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News Release

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Beaufort County Auditor Announces Significant Policy Change in Appraising Motor Vehicles

The Beaufort County Auditor's Office has undergone many changes in the past 90 days since Jim Beckert took office, including appearance changes in the office, implementation of new customer service accountability performance standards, and workflow improvements designed to improve efficiency. The first major policy change introduced will affect the way motor vehicles are appraised for taxation. After researching this issue and having multiple discussions with the South Carolina Department of Revenue (SCDOR), Beaufort County Auditor Jim Beckert determined the need for a change.

Beaufort County was one of the few counties in the state assessing motor vehicle taxes based on the highest vehicle car model, or value criteria, when the value was not available in the SCDOR valuation guide. According to Beckert, if the SCDOR guide does not list the value of a motor vehicle, the lowest price criteria provided in the Automobile Red Book cost guide will be used as a second source of data.

"Our appraisal practices need to change to reflect the guidance given by the SCDOR, which will put Beaufort County's method in line with peer counties."

All motor vehicles are assessed first using the SCDOR valuation guide as required by state law. That guide provides the value for the vast majority of the motor vehicles registered in Beaufort County. When the value is not available in the SCDOR guide for a new current year vehicle, the assessed value is based on the Automobile Red Book new car guide using the invoice cost. Older year vehicles will be assessed a value based on the lowest value criteria in the Automobile Red Book. If records provided to the Auditor's Office are incomplete and research does not identify a particular model of vehicle, the base model, the lowest value criteria listed in the Automobile Red Book will be used until additional information can be gathered that will accurately identify the vehicles' make.

"Feedback from taxpayers is essential to our operations and we encourage them to review their tax bill and contact us with any questions," said Beckert. "Our goal is to help ensure that taxpayers are taxed fairly and appropriately. We are here to serve them."

To correct information on a motor vehicle tax bill, taxpayers should submit the title, registration and/or the bill of sale to the Auditor's Office. In accordance with South Carolina Code 12-60-2910, taxpayers have the right to appeal a tax assessment or request a refund, 30 days from when the tax bill was mailed or the last day to pay the tax bill.

For more information, contact the Auditor's Office at 843-255-2500 or visit the [Auditor's web page](#).