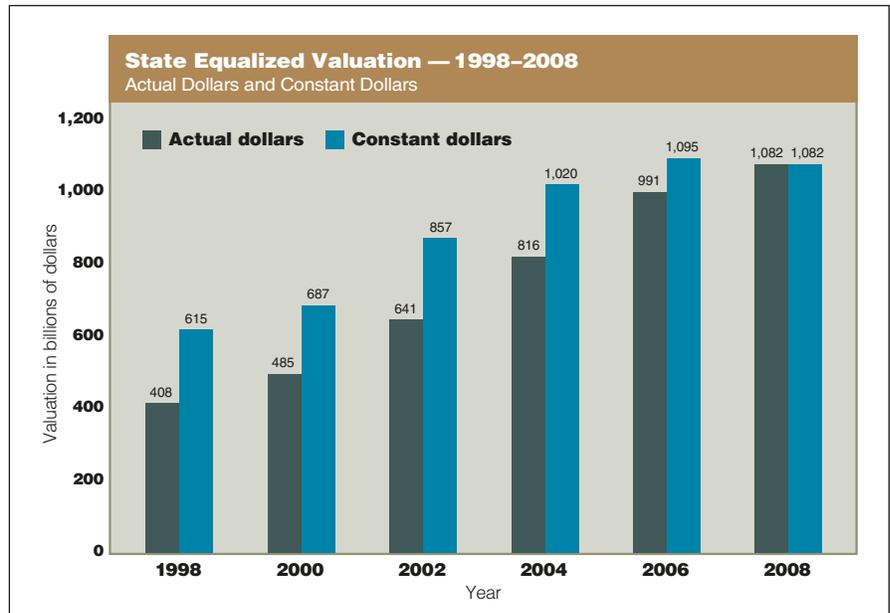


Figure 1

the largest being in **Gill** with nearly a 40 percent change (39.6). On the other end of the spectrum, those with the least percent change are **Swampscott, Milton, Boxborough, Melrose** and **Wakefield**, all of which were below a 1.1 percent increase, with Swampscott being the lowest at 0.6 percent.

Counties with the least percent change from the 2006 EQV are Norfolk (4.5), Middlesex (5.2) and Essex (5.8). Those with the highest double-digit percent increases include Suffolk (19.4), Berkshire (20.4), and Nantucket (28.1) counties. As a region, the four westernmost counties had an increase of 16.5 percent, the highest region in the state. The region with the smallest increase of 6.9 percent included Bristol, Norfolk and Plymouth counties.

Sorting the table by EQV per capita reveals some interesting data. The five communities with the highest EQV per capita in order, starting with the highest, are **Gosnold, Chilmark, Aquinnah, Nantucket** and **Edgartown** with EQV per capita values above \$1.9 million. All five towns are island communities. On the opposite end of the spectrum the five municipalities with the lowest equalized value per capita, going from

high to low, are **Adams, Lawrence, Holyoke, North Adams** and **Springfield** with per capita values less than \$63,000. In that grouping all but Adams are cities and all of are in western Massachusetts with the exception of Lawrence. The statewide EQV per capita is \$167,177 representing a 7.9 percent increase over 2006.

Where do we go from here? In general, all 14 counties in the commonwealth experienced increases in value over this 10-year time frame, even after adjusting for inflation. It is doubtful this trend will continue going forward faced with the current real estate market conditions in these troubled economic times. It is also too early to know if values will continue to rise in the western part of the state or level off as they have in eastern Massachusetts, with the exception of the island communities. We will be closely following the real estate market as we are sure you will be too. ■

1. In this article we consider Massachusetts regions to be the following: the western is made up of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties, central is Worcester County, northeast is Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk and Norfolk Counties, southeast is Bristol and Plymouth Counties and the Cape and the islands are made up of Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties.

