

# Introduction

Oregon's property tax system is one of the most important sources of revenue for the public sector in Oregon. This source raised \$3.61 billion for local governments in fiscal year 2003–04. Only state personal income tax collections exceed property tax revenues as a source of state and local tax revenue. Over the past decade, property tax revenues have been reduced and limited as a result of two changes to how taxes are calculated. Since the last limitation went into effect in 1997–98, and despite the economic downturn of the last couple of years, property tax revenues continue to gradually increase each year.

This publication describes Oregon's property tax system through the presentation of statistical information. Specifically, it presents assessed values, market values, and taxes imposed by county and type of taxing district. In addition, the publication contains a brief description of how Oregon's property tax system has changed over the last 12 years and how it currently works.

This document contains four sections:

- The *Overview and Highlights* makes observations about distinguishing features of fiscal year 2003–04 and recent trends in Oregon's property tax system.
- The *Guide to Using the Data* explains how certain data elements are handled in the tables. This guide is provided both to clarify some subtle features of the property tax system that may appear inconsistent and to point out some data limitations.
- The *Detailed Tables* section provides tables of property values and taxes imposed, both by county and type of district. Taxes collected and uncollected are also included by county.
- Finally, the three appendices contain a detailed list of district tax rates (Appendix A), a description of changes to the property tax system over the last decade (Appendix B), and a glossary of terms used in the publication (Appendix C).

The information in this book is presented primarily at the county or district-type level. Additional information about property taxes is available in two other Department of Revenue publications. Information about individual taxing districts can be found in the 2003–04 edition of the *Oregon Property Tax Statistics Supplement*. Information about property tax exemptions can be found in the *State of Oregon 2003–05 Tax Expenditure Report*.

In recent years, some of the property tax data the department has received from counties has been incomplete. This has prevented some statewide totals from being calculated. In an effort to provide as much useful information as possible, we have included tables with missing data. Where data were missing, every effort was made to clearly identify the gaps. Totals are included only where we have complete data for all 36 counties. In some cases, certain data discrepancies could not be resolved. The *Guide to Using the Data* section provides further discussion of the major data problems.