

ASSESSOR'S REPORT MARCH 2013

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During March we kept very busy with the personal property mailings and **homestead applications**. As mentioned before, we mailed 240 letters to property owners who we thought might qualify for the homestead exemption – as of April 1st, we received 60 returns for qualified homesteads just from the mailing.

Personal Property reports continue to trickle in. Most of the returns indicate that there are no changes to the last reporting of equipment. Along with the regular mailing, we sent out forms to 30 potential new accounts which include either new owners of an existing business, home occupations and a couple of newly opened shops in the Bay Street mall.

Madison Paper retained a 42 acre parcel along the Kennebec River after the sale of the hydro dam. In March, they donated this land to **Kennebec Messalonskee Trails Inc.** The new owner filed a request for exempt status as a benevolent and charitable institution. The new owner met the criteria by filing timely and providing supportive documentation, therefore I granted the exemption. The town will lose a taxable value of \$108,000 on the tax rolls.

I attended a **GIS** (Geographic Information System) seminar in Augusta. This daylong session included presentations on forestry images, uses of the imagery with data with a time lapse and ended with a dynamic presentation by Mike Smith with the State Office of GIS. He demonstrated the way to use State imagery with our own data, such as flood plains, wetlands, E-911 streets and ortho imagery. The state has collected an immense amount of data and images for public consumption and continues to add updates to their site.

I also attended an afternoon session in New Gloucester on the **Maine FOAA** – Freedom of Access Act. This was very informative and made the point of how important it is to understand what constitutes a public record, the need for creating a town policy that adopts the Maine statutory standards and how to deal with requests from the public.

The 2013 tree growth have been published in accordance with Title 36, Section 576; that requires that the State Tax Assessor establish the 100% valuation per acre for each forest type by economic region for parcels classified under the **Tree Growth Program**. The new per acre rates for Kennebec County are as follows:

Softwood	\$333.00	Mixed Wood	\$264.00	Hard Wood	\$174.00
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These new values did not increase much over last year so the impact on taxpayers will be minimal. These same rates are applied to forest land located within a farmland parcel.