# 2008 Equalized Valuation

	2008 EDV	2008 EDV per capita	EDV pct. change	EQV rank	2008 EDV	2008 EDV per capita	EDV pct. change	EQV rank	2008 EDV	2008 EDV per capita	EDV pct. change	EQV rank	Per capita rank
Abington	2,079,940,800	2,225,081,800	7.0	153	135,966	224	7.0	153	135,966	224	7.0	153	224
Acton	3,908,226,500	4,102,027,500	4.9	83	197,659	106	4.9	83	197,659	106	4.9	83	106
Acushnet	1,213,915,400	1,336,022,300	10.1	205	127,935	244	10.1	205	127,935	244	10.1	205	244
Adams	465,809,900	515,554,500	10.7	277	62,765	347	10.7	277	62,765	347	10.7	277	347
Agawam	2,756,586,100	3,123,034,200	13.3	110	110,226	290	13.3	110	110,226	290	13.3	110	290
Afford	204,053,400	270,849,900	32.7	303	687,436	14	32.7	303	687,436	14	32.7	303	14
Amesbury	2,174,220,500	2,266,894,100	4.3	151	137,981	220	4.3	151	137,981	220	4.3	151	220
Amherst	2,151,338,800	2,321,406,100	7.9	146	64,552	346	7.9	146	64,552	346	7.9	146	346
Andover	7,553,584,000	7,757,246,000	2.1	55	233,062	77	2.1	55	233,062	77	2.1	55	77
Aquinnah	597,379,100	778,441,100	30.3	254	2,198,986	3	30.3	254	2,198,986	3	30.3	254	3
Arlington	7,189,083,600	7,558,647,700	5.1	117	183,712	117	5.1	117	183,712	117	5.1	117	117
Ashburnham	665,392,600	734,288,800	10.4	258	123,220	257	10.4	258	123,220	257	10.4	258	257
Ashby	361,633,100	378,287,300	4.6	290	128,494	241	4.6	290	128,494	241	4.6	290	241
Ashfield	229,678,700	253,050,400	10.2	306	139,422	217	10.2	306	139,422	217	10.2	306	217
Ashland	2,510,645,400	2,651,900,700	5.6	129	167,884	146	5.6	129	167,884	146	5.6	129	146
Athol	796,832,300	900,357,300	13.0	245	77,610	338	13.0	245	77,610	338	13.0	245	338
Attleboro	4,421,432,500	4,972,426,100	12.5	62	115,335	276	12.5	62	115,335	276	12.5	62	276
Auburn	2,116,549,800	2,276,891,900	7.6	150	140,039	214	7.6	150	140,039	214	7.6	150	214
Ayer	878,333,500	968,653,500	10.2	237	225,111	80	10.2	237	225,111	80	10.2	237	80
Ayer	1,007,870,000	1,085,310,400	7.7	225	147,281	191	7.7	225	147,281	191	7.7	225	191
Barnstable	14,974,792,700	16,142,285,200	7.8	5	345,378	37	7.8	5	345,378	37	7.8	5	37
Barre	462,168,100	521,619,800	12.9	276	96,258	316	12.9	276	96,258	316	12.9	276	316
Becket	420,461,700	550,721,900	31.0	273	306,467	44	31.0	273	306,467	44	31.0	273	44
Bedford	2,946,953,200	3,141,130,500	6.6	107	238,942	72	6.6	107	238,942	72	6.6	107	72
Belchertown	1,305,703,400	1,528,725,200	17.1	186	109,421	292	17.1	186	109,421	292	17.1	186	292
Bellingham	2,509,075,900	2,594,856,000	3.4	133	163,116	154	3.4	133	163,116	154	3.4	133	154
Belmont	5,538,582,800	5,732,763,400	3.5	47	245,451	70	3.5	47	245,451	70	3.5	47	70
Berkley	847,587,000	928,708,900	9.6	239	144,366	199	9.6	239	144,366	199	9.6	239	199
Berlin	560,592,600	644,284,100	14.9	264	238,712	73	14.9	264	238,712	73	14.9	264	73
Bernardston	196,062,600	232,710,600	18.7	311	104,589	301	18.7	311	104,589	301	18.7	311	301
Beverly	6,008,449,300	6,375,913,600	6.1	35	161,456	159	6.1	35	161,456	159	6.1	35	159
Billerica	5,828,601,700	6,091,910,100	4.1	28	144,914	198	4.1	28	144,914	198	4.1	28	198
Blackstone	1,032,838,100	1,149,804,000	11.3	218	127,163	247	11.3	218	127,163	247	11.3	218	247
Blandford	150,500,300	172,005,600	14.3	323	134,484	227	14.3	323	134,484	227	14.3	323	227
Bolton	1,021,068,500	1,065,776,300	4.4	227	237,843	74	4.4	227	237,843	74	4.4	227	74
Boston	87,749,317,700	105,876,525,800	20.7	1	174,038	137	20.7	1	174,038	137	20.7	1	137
Bourne	4,613,395,800	5,016,456,300	8.7	61	263,705	60	8.7	61	263,705	60	8.7	61	60
Boxborough	1,097,618,200	1,105,746,800	0.7	223	216,941	86	0.7	223	216,941	86	0.7	223	86
Boxford	1,940,716,100	2,007,053,900	3.4	163	248,582	69	3.4	163	248,582	69	3.4	163	69
Boylston	725,741,900	760,367,800	4.8	256	178,239	130	4.8	256	178,239	130	4.8	256	130
Braintree	5,878,650,200	6,103,206,100	3.8	40	177,305	132	3.8	40	177,305	132	3.8	40	132
