

WHEN THE TAX APPRAISER COMES KNOCKING

Property taxes is a subject most of us have an opinion on, but few people understand how they are calculated. The process, according to Midland County [Equalization](#) Director Mary Cornell, begins with property appraisals on agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential properties throughout the county. For residential property owners this means if your property is selected for a sample study or has been sold since September of 2015, you might receive a visit from an appraiser.



What can you expect on the visit? Mary says after the appraiser identifies herself to the property owner and explains the process, it takes only about 30 minutes to complete the appraisal. The process includes checking building sketches and measuring buildings as well as assessing structure quality and taking a few photos for the record.

Some homeowners are nervous about letting strangers onto their property, but it's important for people to let the Equalization staff gather information. This ensures accurate study results and that the property record is correct.

"We're nice people just trying to do our jobs," Mary says. "We understand that people value their privacy and their time, so we do our job quickly and record only the appraisal information about the structures that we need."

As for property taxes, Mary says, "Most people tell me that they just want to feel they are paying their fair share. That's our goal in Equalization. That's why we're here."

How equalization works:

- Provides a system of checks and balances to protect property owners from arbitrary taxation
- Studies market trends used in determining current market values
- Ensures individual city and township assessors are applying proper practices and meeting the statutory requirements of the profession
- Offers assistance and/or mentoring to local assessors to improve practices and professionalism