

Locked in with Lane Property Tax Advocates: Expertise saves money, headaches in property tax process

BY BRANDI SMITH

If you've never done battle with your local appraisal district over the value of your property, you've likely saved yourself from a huge headache, but alternately missed out on a huge opportunity to save yourself a significant amount on property taxes.

"If you are not aggressively protesting your value and pushing for appeals on your property, you are not managing your tax base appropriately and are most likely paying more than your fair share in property taxes," said Hunter Lane, vice president of Lane Property Tax Advocates.

The company got its start in 2009 when founder Michael Lane, who at the time had more than 20 years of appraisal experience, attended a hearing with the Harris County Appraisal Review Board.

"Like the majority of property owners, he left frustrated as he had been denied a correction for his hearing," Hunter said. "He then decided something needed to be done with the current property tax system and founded Lane Property Tax Advocates."

The full-service property tax advisory firm has experience in all facets of commercial real estate. It boasts a team of tax professionals with more than 100 years of combined experience.

"We have a great group of established individuals who come to work every day looking to progress and have no fear of taking on great resistance in order to achieve success," Hunter said.

He adds the staff actively seeks out the empowerment of education, such as



Michael Lane



Hunter Lane

classes on negotiation, appraisal and real estate trends, throughout the year to stay sharp and keep ahead of the game.

"Our group is relentless and takes their real estate knowledge to heart. Never settling, but always looking to learn and gain an edge," said Hunter. "We are highly qualified real estate professionals equipped with all the necessary tools to handle a client's commercial real estate needs."

Above all, though, Lane Property Tax is a family-owned business that holds on to its core family values, such as integrity, loyalty and pride.

"We are honored when clients choose us because we do know that they have a choice. Once you're onboard with Lane you are not just a client to us, you are a part of our family," Hunter said.

Founder and CEO, Michael Lane, is a designated member of The Appraisal Institute (MAI), state-certified general appraiser, real estate broker and a senior property tax consultant with more than 30 years of experience in commercial real estate consulting and valuation. His passion for his career helped kickstart his son Hunter's.

"When I was a kid riding in the car with him, he would always point out buildings that he worked on. By the time I got out of college, I felt like I was halfway there," said Hunter.

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That keen interest is vital when navigating the tricky waters that constitute the property tax appeal process.

“It is challenging. Most appraisal districts set their guidelines to how they see fit and this puts the owner at an unfair disadvantage because a mass appraisal system has significant flaws in estimating market value,” said Hunter. “If those flaws are not being taken seriously, then you as a property owner are being taken advantage of.”

Having a wide range of data and a system designed to fight the guidelines of the state and appraisal districts highly improves the odds of achieving a strong correction. That’s why Hunter encourages property owners to contact a property tax firm in the first quarter of the year.

“The sooner we have authority, the more proactive our team can be—building a case for the property, visiting the property and taking pictures, allowing time to get all substantial evidence needed for a successful correction,” Hunter said.

All too often, property owners believe they can make it through the process on their own, realizing too late that a level of expertise is needed to deal with the appraisal district.

“The county appraisal district makes it very difficult to break the barrier of correcting your property taxes. It can be so confusing just down to the information required as supporting evidence,” said Hunter. “It’s just so in depth and it’s difficult for the average person to understand, read and critique all the flaws in the documentation required by the district.”

Add to that the fact that government deadlines at each point in the process cannot be missed or corrected and it’s easy to understand why the Lane team, whose tagline is “Unburden Your Business,” is so valuable.

“We found very early on that the property tax system is a grueling process. Our clients have businesses to run; the need to consistently attend property tax hearings, appeal and correct values is unwarranted,” Hunter said. “We are hopeful our clients put the burden of trying to understand the best defense

against their rising property taxes is best served in the hands of the Lane team. This area of expertise is what our team does on a daily basis. Further, we are available to our clients 24/7.”

For more information about working with Lane Property Tax Advocates, visit lanepropertytax.com.

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