Brewster	3,892,839,600	4,182,196,400	7.4	80	417,260	27	7.4	80	417,260	27	7.4	80	27
Bridgewater	2,806,627,600	2,954,048,200	5.3	114	115,781	275	5.3	114	115,781	275	5.3	114	275
Brimfield	406,940,900	458,575,100	12.9	282	124,107	253	12.9	282	124,107	253	12.9	282	253
Brockton	7,787,790,000	8,627,153,400	10.8	15	92,673	321	10.8	15	92,673	321	10.8	15	321
Brookfield	284,546,000	342,141,800	20.2	294	112,918	282	20.2	294	112,918	282	20.2	294	282
Brookline	14,826,752,900	15,563,591,600	5.0	6	283,961	47	5.0	6	283,961	47	5.0	6	47
Buckland	192,847,900	226,131,300	17.3	314	113,634	280	17.3	314	113,634	280	17.3	314	280
Burlington	4,563,513,000	5,138,693,700	12.6	59	205,269	96	12.6	59	205,269	96	12.6	59	96
Cambridge	24,529,458,900	26,124,313,400	6.5	2	257,667	64	6.5	2	257,667	64	6.5	2	64
Canton	4,384,334,700	4,487,449,500	2.4	73	204,757	97	2.4	73	204,757	97	2.4	73	97
Carlisle	1,530,775,600	1,566,634,600	2.3	184	320,900	39	2.3	184	320,900	39	2.3	184	39
Carver	1,265,850,400	1,373,004,900	8.5	203	118,906	269	8.5	203	118,906	269	8.5	203	269
Charlemont	116,542,000	138,792,200	19.1	329	101,531	306	19.1	329	101,531	306	19.1	329	306
Charlton	1,460,055,600	1,758,752,000	20.5	175	139,850	215	20.5	175	139,850	215	20.5	175	215
Chatham	6,134,869,700	6,861,707,900	11.8	32	1,020,177	8	11.8	32	1,020,177	8	11.8	32	8
Chelmsford	5,364,392,300	5,703,382,400	6.3	48	167,117	148	6.3	48	167,117	148	6.3	48	148
Chelsea	2,642,115,600	2,856,347,100	8.1	119	74,768	342	8.1	119	74,768	342	8.1	119	342
Cheshire	256,759,200	314,472,800	22.5	297	95,324	317	22.5	297	95,324	317	22.5	297	317
Chester	106,812,800	125,505,300	17.5	334	96,841	312	17.5	334	96,841	312	17.5	334	312
Chesterfield	136,454,700	162,147,900	18.8	325	18,8	303	18.8	325	18,8	303	18.8	325	303
Chicopee	3,211,970,500	3,887,730,100	21.0	91	127,935	244	21.0	91	127,935	244	21.0	91	244
Chilmark	2,908,274,200	3,166,248,400	8.9	106	3,287,901	2	8.9	106	3,287,901	2	8.9	106	2
Clarksburg	104,791,800	124,506,500	18.8	335	18,8	303	18.8	335	18,8	303	18.8	335	303
Clinton	1,263,960,900	1,404,393,100	11.1	198	100,099	309	11.1	198	100,099	309	11.1	198	309
Cohasset	2,383,014,300	2,505,470,200	5.1	135	348,854	36	5.1	135	348,854	36	5.1	135	36
Colrain	177,434,600	177,434,600	32.2	322	96,432	315	32.2	322	96,432	315	32.2	322	315
Concord	5,385,831,800	5,775,460,600	7.2	45	330,366	38	7.2	45	330,366	38	7.2	45	38
Conway	229,121,400	278,245,800	21.4	301	147,689	189	21.4	301	147,689	189	21.4	301	189
Cummington	115,280,800	138,599,600	20.2	330	142,299	206	20.2	330	142,299	206	20.2	330	206
Dalton	574,903,800	676,367,500	17.6	261	102,760	302	17.6	261	102,760	302	17.6	261	302
Danvers	4,539,809,100	4,806,723,100	5.9	66	179,785	128	5.9	66	179,785	128	5.9	66	128
Dartmouth	5,817,992,000	6,349,618,800	9.1	66	186,726	116	9.1	66	186,726	116	9.1	66	116
Deham	4,262,714,700	4,544,587,000	6.6	69	188,322	114	6.6	69	188,322	114	6.6	69	114
Deerfield	670,816,100	734,344,200	9.5	257	155,220	169	9.5	257	155,220	169	9.5	257	169
Dennis	6,772,776,000	7,310,992,000	7.9	27	472,500	20	7.9	27	472,500	20	7.9	27	20
Dighton	1,011,730,400	1,127,662,400	8.2	229	149,930	180	8.2	229	149,930	180	8.2	229	180
Douglas	1,025,634,100	1,127,662,400	9.9	221	142,310	205	9.9	221	142,310	205	9.9	221	205
Dover	2,449,715,000	2,503,189,600	2.2	136	444,853	24	2.2	136	444,853	24	2.2	136	24
Dracut	3,312,174,400	3,486,807,900	5.3	100	118,205	272	5.3	100	118,205	272	5.3	100	272
Dudley	991,246,100	1,131,289,600	14.1	220	102,333	303	14.1	220	102,333	303	14.1	220	303
Dunstable	521,055,700	558,165,300	7.1	272	169,655	143	7.1	272	169,655	143	7.1	272	143
Duxbury	3,837,215,500	4,026,592,800	4.9	85	278,773	52	4.9	85	278,773	52	4.9	85	52
E. Bridgewater	1,643,271,400	1,845,073,900	12.3	169	132,940	229	12.3	169	132,940	229	12.3	169	229
E. Brookfield	251,721,400	265,851,500	5.6	304	128,493	242	5.6	304	128,493				

