

# 2024 Outstanding Achievement in Assessment (Large Jurisdiction) Award Nomination

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## Nominee's Information

Nominee's Name:	Donald Draper
Nominee's Title:	Assessor
Nominee's Jurisdiction:	Lake Wobegon Township (Des Plaines County)
Years in Property Assessment:	18
Nominated By:	Dorcas Gaylen

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## Nomination Questions:

**Have assessments within the jurisdiction been regularly accurate? What approach is taken to ensure accuracy?**

Lake Wobegon Township has over 25,000 parcels which include old historic homes, low end rentals, farms, commercial, industrial and everything in between. In 2007 when Don Draper took over as Lake Wobegon Township Assessor the coefficient of dispersion was 26.34 and by 2011 it had lowered to 18.51. In 2016 Don fully implemented use of GIS in the office to help ensure accuracy and uniformity in all fieldwork and thereby, assessments. Now when fieldwork is done, the staff take iPads with them that are connected to the CAMA and GIS system. Their work is more accurate, as are the assessments.

**What innovative or new ideas have been implemented with the office? How has this improved the quality of assessments and/or function of the office?**

In quad years, Don started a monthly "Coffee with the Assessor" at the local McDonald's. It's an informal time in the morning where people can come and learn more about their assessments, how property valuation is done, and share a cup of joe. The Cubs and Bears tend to get talked about a lot too!

Don also started doing community outreach by giving presentations to senior groups, Rotary Clubs, neighborhood associations, and others willing to bring him in for an hour talk. He uses these opportunities to teach others about the work we do.

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**How is the nominee collaborative with other elected or appointed officials (both inside and outside of the jurisdiction)?**

He works very closely with me at the county, as well as the township assessor in Enterprise Township, which borders his own. Don also has a strong working relationship with township supervisor, Henry. They work together on various township projects outside of the assessment office, but for the betterment of the community.

**What does the nominee do to maintain high ethical standards? How have they worked to elevate the public trust in the work of the office or property tax cycle?**

Don's daughter once told me that her dad is so honest that once when she was eight, he took a piece of gum from the store without paying. When Don found out, he took her back, made her apologize to the clerk and the register, and pay for the gum out of her birthday money. He brings the same level of attention to and honesty to his office and the work he and his staff do.

Don is always happy to down with me and representatives from the school district and city to talk about assessments and where we think the EAV is headed. Doing this has been a great help to them for pre-planning their annual budgets. It also helps make for no, or few, surprises when the actual assessments come forward.



## **Des Plaines County**

1400 N Main St, Wilmington, Illinois

*Supervisor of Assessments Office*

*Dorcas Gaylen, CIAO-M*

November 1, 2023

Board of Directors  
Illinois Property Assessment Institute  
207 W Jefferson St, STE 303  
Bloomington, IL 61701

RE: Outstanding Achievement in Property Assessment Award

Dear Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to write a supporting letter in reference to Lake Wobegon Township Assessor Donald Draper.

I am the Supervisor of Assessments for Des Plaines County and Don and I have worked hand in hand for more than a decade. Over this time, he has shown himself to be a strong community leader. He has continued to show his knowledge of assessments, as well as partner with the community on a personal and office level.

He was the first township assessor in our country to embrace GIS and implement it as a tool in all his office does from fieldwork to constituents coming into the office. Don has made presentations to both IAAO and IPAI conferences concerning the successes of this technology/software and precisely how it was used to improve Lake Wobegon Township. Don also takes the time to share his knowledge and experiences with others. As a result, several more township assessors have begun to fully embrace the use of GIS in their offices.

Don has made a great contribution to our industry and the people of Lake Wobegon Township. I fully support his nomination for Outstanding Achievement in Property Assessment Award.

Thank you,

Dorcas Gaylen, CIAO-M  
Supervisor of Assessments

# *Lake Wobegon Township*

*Henry Higgins, Supervisor*

1400 N Main St  
Wilmington, Illinois 60481

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November 1, 2023

Board of Directors  
Illinois Property Assessment Institute  
207 W Jefferson St, STE 303  
Bloomington, IL 61701

RE: Outstanding Achievement in Property Assessment Award

Dear IPAI Board,

I am writing to support the nomination of Lake Wobegon Township Assessor Donald Draper.

As township supervisor, I have worked closely with Don for a number of years. Since my first day in office, Don has been a partner and friend. He has outstanding credentials, including earning his advanced degree from your organization. He has been deeply involved with Township Officials of Illinois and co-chairs our annual township Christmas toy drive.

When it comes to assessments and taxes, Don goes out of his way to make sure the other taxing districts understand what is happening with real estate values in our city and how its going to impact them. He annually meets with local superintendent and school board chairman, as well as the city manager to talk through any major changes in values.

When it comes to running his office, Don is first class all the way. He's a good boss to his employees. Firm when he needs to be, but always fair and understanding. He's started using new mapping technology in his office that helps them track changes in real estate values. He's able to share this with the taxpayers too so they can easily see what he's talking about when it comes to their assessments.

Don is a community-minded person and we're glad to have him at the township as assessor. Please make sure Lake Wobegon Township Donald Draper is the one to receive this award. It is well deserved for his years of service.

Thank you,

Supervisor Henry T. Higgins  
Lake Wobegon Township



## Enterprise Township Assessor

213 S Maple Street – Stelle, Illinois 60919

**Elphaba Thropp, CIAO**

November 22, 2023

IPAI Board of Directors  
Illinois Property Assessment Institute  
207 W Jefferson St, STE 303  
Bloomington, IL 61701

RE: Outstanding Achievement in Property Assessment Award

To the Board of Directors,

I am writing to support the nomination of Lake Wobegon Township Assessor Donald Draper for the Outstanding Achievement in Property Assessment Award. Mr. Draper's ethics, achievements, and dedication to service have an immeasurable effect on not only his township but every township in Des Plaines County.

For a decade, Don served as president of our Des Plaines County Township Assessors Association. During that time, he has fostered education, information sharing, and equitable access for all. His dedication to the greater good has transformed the way we work.

Enterprise Township is a neighboring township to Lake Wobegon Township. Because the City of Lake Wobegon overlaps both of our townships, Don and I have co-sponsored community forums on assessment with the county so the taxpayers better understand their assessments and taxes.

Don is a well-respected member of our community and has been deeply involved in many organizations through the years. He has the respect of our other township assessors, great knowledge, and experience. I fully support Lake Wobegon Township Assessor Donald Draper for the Outstanding Achievement in Property Assessment Award.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elphaba Thropp, CIAO  
Enterprise Township Assessor

