

## **Orange County 2012 Trending Activity Summary**

### **General**

Orange County is one of the smaller counties in the state. The county is made up of ten townships with a total parcel count of just under 20,500 total parcels. The real estate market had been relatively slow for several years until developments during 2005 and 2006 involving the new casino and modernization of French Lick and West Baden hotels. This led to a dramatic increase in the value of commercial properties near the hotels and casino and a large amount of new development in that area.

Beginning in 2008 and continuing into early 2012 the housing sector has been relatively slow throughout the county. There have been several upper-end homes built during this period, but overall prices of existing homes have stabilized and the volume of sales has slowed since the 2005 through 2007 period. The French Lick area had seen significant increases in property values following the work done to the hotels and the addition of the casino, but prices in this area have also now stabilized. New residential developments have been limited to a few large-tract rural subdivisions scattered around the county with only a small number of new homes in those areas.

### **Commercial**

The hotel and casino developments in West Baden and French Lick have been the driving force of commercial activity in the county since 2005. While there has been some limited continued new growth following the hotel and casino developments, the pace of new construction and renovation has slowed considerably. Since 2008 the area has seen the addition of an indoor water park with attached hotel, the construction of another motel, the conversion of a factory into a modern indoor go-cart facility, the completion of the PGA quality Pete Dye golf course, the addition of a mini-golf/ laser tag venue, and the construction of various smaller entities. Conversely, there are multiple vacant commercial and industrial facilities that have been on the market for several months now and others that have had a high rate of turnover with tenants.

Between 2006 and 2010 the Assessor's appraisal vendor carried out a complete field inspection and reassessment of about 90% of the commercial parcels throughout the county, including yearly inspections of most larger facilities including the hotels and casino. During the 2010 through 2012 reassessment period all commercial and industrial parcels were re-inspected in the field.

In assessment years prior to 2012 the county was able to readily develop trend factors to be applied to commercial properties in the French Lick area. However, due to the limited number of sales outside of French Lick, the assessor began applying cost index multipliers and re-depreciating commercial properties beginning in 2007.

A cost index derived from *Marshall and Swift* was applied to all commercial, industrial, utility and commercial-type exempts outside of French Lick Township and then these parcels were re-depreciated based on an effective valuation date of January 1, 2006. This process continued each year through the 2011 project. For 2012 all cost index multipliers were removed when new cost and depreciation tables were loaded that were applicable to the March 1, 2012 assessment date.

## **Commercial Land**

Due to the limited amount of raw land sales for commercial and industrial property, the county contracted with a local appraiser in 2009 to obtain appraisals of commercial and industrial properties in both Paoli and Orleans Townships. The appraisals carried out were used to supplement and revise the land values established by the county. Commercial land was trended slightly higher in 2010 to capture the demand for new commercial sites and to bring the assessed values closer to full market value in use. Most of the changes made during 2011 were solely to bring land values closer to a 100%-assessment level.

## **Residential**

All sales disclosures for residential properties are initially verified and validated by the county assessor's office by phone contact with the parties involved in the sale. During the trending projects from 2004 through 2010, field inspections were made of any parcels where the sale price and assessed value differed by more than 15% . During the 2011 and 2012 projects all sold parcels were reviewed in the field.

A large number of these inspections often result in finding renovated, omitted or removed improvements. Discussion with the owners onsite yielded new information about the financing or family relationships which do not always appear on the disclosures. During each prior year the Assessor has attached a spreadsheet with the trending package with a summary of those parcels reviewed in the field during the trending process.

Sale prices throughout the county during 2009 and early 2010 tended to vary from slight decreases in incorporated areas to relatively flat prices in the rural areas. This pattern has continued through the remainder of 2010 , 2011 and into 2012 with no precipitous drops but no real increases.. The number of foreclosures, distressed sales, and sales following repossessions rose significantly in 2009 and has continued at a high rate through 2010, 2011 and now 2012.

## **Income Producing Properties**

Orange County has a limited number of multi-family housing apartments. Most of the multi-family developments are either low-income or elderly housing. The county has obtained income and expense data from the majority of those properties. Almost all of the multi-family apartments were appealed during the 2002 reassessment and/ or following the 2006 through 2011

trending projects. The process of comparing the capitalized net income to the assessed valuations has been an ongoing activity since the 2002 reassessment. The county has also gathered rental data from residential rentals to develop GRM's and then compared the GRM derived values against the current assessed values.

### **Other data Sources**

The data base for properties available through the MLS has improved in the past few years. The county has utilized what data is available, which is primarily on-line listing fact sheets, as comparison of value and also to obtain construction data on both residential and commercial property. The MLS data is still relatively limited compared to MLS data available in most larger counties. What data is available has been incorporated into the 2012 valuation process and has been utilized for prior years also.