	2006 EDV	2008 EDV	EQV rank	EDV pct. change	2008 EDV per capita	Per capita rank
Hancock	280,678,100	338,489,400	295	20.6	312,837	40
Hanover	2,591,082,200	2,838,173,500	121	9.5	203,220	99
Hanson	1,317,650,700	1,399,821,900	199	6.2	140,601	210
Harwick	247,779,200	305,562,700	298	23.3	115,307	277
Harvard	1,233,188,100	1,257,158,500	210	1.9	209,492	90
Harwich	5,328,884,400	5,689,733,100	49	6.8	459,331	22
Hartfield	458,292,000	510,741,800	279	11.4	156,765	166
Haverhill	6,199,044,100	6,700,320,500	33	8.1	111,855	285
Hawley	31,588,900	40,217,500	349	27.3	119,695	266
Heath	81,165,600	100,014,300	339	23.2	125,488	249
Hingham	5,479,432,500	6,190,427,500	39	13.0	276,432	53
Hinsdale	230,908,400	276,834,300	302	19.9	142,919	202
Holbrook	1,286,287,100	1,387,357,800	201	7.9	130,110	237
Holden	2,097,480,800	2,278,014,300	149	8.6	137,387	221
Holland	356,609,800	389,214,500	289	9.1	153,718	172
Holliston	2,169,504,300	2,243,975,900	152	3.4	160,962	160
Holyoke	2,080,918,800	2,361,133,900	143	13.5	59,419	349
Hopdale	785,450,200	803,513,200	251	2.3	130,335	235
Hopkinton	3,164,460,000	3,291,075,300	104	4.0	230,033	78
Hubbardston	464,249,000	547,133,700	274	17.9	122,648	260
Hudson	2,553,716,500	2,783,944,900	123	9.0	142,183	207
Hull	2,205,241,600	2,285,343,800	148	3.6	206,501	94
Huntington	1,793,939,500	2,027,772,800	316	12.7	92,464	322
Ipswich	2,760,858,300	2,898,315,700	116	5.0	218,823	84
Kingston	2,097,410,500	2,122,548,900	156	1.2	172,020	138
Lakeville	1,635,605,700	1,777,091,100	174	8.7	167,856	147
Lancaster	890,380,200	972,702,500	236	9.2	138,031	219
Lanesborough	386,939,200	453,032,800	283	17.1	156,705	167
Lawrence	3,829,403,900	4,168,300,000	81	8.8	59,491	348
Lee	767,793,700	940,282,200	238	22.5	162,034	157
Leicester	991,520,700	1,156,399,100	217	16.6	105,299	298
Lenox	1,119,519,500	1,344,827,500	204	20.1	263,433	62
Leominster	3,983,376,300	4,338,890,600	76	8.9	105,497	297
Leverett	263,280,300	285,041,500	299	8.3	163,254	153
Lexington	8,232,742,600	8,583,888,200	16	4.3	282,998	48
Leyden	71,633,100	88,049,600	344	22.9	109,768	291
Lincoln	2,038,197,800	2,064,627,100	183	1.3	258,272	63
Littleton	1,551,204,600	1,591,364,300	158	2.6	182,622	121
Longmeadow	2,124,260,600	2,290,813,600	147	7.8	149,580	182
Lowell	7,315,142,600	8,186,441,400	18	11.9	79,087	335
Ludlow	1,743,035,500	2,044,224,300	160	17.3	91,333	324
Lunenburg	1,344,943,200	1,446,399,700	194	7.5	145,396	196
Lynn	7,258,700,200	7,613,788,900	23	4.9	87,392	327
Lynnfield	2,540,064,900	2,665,254,600	128	4.9	234,164	76
Malden	5,859,714,900	6,079,443,100	42	3.7	109,123	294
Manchester	2,124,611,400	2,346,551,100	144	10.4	445,689	23
Mansfield	3,531,710,900	3,809,750,300	93	7.9	165,692	150
Marblehead	5,582,874,900	5,976,188,400	43	7.0	298,228	45
Marion	1,806,295,700	1,893,529,500	166	4.9	362,954	35
Marlborough	5,242,985,800	5,628,776,300	50	7.4	147,873	186
Marsfield	4,787,007,000	5,158,780,200	58	7.8	209,911	88
Mashpee	5,067,905,000	5,578,976,700	52	10.1	391,205	32
Mattapoisett	1,716,520,800	1,797,383,500	173	4.7	278,794	51
Maynard	1,353,069,300	1,427,909,900	196	5.5	140,308	213
Medfield	2,435,253,400	2,549,191,600	134	4.7	207,826	92
Medford	7,470,569,800	7,955,997,000	19	6.5	143,184	201
Medway	1,890,417,000	1,910,818,700	164	1.1	149,880	181
Melrose	3,901,802,300	3,938,558,100	87	0.9	147,060	192
Mendon	945,006,700	976,126,600	235	3.3	169,261	145
Merrimac	794,658,100	824,934,700	250	3.8	128,395	243
