

Frequently Asked Questions About Property Tax Revaluations in Rural Wisconsin

Understanding Property Assessments and Revaluations

Q: What is a property tax assessment?

A: A property tax assessment is the assessor's estimate of your property's market value as of January 1 of a given year. Wisconsin law requires that property assessments reflect market value as accurately as possible. This assessed value is used to distribute the local property tax burden fairly among property owners.

Q: What is a revaluation?

A: A revaluation is a systematic review and update of property assessments within a municipality. During a revaluation, the assessor analyzes recent sales, property characteristics, construction costs, market trends, and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Equalized Values to bring assessments closer to current market values.

A revaluation may involve:

- Exterior property inspections
- Property data verification
- Analysis of recent real estate sales
- Updates to property records
- Adjustments to assessed values based on market conditions

Q: Why are revaluations necessary?

A: Revaluations are necessary because real estate markets change over time. If assessments are not updated periodically, they become less accurate and unequal.

Reasons for revaluation include:

- Changes in the real estate market. Property values may increase or decrease due to market conditions.
- Fairness among taxpayers. Some properties may appreciate faster than others. Regular revaluations help ensure each property owner pays their fair share.
- Compliance with Wisconsin law. Municipalities are expected to maintain assessments that reasonably reflect market value.
- Correction of assessment inequities. Over time, similar properties can become assessed at significantly different percentages of market value.

Q: Does a revaluation mean my taxes will automatically increase?

A: No. This is one of the most common misconceptions about revaluations.

A revaluation changes the way the tax burden is distributed among property owners. It does not automatically generate additional tax revenue for the municipality.

Your actual tax bill depends on:

- Your property's assessed value
- The total value of all taxable property in the municipality
- The tax levy established by local governments, schools, counties, and special districts

Q: What is the typical result for most property owners after a revaluation?

A: In many rural Wisconsin communities, the typical result is that assessed values increase because assessments have not kept pace with rising market values.

However, when most properties in a community increase by roughly the same percentage:

- Property values go up.
- The total tax base goes up.
- Tax rates generally decrease.
- The average property owner's tax bill may remain relatively similar, changing only due to normal levy increases or shifts in property values relative to neighboring properties.

For example:

Before Revaluation	After Revaluation
Home assessed at \$150,000	Home assessed at \$225,000
Tax rate: \$20 per \$1,000	Tax rate: \$13.33 per \$1,000
Tax bill: \$3,000	Tax bill: \$3,000

In this example, the assessment increased significantly, but the tax bill remained the same because the tax rate decreased proportionally.

Q: When would a property owner's taxes increase after a revaluation?

A: Taxes may increase if:

- Your property's value increased more than the average property in the municipality.
- Major improvements were made to the property.
- Market demand for your type of property grew faster than other properties.

- Local governments increased their tax levies.

Q: When might a property owner's taxes decrease after a revaluation?

A: Taxes may decrease if:

- Your property's value increased less than the community average.
- Your property's market value declined.
- Other classes of property experienced greater appreciation.
- Assessment inequities were corrected in your favor.

Q: Why do rural properties sometimes see larger assessment changes?

A: Rural areas often experience periods where assessments remain unchanged for many years while market values continue to rise. When a revaluation is finally completed, assessment increases can appear dramatic even though they simply reflect market changes that have accumulated over time.

Additionally, rural properties with:

- Significant acreage
- Recreational land
- Waterfront frontage
- Hunting or timber land

may experience market trends that differ from residential properties in town.

Q: What should I do if I disagree with my new assessment?

A: Property owners should first review the assessment notice and verify that the property's characteristics are correct, including:

- Square footage
- Acreage
- Buildings and improvements
- Number of bedrooms and bathrooms
- Other property features

If concerns remain, contact the assessor to discuss the valuation. Property owners also have the right to attend the Board of Review and appeal the assessment through the procedures provided under Wisconsin law.

Q: What is the key takeaway about revaluations?

A: A revaluation is primarily a fairness tool, not a tax increase. The goal is to ensure that all properties are assessed consistently and that the local tax burden is distributed equitably. While assessed values often rise after a revaluation, the typical property owner does not experience a proportional increase in property taxes simply because the assessment increased. The most important factor is how a property's value changes relative to other properties in the community.

Summary

My assessment went up. Does that mean my taxes will go up by the same percentage?

Usually, no. In a typical rural Wisconsin revaluation, most property values increase together. When that happens, tax rates generally adjust downward. The result is that many property owners see little change in their tax bill unless their property's value changes significantly more or less than the average property in the municipality.

Prepared by Jef Muelver, Assessor 10/26/2026
Town of Newbold & Summit Assessment
715-275-4001
jefm@frontier.com