



Cheryl E. Johnson, RTA
Assessor and Collector of Taxes
Galveston County
 722 Moody Avenue
 Galveston, Texas 77550
 (409) 765-3277
 Cheryl.E.Johnson@co.galveston.tx.us



10 Years of Facts & Figures

The Galveston County Tax Office team is celebrating 10 years of change under my leadership. This is the first in a series of articles intended to celebrate our on-going race for quality. The motto of the Tax Office is *“where the race for quality knows no finish line.”* As frustrating as the changes have sometimes been for the team who have been with me the entire 10 years, the improvements have been worth it in my opinion.

Since this is the time of year for local governments to adopt budgets and set tax rates, this article will discuss our impact on the County budget over the last 10 years (*assuming our proposed budget is approved*). You decide whether you are getting “bang for the buck” from us.

The chart below includes some of our measurable workloads – think about what you see. For example, 23,717 more property tax parcels translates to 23,717 more property bills, payments to receive and receipt, deposit, disperse and report to our government partners (which have also increased). When we, you or the CAD make a mistake, there are penalty and interest cases and refunds. We collect over \$300M in property taxes alone every year.

Ten years ago, it took four months, 27 employees and 10 temps to process property tax payments – manually – as we had not yet contracted for “remote processing/lockbox”. Today, we are again processing in-house but we are utilizing technology. We have no temps – every department contributes time to the effort and it happens in 1-5 DAYS. The team is amazing and we have saved the county \$40,000 a year in contract costs – without adding staff.

As you can see, the budget has increased. This year in particular, we have requested pay-for-performance to address employee morale, performance and hopefully retention. Although COLAs (cost-of-living-adjustments) are welcome, they simply address inflation and not performance. A trained and motivated workforce is essential to the work we do and performance pay is simply a good business policy. Increased are a couple of position upgrades due to new technologies which require greater skills. Also included is a Customer Service Representative for the League City Branch – absolutely necessary to service the additional 46,471 people who moved to Friendswood, League City and Dickinson since 2000. The mid and south county populations are a bit of a wash due to the dramatic impact of Hurricane Ike which profoundly affected our waterfront communities.

Take a look. Next time I report on some of our improvements and the services we are pleased to provide.

	2005-2006	Proposed 2014 - 2015	10 Year Increase	% Increase Over 10 Years
Employees	50	51.5	1.5	3%
Budgets	\$2,142,952	\$2,672,037	529,085	25%
Property Tax Accounts	168,670	192,387	23,717	14%
Tax Collection Partners	30	40	10	33%
Motor Vehicle Registrations	228,353	279,003	50,650	22%
Motor Vehicle Titles	47,834	58,064	10,230	21%
Beer & Wine Permits	1,147	1,092	-55	-5%
Coin Operated Machines	1,076	2,423	1,347	125%
Registered Voters	182,743	187,595	4,852	3%

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