Methuen	5,599,072,900	5,999,072,900	51	8.4	127,312	247
Middleborough	2,865,456,300	2,865,456,300	118	10.7	134,877	226
Middlefield	65,280,000	65,280,000	348	18.4	118,439	271
Middleton	1,900,260,500	1,900,260,500	165	12.9	203,302	98
Milford	3,428,861,900	3,806,499,500	94	11.0	139,621	216
Milbury	1,540,735,800	1,669,891,200	177	8.4	123,967	254
Millis	1,125,903,700	1,194,143,900	215	6.1	150,643	178
Milwille	3,412,077,700	3,542,294,700	292	3.6	125,016	250
Milton	4,949,755,300	4,949,755,300	63	0.6	188,404	113
Monroe	18,280,300	21,238,900	351	16.2	221,239	83
Monson	707,435,400	849,262,700	249	20.0	96,639	313
Montague	671,465,900	765,320,700	255	14.0	91,831	323
Monterey	460,616,800	513,146,700	278	11.4	534,528	19
Montgomery	97,156,900	102,802,600	338	5.8	136,343	223
Mt. Washington	66,748,400	79,217,300	345	18.7	574,038	17
Nahant	841,133,900	905,400,800	242	7.6	257,289	66
Nantucket	17,562,057,600	22,498,040,300	3	28.1	2,136,363	4
Natick	6,522,435,400	6,908,380,200	31	5.9	216,056	87
Needham	7,307,708,400	7,637,636,300	22	4.5	270,234	56
New Ashford	31,707,400	37,623,300	350	18.7	151,707	176
New Bedford	6,341,749,200	7,140,048,800	29	12.6	77,737	337
New Braintree	110,160,700	125,543,100	333	14.0	112,898	283
New Marlborough	456,833,200	584,200,500	270	23.5	370,940	34
New Salem	108,627,100	117,867,800	336	8.5	119,048	267
Newbury	1,405,083,400	1,538,541,900	185	9.5	222,140	82
Newburyport	3,549,054,100	3,856,161,200	92	8.7	224,928	81
Newton	21,604,607,900	22,221,420,100	4	2.9	266,857	58
Norfolk	1,546,041,200	1,610,178,900	182	4.1	151,247	177
North Adams	642,933,300	783,661,400	253	21.9	56,484	350
N. Andover	4,648,968,500	4,913,088,200	64	5.7	177,770	131
N. Attleborough	4,014,219,100	4,480,096,300	74	11.6	160,537	162
N. Brookfield	415,242,900	478,817,700	281	15.3	99,360	310
N. Reading	2,687,227,900	2,838,277,300	120	5.6	202,430	100
Northampton	2,974,992,300	3,381,331,100	103	13.7	119,015	268
Northborough	2,645,591,800	2,649,334,300	130	7.5	181,325	126
Northbridge	1,694,975,200	1,891,135,200	167	11.6	131,557	233
Northfield	368,576,600	419,296,300	287	13.8	140,468	211
Norton	2,390,733,000	2,488,600,800	138	4.1	129,466	238
Norwell	2,465,833,200	2,634,376,200	131	6.8	256,487	67
Norwood	4,596,113,300	4,910,695,600	65	6.8	174,311	136
Oak Bluffs	2,799,162,000	3,129,657,500	108	11.8	838,825	11
Oakham	212,968,400	235,854,800	309	10.7	123,743	255
Orange	512,435,100	585,115,500	269	14.2	75,053	341
Orleans	3,981,793,400	4,280,660,700	77	7.5	677,856	15
Oris	553,194,700	616,358,000	266	11.4	442,151	25
Oxford	1,371,153,400	1,518,924,000	187	10.8	111,350	288
Palm	979,571,100	1,107,920,000	222	13.1	86,226	328
Paxton	548,885,800	604,866,800	268	10.2	133,525	228
Peabody	7,758,307,400	7,915,111,000	20	2.0	153,868	171
Pelham	149,533,800	181,159,200	321	21.1	129,031	240
Pembroke	2,586,794,800	2,749,557,000	126	6.3	147,864	187
Pepperell	1,322,448,300	1,408,517,400	197	6.5	123,457	256
Peru	74,226,100	94,470,200	340	27.3	112,733	284
Petersham	157,899,400	170,505,500	324	8.0	132,896	230
Phillipston	200,845,300	227,590,900	313	13.3	127,359	246
Pittsfield	3,088,729,400	3,772,870,800	95	22.1	87,882	326
Plainfield	84,222,700	88,906,600	343	5.6	148,178	185
Plainville	1,169,940,400	1,299,687,000	208	11.1	156,382	169
Plymouth	9,961,552,300	10,588,136,000	10	6.3	191,856	109
Plympton	431,134,200	487,480,400	280	13.1	175,859	135