As part of the ongoing assessment support process the county also has a tax attorney on retainer. The county utilizes her services on various appeals each year and she has provided appraisers to help support the county's assessed values. The county also retains the services of independent appraisers when necessary to support assessed values during the appeal process.

### **Mobile Homes**

Pursuant to directions from the DLGF the Assessor has removed single-wide mobile homes from the real property assessment rolls and priced them as personal property. Because of this, sales involving single-wide mobile homes have not been used since the 2007 ratio study. Also, the county has repriced all double-wide mobile homes as dwellings. This repricing has resulted in assessed values that vary far more than other classes of property when comparing year-to-year assessments.

### **Neighborhood Review and Reduction of Overstratification**

During the 2002 revaluation neighborhood boundaries within incorporated areas tended to follow subdivision lines. While this made the data collection, data entry and land valuation process much easier during the reassessment it created some trending issues. It required far more changes to the control pages of the county's software system than would be expected and it has required that multipliers be developed from reviewing clusters of similar neighborhoods instead of larger more comprehensive neighborhoods. Between 2008 and 2011 multiple smaller neighborhoods were combined to produce larger neighborhoods that are easier to work with. This allows for better stratification, where before the county was over-stratified. Below is a summary of neighborhoods combined and inactivated by taxing unit:

**Paoli Town** ( 32 small neighborhoods combined into larger areas and inactivated );  
**West Baden** ( 5 neighborhoods combined); **French Lick Town** ( 15 neighborhoods combined );  
**Orleans Town** ( 22 neighborhoods combined); **French Lick Township**: ( 4 neighborhoods combined);  
**Greenfield**: ( 1 neighborhood combined); **Jackson**: ( 1 neighborhood combined);

**Northeast:** (2 neighborhoods combined); **Northwest:** (1 neighborhood combined); **Stampers Creek:** ( 1 neighborhood combined).

During the 2012 trending and reassessment process additional neighborhoods have been combined into larger neighborhoods: **French Lick Township** (Neigh 9102 combined into 9101); **French Lick Town** (#9203 added to #9228, #9226 added to #9221); **Jackson Township** (#9503 combined into #9501); **Northeast Township** (#9604 added to 9603); **Paoli Township** ( #1101, 1106, 1108 and 1109 all combined with 1103); **Paoli Town** (#1218 and 1220 both added to 1217, #1244 added to 1214); **Southeast Township** (#1405 added to #1404).

The 2012 neighborhood makeup will be dramatically different than that first used during the 2002 reassessment. Since 2002 the total number of neighborhoods has been reduced by (97).

### **Reassessment Activity Impact**

Initial work for the 2012 reassessment began in January of 2010 and has continued actively since that time. This activity has been a “complete” reassessment with a re-measure and full review of all parcels.

### **Time Trending of Sales and Expanded Sales Pools**

As required in the guidelines for 2012 ratio studies the residential improved sales pool is made up of all valid sales from January 1, 2010 through March 1, 2012 window. Due to the small number of sales available the residential vacant and commercial improved categories were expanded to include 2009 sales.

Incorporating the best available data from prior sales and the opinions of Realtors and Appraisers yielded very negligible time adjustments of 1 percent for properties that have sold earlier than January 1, 2009. There have been no discernable changes to justify a time adjustment since the end of 2008 so no time adjustment was applied to 2009 sales.

While various indexes could be used to establish a time trend those indexes do not accurately capture what is taking place in the market. For example an inflation index of building material would show large changes. The material costs would be substantially higher, but that cost is not reflected in prices of existing homes.

### **Sales Groupings**

Due to the limited number of industrial sales the sales throughout the county of both Industrial Improved and Industrial Vacant have been combined onto one spreadsheet. This was also done with vacant commercial property and improved commercial parcels.

Residential vacant parcels have been combined into three groupings. French Lick, Jackson and Northwest Townships have been combined for the first grouping. These townships are adjacent, and make up the western part of the county. They are also in the same school district.

The second grouping of residential vacant parcels is comprised of Northeast, Orangeville, Orleans, Southeast, and Stampers Creek Townships. The third grouping consists of Paoli Township and Greenfield Township which is immediately to the south.

Due to the small number of sales of residential homes in the more sparsely populated areas, sales from some of the townships were also combined. Stampers Creek, Southeast and Northeast Townships have been grouped. These townships make up the eastern third of the county. Sales from Northwest Township and Orangeville have also been combined. These are two very similar townships that make up the northwest quarter of the county.