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HEADLINE: Property values in **Mansfield** take another double-digit leap

BYLINE: Neil Strassman, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, **Texas**

BODY:

May 16--The fast-growing city of **Mansfield and the Mansfield** school district saw another double-digit increase in net taxable property values, according to preliminary 2006 valuations released Monday by the Tarrant Appraisal District.

Increases in Arlington and the Arlington school district were more modest and less than the 8.5 percent that valuations grew last year throughout Tarrant County.

"**Mansfield** is doing well again," said Chief Appraiser John Marshall. "Southeast Arlington was hot, but they're running out of land."

The biggest single factor in the growth of property values was the boom in single-family home construction, he said, adding that 17,000 houses were built, accounting for 40 percent of the \$8.2 billion increase from 2005 to 2006.

Taxing entities use the preliminary values as a guide for developing budgets.

Countywide, property values also got a boost from oil and gas revenue, with the taxable value of gas wells nearly doubling from \$768 million to \$1.4 billion. But gas wells accounted for only about 1 percent of the

county's \$105.4 billion tax base, records show.

"I'm happy with 5 percent," Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck said of the 4.9 percent increase in net taxable property values. "In a few years those numbers will be much higher than that."

The Dallas Cowboys stadium and retail development projects in Arlington will help raise the values for everyone in the city, he said.

Values in the **Mansfield** school district, which includes portions of southeast Arlington, rose by 13.5 percent, up from 12.6 percent increase the year before. Values in **Mansfield** increased by 11.5 percent, less than the 13.7 percent jump in 2005.

Mansfield City Manager Clayton Chandler credited the boost in values to "good planning" in recent years, including ordinance revisions that have increased aesthetic standards for residential and commercial development.

"We've gone out and marketed the city that we're about building value," he said. "That has been the underlying theme of our business plan, and this proves that it's working."

Pantego saw a 7.7 percent increase in values and Dalworthington Gardens saw a 6 percent increase.

Cities with the biggest jumps in appraised values typically had cheap, available land, Marshall said.

The largest increases in the county occurred in northwestern suburbs such as Westworth Village, where values jumped by 41.7 percent; Lakeside, 31.9 percent; Lake Worth, 30.3 percent; and Lake Worth school district, 22.4 percent.

In Fort Worth, which grew by 12.6 percent, up from about 9 percent last year, the housing boom has helped fill the city's treasury, but it has also left city officials scrambling to provide streets, water and sewer services, and police and fire protection for the new residents.

Staff writers Mike Lee, Elizabeth Campbell, Martha Deller, Adrienne Nettles and Bill Teeter and correspondent Robert Cadwallader contributed to this report.

IN THE KNOW

Protesting property values

Property owners have until May 31 to protest their valuation.

Protests must be submitted in writing to the Tarrant Appraisal Review Board and must identify the property owner and the property.

Protests must deal with some aspect of the appraisal (the appraisal district doesn't set tax rates or determine total tax bills.) A form, printed on the back of appraisal notices, is available but not required.

The mailing address for the Tarrant Appraisal Review Board is P.O. Box 185519, Fort Worth, TX 76181-

0519. The Tarrant Appraisal District is at 2500 Handley-Ederville Road in Fort Worth.

Homeowners with questions about their appraisals may call (817) 284-3925. Homeowners with questions about exemptions may call (817) 284-4063.

SOURCE: Tarrant Appraisal District

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