	2006 EDV	2008 EDV	EDV pct. change	2008 EDV per capita	Per capita rank	2006 EDV	2008 EDV	EDV pct. change	2008 EDV per capita	Per capita rank
Princeton	517,610,900	559,866,000	8.2	160,236	163	1,520,433,700	1,664,468,000	10.8	166,468	178
Provincetown	2,556,302,100	2,782,084,100	8.8	820,674	13	1,510,567,400	1,664,468,000	10.8	166,468	178
Quincy	12,486,829,000	12,947,793,600	3.7	141,318	209	1,125,061,800	1,194,158,900	6.1	119,960	214
Randolph	3,524,469,100	3,710,162,500	5.3	122,983	259	1,601,610,600	1,809,846,900	13.0	182,952	200
Raynham	2,049,468,900	2,233,852,700	13.4	170,358	141	4,161,973,600	4,205,983,700	1.1	4,205,983	170
Reading	3,952,521,900	4,068,819,300	2.9	175,919	134	158,282,700	183,142,800	15.7	183,142	311
Rehoboth	1,724,446,400	2,049,997,800	18.9	178,509	129	4,073,260,100	4,355,368,100	7.5	4,355,368	112
Revere	5,049,492,600	5,571,573,100	10.3	100,677	308	9,934,066,400	9,934,066,400	7.2	9,934,066	152
Richmond	401,965,000	449,732,700	11.9	282,673	49	750,424,300	903,301,300	20.4	903,301	325
Rochester	830,394,500	998,924,400	20.3	191,438	110	3,960,579,500	4,216,499,700	6.5	4,216,499	104
Rockland	2,043,639,700	2,173,205,800	6.3	122,228	261	363,603,500	415,604,300	14.3	415,604	288
Rockport	1,952,233,400	2,089,132,100	15.7	273,697	54	76,837,400	92,275,100	20.1	92,275	342
Rose	306,234,700	316,045,500	3.2	910,794	10	52,822,700	65,775,600	24.5	65,775	285
Roxbury	966,675,800	1,065,791,300	10.3	182,530	122	5,753,056,200	5,942,687,700	3.3	5,942,687	120
Royalston	139,348,400	152,322,200	9.3	110,378	289	3,403,746,100	3,485,259,700	2.4	3,485,259	101
Russell	121,031,700	141,803,100	17.2	81,967	332	1,666,435,300	1,862,479,100	11.8	1,862,479	287
Rutland	778,214,100	908,650,600	16.8	115,811	273	9,523,566,700	10,029,555,000	5.3	10,029,555	33
Salem	4,923,330,400	5,168,060,200	5.0	124,769	251	2,450,080,800	2,735,300,500	12.7	2,735,300	9
Salisbury	1,489,163,300	1,702,328,400	14.3	199,780	103	80,664,000	93,981,900	16.5	93,981	320
Sandwich	213,062,000	259,394,200	21.7	309,909	41	861,420,000	907,720,000	5.4	907,720	107
Sandwich	4,579,731,300	4,781,515,700	4.4	236,066	75	911,302,100	991,148,400	8.8	991,148	263
Saugus	4,328,919,200	4,489,098,800	3.7	165,089	151	1,142,947,200	1,218,372,300	6.6	1,218,372	123
Saugus	61,620,700	78,301,300	27.1	108,752	296	440,259,900	440,259,900	7.9	440,259	286
Savoy	4,327,989,400	4,575,033,600	5.7	255,860	66	874,052,600	896,061,800	2.46	896,061	246
Scituate	2,140,093,300	2,491,374,900	16.4	183,284	118	2,386,702,300	2,814,135,100	17.9	2,814,135	305
Seekonk	3,028,491,900	3,093,798,200	2.2	181,636	125	350,888,600	444,942,200	26.8	444,942	43
Sharon	552,811,500	626,448,800	13.3	187,897	115	2,552,816,600	2,984,887,300	16.9	2,984,887	7
Shelfield	219,518,000	227,678,300	3.7	111,826	286	3,740,264,300	4,021,045,600	8.6	4,021,045	85
Shelburne	1,255,862,000	1,305,450,000	3.9	309,568	42	3,007,078,800	3,510,877,200	16.8	3,510,877	329
Sherborn	658,521,800	725,415,600	10.2	93,893	318	3,924,006,800	4,139,284,800	5.5	4,139,284	111
Shirley	5,041,995,700	5,422,224,900	7.5	161,911	158	210,960,300	241,438,800	14.4	241,438	175
Shrewsbury	215,721,500	242,898,800	12.6	132,442	231	1,012,483,900	1,097,648,000	8.4	1,097,648	184
Shutesbury	2,822,879,500	2,898,569,500	2.7	158,669	164	5,204,205,700	5,511,643,200	5.9	5,511,643	21
Somerset	8,760,328,000	9,612,275,100	9.7	129,189	239	3,223,579,800	3,656,068,400	13.4	3,656,068	71
Somerville	1,434,251,600	1,636,206,000	14.1	96,520	314	3,834,008,100	3,906,162,100	1.9	3,906,162	50
Somerville	566,148,000	677,338,300	19.6	113,609	281	7,110,692,600	7,387,409,800	3.9	7,387,409	218
Southampton	2,347,541,900	2,442,517,500	4.0	257,541	65	187,900,800	233,801,300	24.4	233,801	179
Southborough	1,135,254,100	1,251,329,000	10.2	73,929	343	1,538,148,000	1,641,094,400	6.7	1,641,094	279
Southbridge	929,932,200	1,135,297,300	22.1	120,379	264	1,652,062,600	1,839,635,000	11.4	1,839,635	234
Southwick	1,156,116,200	1,261,037,300	9.1	105,034	299	289,732,400	346,442,700	19.6	346,442	208
Spencer	7,118,922,700	8,479,854,100	19.1	56,031	351	1,010,908,600	1,178,022,300	16.5	1,178,022	197
Springfield	1,146,763,400	1,217,696,100	6.2	154,648	170	3,733,924,100	3,925,056,900	5.1	3,925,056	127
Sterling	782,590,600	904,568,100	15.6	405,272	28	758,563,100	864,370,000	13.9	864,370	330
Stockbridge	3,346,362,100	3,410,721,500	1.9	158,579	165	5,616,058,000	5,738,788,300	2.2	5,738,788	55
Stoneham	3,756,611,000	3,935,041,900	4.7	146,007	194	92,575,400	117,108,200	26.5	117,108	222
Stoughton	1,213,054,900	1,310,513,400	8.0	207,130	93	2,141,570,000	2,196,940,600	2.6	2,196,940	295
Stow	1,308,345,900	1,464,368,200	11.9	160,884	161	6,160,376,600	6,343,731,100	3.7	6,343,731	139
Sturbridge	4,260,907,900	4,522,988,100	6.2	263,593	61	12,654,571,600	13,827,179,500	9.3	13,827,179	336
Sudbury	351,537,100	376,646,700	7.1	101,222	307	141,877,100	185,340,700	31.9	185,340	195
Sunderland	1,332,159,300	1,461,292,600	9.7	162,096	156	1,941,456,400	2,024,826,300	4.3	2,024,826	124
Sutton	2,749,936,100	2,766,258,800	0.6	197,675	105	6,541,352,300	6,945,280,700	6.2	6,945,280	46
Swampscott	2,261,619,600	2,384,787,300	5.4	146,874	193	991,189,369,000	1,081,810,895,500	9.1	1,081,810,895	500
Swansea	6,075,770,900	6,619,361,800	8.9	118,663	270	1,941,456,400	2,024,826,300	4.3	2,024,826	124
Taunton	645,466,800	795,529,200	23.2	102,214	304	1,941,456,400	2,024,826,300	4.3	2,024,826	124
Templeton	4,565,175,800	4,512,973,700	3.4	152,429	174	991,189,369,000	1,081,810,895,500	9.1	1,081,810,895	500
Tewksbury	2,733,958,400	3,128,701,200	14.4	822,260	12	6,160,376,600	6,343,731,100	3.7	6,343,731	139
Tisbury	163,462,000	195,049,500	19.3	432,482	26	12,654,571,600	13,827,179,500	9.3	13,827,179	336
Tolland	1,300,988,600	1,373,883,400	5.6	226,452	79	141,877,100	185,340,700	31.9	185,340	195
Topsfield	944,901,900	1,023,754,100	8.3	109,212	293	6,541,352,300	6,945,280,700	6.2	6,945,280	46
Townsend	2,252,978,600	2,465,454,600	9.4	1,155,321	6	991,189,369,000	1,081,810,895,500	9.1	1,081,810,895	500
Truro										
<b>Total</b>										
<b>State</b>										
<b>EDV per capita</b>										
<b>Rank</b>										

