WEST VIRGINIA STATE TAX DEPARTMENT
Administrative Notice 2004-12

SUBJECT: **Property Tax --** State Tax Commissioner's Statement Concerning Primary Reliance on the Cost Approach to Value for Appraisals of Industrial Personal Property i.e. Machinery, Equipment, Furniture, Fixtures, and Leasehold Improvements Pursuant to §110 CSR 1P-2.5.3.1.

On July 26, 1991, the State Tax Department filed Legislative Rule § 110 CSR 1P-1 et seq. relating to the appraisal of industrial machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and leasehold improvements. This notice will address the Tax Commissioner's primary reliance on the cost approach to value when appraising industrial machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and leasehold improvements, for property tax purposes.

DISCUSSION

There are three (3) generally accepted approaches to value that must be considered when estimating market value of property for ad valorem tax purposes. These are the cost, market, and income approaches. These approaches to value must be considered and should be developed, if appropriate, to properly estimate market value in compliance with generally accepted appraisal principles. The following is a brief discussion of these three (3) approaches to value and their potential use when estimating the market value of industrial machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and leasehold improvements for ad valorem tax purposes.

MARKET APPROACH

The market approach to value is based upon the assumption that the recent selling price of comparable properties if properly analyzed and adjusted, if appropriate, will yield a reasonable estimate of current market value. This valuation approach is widely employed in the appraisal of residential real estate where a considerable number of properties transfer on a reasonably frequent basis. Industrial machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and leasehold improvements sell infrequently and are often liquidation sales, which typically are not at market value. The market approach to value is of little, if any, use in appraising industrial personal property due principally to the lack of a sufficient number of meaningful sales to statistically support development of the approach.

INCOME APPROACH

The income approach to value is based upon the assumption that a property is worth the future income, discounted to present worth, that it will generate for a prospective buyer. The income approach is widely used in the appraisal of various types of income producing properties; however, the approach has limited use in the appraisal of industrial machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and leasehold improvements because of the difficulty in estimating future net benefits; except in the case of certain kinds of leased equipment. When reliable data on equipment leases is available, the income approach can provide reliable estimates of fair market value.

COST APPROACH

The cost approach to value is based upon the assumption that the cost of a property, less depreciation (loss in value), yields a reasonable estimate of market value. Depreciation is a loss in value due to physical deterioration through use, functional obsolescence through design or utility, and economic obsolescence due to outside market forces.

Costs used in the cost approach can be original, acquisition, replacement, or reproduction costs, although often only original or acquisition costs are readily available. Original cost is the cost of acquisition of a property. Reproduction cost is the cost of reproducing an exact replica of a property. Replacement cost is the cost of replacing a property with one of like utility. The cost approach may be most consistently applied to machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and leasehold improvements because of the availability of reliable data such as the original or acquisition cost.

The State Tax Department trends the original or acquisition cost to today's replacement cost and depreciates the replacement cost, based on age and condition, to estimate a property's current market value. This process is recommended by the International Association of Assessing Officers' Standards on the Valuation of Personal Property.

This process is as follows:

Original or Acquisition Cost	**x**	Trend Factor	=	Today's Replacement or Reproduction Cost	**x**	Depreciation Factor	=	Current Market Value

The Tax Commissioner uses the *Marshall Valuation Service*, an appraisal guide, as the source of information for the trend and depreciation tables and provides this information to all fifty-five counties as a guide for the appraisal of personal property. The *Marshall Valuation Service* is compiled, published and updated quarterly by Marshall and Swift of Los Angeles, California. The *Marshall Valuation Service* has a circulation of over 85,000 users in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and Canada. Users include independent appraisers, insurance companies, savings and loan associations, banks, architects, developers, accountants, assessors and engineers.

For further discussion concerning the use of a cost approach appraisal, or use of the *Marshall Valuation Service*, please direct your inquiries to the Property Tax Division of the State Tax Department at telephone number (304) 558-3940.

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