

By: Steve Patterson

Field surveyors went to work here Tuesday beginning the second major phase in Pittsburg County 's giant tax reappraisal program under county assessor J.D. Roberson.

Assigned by the Oklahoma Tax Commission last year to conduct the three-year project, Gem Surveys, Inc., of Chandler , has operated since contract signing time in the county courthouse. "Our people here in the office have been and are continuing to research and physically describe every piece of property in the county," said general manager Rick Mask today. "This work will go on right up to the end of the project."

With the influx of field men this week begins the process of physically eyeing each of the described pieces of property and examining any improvements.

Mask is asking for "full cooperation of public" in aiding his company to complete the survey.

"No one will ever succeed in making taxes popular," he said. "The best to hope for is that they can be made equitable."

Mask said that presently field men are making calls on commercial and industrial properties.

He described the field survey process:

"The field man will present a letter of introduction signed by your county assessor, Mr. Roberson," Mask said. "Each and every building will be physically inspected for type of construction and measured for size."

The Survey company general manager said the field men will query property owners as to the age of their home or building or what improvements have been made or what was paid for the property if recently purchased, etc.

While most property owners are anxious to know their revised appraisal, the field men won't provide that information.

"The field men gather data only," Mask said. "He will not be able to give you the appraised value."

Mask reported that much of the preliminary research work into deeds and land description of McAlester and surrounding additions has been completed.

It has been well over two decades since a physical land survey over all of Pittsburg County has been undertaken successfully for tax purposes.

The present survey, once complete, is aimed at providing "permanent and accurate property records for use by the assessor as the basis of equalized tax assessments."

The commercial property survey now underway is being handled by two working crews or four men, Mask said.

Physical surveys of residential and farm properties is to follow as research work in the court house office progresses.

"We just hope for the cooperation of all Pittsburg County residents," Mask said. "No program of this nature can be truly successful without the full participation of the owners..."