Table 1

## The Good Old Days continued from page 1

dicial Court to order a complete revaluation. Revaluations, some court ordered, followed in about half of the state's municipalities.

It was during this time that the court established a taxpayer abatement remedy for disproportionate assessment. The financial implication of this remedy ultimately was a significant factor in gaining compliance. But most communities willing to revalue during this time were primarily residential communities with little or no commercial property. Communities where revaluation would result in a significant shift of the tax burden onto residential taxpayers continued to resist revaluation.

In 1974 the Supreme Judicial Court held that the Department of Revenue (DOR) had the statutory power to direct assessors to revalue and attain assessment uniformity on a statewide basis. DOR stepped up administrative action and brought lawsuits in order to obtain full compliance, but progress was slow. Revaluation was not going to be politically acceptable in certain communities. More advances were made on the uniform assessment front with the 1978 amendment to the state constitution permitting property tax classification and the 1979 legislation to implement it.

Effective in fiscal year 1981, all real property was classified into four classes: residential, open space, commercial and industrial. Within certain parameters defined by law, communities could place different tax rates on these different tax classes. This created transparency in policy making. Tax policy was no longer made by inaction or deliberate manipulation of the assessments. The tax levy is allocated after a public hearing so that policy makers can make informed decisions. Assessors provide factual data about the composition of the tax base and changes from the prior year, as well as the impact of

adopting classification options. Taxpayers may participate and present views. The foundation of the Massachusetts classification system is the requirement that annual property assessments be based on fair cash valuation.

First effective in FY1984, fair cash valuation was ensured by requiring each community in the commonwealth to undergo a full revaluation and to have the new values reviewed and approved by DOR every three years with full cash values expected annually.

The groundwork has been laid, rules are in place and plans have been made. The three-year revaluation cycle with annual full and fair cash values is an admirable pursuit but how would DOR ensure community compliance? Neither the towns nor DOR had set procedures in place. Much of the work that lay ahead would have to be figured out as they went along. DOR employees from the mid 1980's have satirically compared those days to the "Wild West." Imagine starting a revaluation review by looking at the communities' property record cards only to see that much of the basic property information was either incomplete or totally absent. State use codes that categorize each property use were nonexistent as well as Sales Codes. Advisors normally pulled the field cards of most sales along with 3-4 cards of nearby non sold properties. This could represent hundreds of field cards. Town wide maps would be laid out with sale locations plotted. All sold and comparable properties would be visited by DOR advisors and verified for accuracy. This meant days and countless miles driving to and around each community. Spreadsheets would have to be created and statistics calculated by hand. Each advisor would report the results of their specific area in a narrative report. The manager of the project would summarize all finding and make applicable recommendations.

The current DOR revaluation review process has changed dramatically from those earlier times. Towns are almost always reviewed by one advisor only. There is still time allotted to physically inspect a sampling of data to ensure data accuracy but community data is now supplied electronically and analyzed with a laptop computer. Review spreadsheets no longer have to be created but are now standard software applications and can be reviewed and submitted much more quickly. DOR also maintains a website where towns may find everything they need to aid in their functions from training materials and commonly used forms to online tutorials.

Massachusetts set the assessment valuation standards high very early on to ensure property taxes would be as fair as possible. Full revaluations every three years with mandatory interim year adjustments help ensure that assessments annually reflect 100 percent full and fair cash value. Compare this to some surrounding states. Connecticut has revaluations every five years and requires a 70 percent assessment level for all properties. Vermont has no set revaluation schedule and only an 80 percent assessment level annually. Maine is similar with no required revaluations but with 70 percent assessment level annually. New Hampshire is on a five-year revaluation cycle with the state setting equalized values in the interim years.

The DOR revaluation review process has come so far since its inception and will continually develop to meet current needs, but the most severe growing pains are now a distant memory. Thankfully the good old days are now more like folklore, not business as usual. ■

**The author thanks contributors Kathleen Colleary, Linda Bradley, Tom Sweeney and Karen Rassias for their assistance.**

## Welcome to DOR's New Blog

<http://revenue.blog.state.ma.us/blog>

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue's new blog is now available at the link above. We hope to use this blog to carry on conversations with Massachusetts residents on matters related to taxes and revenues. The blog will also provide a forum to discuss city and town finances in accordance with the work done by the Division of Local Services. Please keep in mind that this blog is not the place for the airing of individual tax matters or for formal comments on DOR rules and regulations. Questions about individual tax matters should continue to be directed to DOR Customer Service, either by using the "Contact Us" information on the website or by calling Customer Service at 800-392-6089 or 617-887-6367.

The blog will however be used to link to or describe issues in taxation at the local, state and federal level. The dramatic declines in revenue have precipitated a robust discussion in Massachusetts about budget cuts, reductions in services and the creation of new revenues to partially fill the hole left in the budgets of cities and towns that rely on the state for local aid payments. This type of discussion is taking place in virtually every state in the nation thanks to the ongoing national economic downturn. We hope to continue the discussion online with the Local Services component of DOR's blog. ■

## Mark Your Calendars

**Municipal Cabinet's Listening Tours** will be held on July 9 from 10:30 to 12:00 p.m. at the Community Center in **Harwich**; July 17 from 10 am to 11:30 am at the Town Hall in **Plymouth**, and on July 23 in **Greenfield**, details regarding the Greenfield event will be announced in the near future. The regional meetings focus on technology, civil service, health insurance, purchasing, capital asset management and human resources. The visits strengthen the ties between local and state government, and help generate new ideas for how the Municipal Cabinet can be most helpful to communities. To register for any of the above tours, please contact Sharyn Adelman at 617-626-2338. For more information on the mission of the Municipal Cabinet, please visit the Lt. Governor's website at [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

**Assessment Administration: Law, Procedures and Valuations (Course 101)** will be held on August 3–6, with an optional session on Friday, August 7. This training opportunity will be held at the University of Massachusetts, **Amherst** and is offered through The Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers (MAAO). Please visit their website for more information and to register: [www.maaao.org](http://www.maaao.org).

The location and dates for the fall 2009 Course 101 have not been established. The proposed region is Middlesex County. The dates and location will be finalized in mid-July.

