

News Release

Contact Greene County Commissioners

724-852-5210

spenich@co.greene.pa.us

Pictometry Investment Assists Tax Assessors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WAYNESBURG – In mid-October 2020, Greene County announced an initiative to upgrade the digital imagery available for county planners, assessment, tax claims, emergency services and other relevant county departments. That updated digital imagery and data was obtained by specially equipped aircraft and individuals may remember observing the dozens of back-and-forth flights that crisscrossed the county as the new data was collected. The combination of that imagery and data is known as pictometry.

That investment in updated pictometry of the county is now paying dividends. Funded through the Federal CARES Act, the collection of that imagery and data provides county employees the capability to work remotely and comply with social distancing restrictions, in accordance with CDC guidelines, with better outcomes than previously obtainable.

Pictometry images assign every pixel in an image an elevation, a latitude and a longitude. This allows county and municipal users to analyze any object in the image and obtain exact measurements with respect to position, length, width, area, slope, height and elevation. It allows users to annotate and compare year-over-year images and is used in several county offices, including the Assessment Office. This provides an opportunity to compare data and allows the County Assessment Office to identify changes in building outlines and new structures across the entire county.

One of the primary functions of the Assessment Office is to appraise real estate for property taxation. Pictometry allows the Assessment Field Assessors access to all the data and measurement requirements to add previously unreported houses and buildings to the tax rolls.

Many of the municipalities in the county are either full “opt-out” or are “opt-in with modifications” in regards to the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). These decisions allow for structures to be constructed with limited and/or no building permits. The reporting requirements from the UCC facilitate notification to the county of new taxable structures. Many townships use a third-party reviewer that is responsible for reporting to the county when new construction occurs, sometimes that doesn’t get reported. This gap between reporting requirements creates a disadvantage to all tax payers as a whole because some taxable improvements go years without contributing toward the tax base.

The Greene County Assessment Office has started using this new data and is systematically reviewing every property parcel in the county and will correct any clerical or mathematical error, assess and tax previously unreported structures and improvements. Abatement programs are not retroactively available. If individuals have failed to report the construction of a residence,

DRAFT

building or other projects, that improvement will be added to the tax rolls and taxed at the fair market value.

Additional information can be obtained at the Greene County Assessment Office at 724-852-5211 or the Greene County Commissioner's Office at (724) 852-5210.