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BUILDING DEPARTMENTS IN TRI-COUNTY TO ADOPT STANDARD METHOD TO CALCULATE FEES

(Portland) By October 1, 2000 local building departments in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties will make the work of contractors and developers in the region a little simpler by adopting a consistent system to calculate fees for building permits. While fees may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction depending on the value of the property or equipment, the method by which fees are calculated will be the same.

The new system was developed by the Tri-County Building Industries Service Board, which the 1999 Legislature created and gave the job of standardizing permitting processes and practices in the 27 local jurisdictions — city and county governments — that make up the region. The Oregon Building Codes Division provides administrative and staff support for the board.

Adopting the new system presents a number of challenges to building departments. “Adjusting our current fee tables to correspond to the new structure was more problematic than we first thought,” said Ricky Icenogle, the acting building official for Hillsboro. “For example we currently calculate commercial mechanical fees per piece of equipment. Tri-county’s methodology is based on the valuation of the equipment. It’s like comparing apples to oranges.”

According to Kevin Wing of the Homebuilders Association, comparing apples and oranges has been precisely the problem for contractors and developers. “Builders working in multiple jurisdictions had to deal with multiple fee tables and methodologies,” said Wing. “Having a standard methodology now makes it possible for contractors to accurately compare — and predict — what fees they will have to pay in a jurisdiction. The board’s goal was to introduce uniform fee methodologies throughout the region without raising fees.”

Jurisdictions must maintain “revenue neutrality” when converting their methodologies -- meaning that the conversion cannot result in fee increases. Nearly every jurisdiction must convert one or more categories of fees to reflect the new method.

In addition to the fee methodology, the Tri-County Building Industries Service Board oversees the standardization of permitting forms and processes, training for certain building inspectors and a process for consistent building code interpretation in the tri-county area. The board provides services through the Tri-County Service Center, an office of the state Building Codes Division. The center is located at 123 NE 3rd Avenue in Portland. It provides informational services to contractors and building officials, and administers a permitting program for minor plumbing and electrical installations serving the tri-county region. For more information, contact the center's manager, Joan Stevens-Schwenger, at 503-872-6731 or check the center's Web site, at www.cbs.state.or.us/bcd.

(more)

Tri-County Fee Methodology for Building Permits

Although permit fees are not uniform throughout the 27 jurisdictions of the tri-county area, the methods used to calculate the various fees will be the same by October 1, 2000. This table outlines the new fee methodology for various permits.

| Type of Permit | Type of Construction | Methodology |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Electrical | All | Based on categories established in the <u>Oregon Administrative Rules</u> (OAR 918-309-0020-0070). Fees for electrical permits are standard throughout Oregon. |
| Manufactured Dwelling | | Each jurisdiction may charge a set fee for set-up and installation. This fee includes cross-over connections. |
| Mechanical | New construction | Calculated per appliance and related equipment. There is a set minimum fee. |
| Mechanical | Commercial | Based on the value of the mechanical equipment and installation costs applied to the jurisdiction's fee table with a set minimum. The plan review fee is based on a percentage of the permit fee. |
| Plumbing | New construction | Fees are based on the number of bathrooms. The jurisdiction has a graduated scale for the first three bathrooms (the first costs the most, for example). The first kitchen is included in this fee. An additional set fee is assessed for each additional kitchen or bath from one to three. |
| Plumbing | Additions, alterations and repairs | Based on the number of fixtures, appurtenances and piping. There is a set minimum fee. |
| Plumbing | Commercial | Fees are based on the number of fixtures and the piping footage, with a set minimum fee. The plan review fee is extra. |
| Structural | New construction and additions | Based on the ICBO Building Evaluation Table (without the Oregon modifier) times the <u>square footage of the dwelling</u> . The valuation is applied to the jurisdiction's fee table to determine the fee. |
| Structural | Remodels and alterations | Based on fair market value as determined by the building official, applied to the jurisdiction's fee table. |
| Structural | Commercial | Based on valuation applied to the jurisdiction's fee table. The plan review fee is based on a percentage of the permit fee as set by the local jurisdiction. |