**"What's New in Municipal Law"** will be held on Friday, September 25, 2009 at the Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House in **Holyoke** and Friday, October 2, 2009 at the Lantana in **Randolph**. The Bulletin announcing this training opportunity will be issued in July. Pre-registration is required. In order to help defray the costs for communities, the Division of Local Services has reduced the registration fee to \$30 for this year's seminar. If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact Donna Quinn, training coordinator, at 617-626-3838 or [quinnd@dor.state.ma.us](mailto:quinnd@dor.state.ma.us). ■

## Legal continued from page 3

Finally, the taxpayers argued that M.G.L. Ch. 59 § 5 Cl. 3 was an older statute, which predated the 1995 legislative authorization for LLCs under M.G.L. Ch. 156C. They urged the court to rule that the Legislature never intended to exclude LLCs from exemption under Clause 3. The court, however, declined the invitation to broaden the statute to include unincorporated entities like LLCs.

Consequently, the Supreme Judicial Court affirmed the decision of the Appellate Tax Board and denied the exemption. Extension of a charitable exemption to LLCs will require the Legislature to amend Clause 3. ■

**Please remember to update the online Local Officials Directory so that both municipal and state officials have accurate contact information.**



**Revenue Commissioner Navjeet K. Bal and DLS Deputy Commissioner Robert Nunes welcome new officials to the forum.**



**Pam Kocher, director of local policy for Administration and Finance spoke of strengthening the partnership between state and local government.**



**Joe Markarian of DLS' Technical Assistance section gave a presentation on the budget process and sources for local revenue.**

## **New Officials Finance Forum a Success!**

**Photographs by Sharyn Adelman**

On June 11, new municipal officials from around the Commonwealth came to the College of Holy Cross in Worcester in order to learn about the basics of local government. The day is an annual event, designed to foster a team approach to the various finance offices by developing an understanding of the responsibilities of the departments as well as their interrelationship. ■



**Amy Januskiewicz of the Bureau of Accounts helps local officials during the hands-on exercise sessions.**



**Kathleen Colleary is ready to provide assistance during one of the NOFF sessions.**

# Municipal Fiscal Calendar

## July 1

**Collector: Mail Annual Preliminary Tax Bills.** For communities issuing annual preliminary tax bills, the preliminary quarterly or semiannual bills should be mailed by this date.

## July 15

**Accountant: Certification Date for Free Cash: Anytime after Books are Closed.** Two weeks after the close of a fiscal year, all accounts are closed out and the resulting balance sheet and supplemental documentation submitted to DOR. Free cash is certified any time after this date.

**Accountant: Report Community Preservation Fund Balance: Anytime after Books are Closed.** After the close of a fiscal year, the fund balance is submitted to DOR (Form CP-2) and notice given to the Community Preservation Committee and other financial officers. The fund balance may be appropriated anytime after that report.

**School Business Officials: Certification Date for Excess and Deficiency (E&D) Fund.** Two weeks after the close of a fiscal year, all accounts are closed and the resulting balance sheet (a pre-closing trial balance or audited financial statements will not be accepted unless requested by the Director of Accounts) and supplemental documentation are submitted to DOR. E&D Fund is certified any time after this date.

**Assessors: Deadline for Appealing Commissioner's Pipeline Valuations to ATB.**

## July 20

**DOR/BLA: Notification of Changes in Proposed SOL Valuations (every 4th year after 2005).**

## August 1

**Taxpayer: Quarterly Tax Bills — Deadline for Paying 1st Quarterly Tax Bill Without Interest.** According to M.G.L. Ch. 59, Sec. 57C, this is the deadline for receipt of the

1st Quarter preliminary tax payment without interest, unless the preliminary bills were mailed after July 1. If mailed by August 1, the 1st Quarterly payment is due August 1, or 30 days after the bills were mailed, whichever is later, and the 2nd Quarterly payment is due November 1. If mailed after August 1, the preliminary tax is due as a single installment on November 1, or 30 days after the bills were mailed, whichever is later.

**Taxpayer: Annual Boat Excise Return Due.**

**Accountant: Notification of Total Receipts of Preceding Year.** The total actual local receipts (e.g., motor vehicle excise, fines, fees, water/sewer charges) of the previous fiscal year must be included on Schedule A of the Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet (Recap) which is submitted by the Assessors to DOR. On the Recap, the Accountant certifies the previous fiscal year's actual revenues, and the Assessors use this information to project the next fiscal year's revenues. Any estimates of local receipts on the Recap that differ significantly from the previous year's actual receipts must be accompanied by documentation justifying the change in order to be approved by the Commissioner of Revenue.

## August 10

**Assessors: Deadline for Appealing SOL Valuations to ATB (every 4th year after 2005).**

## August 15

**Assessors: Deadline to Vote to Seek Approval for Authorization to Issue Optional Preliminary Tax Bills.** For semi-annual communities issuing optional preliminary property tax bills, the Assessors must vote to seek authorization to issue the bills from DOR by this date. After receiving approval, Assessors must submit a Pro-forma Tax Rate Recap Sheet to DOR for review and issue the tax bills by October 1.

## August 31

**Taxpayer: Last Filing Day for Classified Forest Land, M.G.L. Ch. 61.**

**DOR/BOA: Issue Instructions for Determining Local and District Tax Rates.** A copy of the Tax Rate Recap Sheet and its instructions are forwarded to the town.

**Assessors: Begin Work on Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet (to set tax rate for semi-annual bills).** Until the Tax Rate Recap Sheet is completed and certified by the Commissioner of Revenue, the community may not set a tax rate nor send out its property tax bills (unless it issues preliminary quarterly tax bills or requests from DOR the authority to send out preliminary tax notices if DOR requirements are met). Communities should begin gathering the information in enough time for the tax rate to be set and tax bills mailed by October 1. The Tax Rate Recap Sheet provides Mayors or Selectmen with a ready-made financial management tool because the town's most important financial management information is summarized on this form. The Mayor or Selectmen should review the Recap Sheet in preliminary form in order to understand financial information. ■



### City & Town

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