

Today’s Show:

Host Kris Halterman will interview Whatcom County Assessor Keith Willnauer on the soon to be released 2018 Whatcom County Property Tax bills. What’s up? What’s down? And Why?

LIBERTY ALERTS:

[On Tuesday, January 9th, 2018 the newly seated Whatcom County Council will select the candidate to fulfill the vacancy created with the election of Councilmember Todd Donovan to the new District 2 seat.](#)

There are currently twenty-nine candidates who have thrown their hat in the ring. Many of the names are familiar to political-geeks like me. [You \(the listeners\) might want to take a moment to see who’s asking to be seated and weigh-in on who you believe they should select.](#) With the last four-year + of an echo chamber in the Council Chambers it would be refreshing if they were to pick a candidate who is either middle of the road (a true independent voice) or conservative in their following of the national, state, and local laws.

COMMON CENTS:

Just this week all Americans were given a federal tax cut on their earned income. Everyone within the low to middle-class income earners will see a substantial lowering of your federal income tax. This does not include what each wage earner will pay in Social Security or Medicare Taxes. This is only that which you paid to the Federal Government, known as your Withholding taxes.

Some low wage earners will likely not see a difference for several reasons. Mostly because they didn’t have any income withheld due to the number of exemptions they can take and the Earned Income Tax Credit for low income earners. The mid-wage or middle-class will see the largest cuts in federal withholding...those are the Forgotten Man (man, woman, and families) who have been left out of all the fiscal maneuvering for the past thirty-one years, since the 1986 Reagan tax cuts.

Merry Christmas to Everyone...especially you the forgotten people who make up the largest percentage of the American population...this is truly a cause for celebration. Are the tax changes as great as they could have been? No. But, they are a step in the right direction and it is up to all of us to continue to push for smaller government, expansion of civil and private property rights, and with that the means to keep more for the benefit of our family and our future.

Please take a snapshot of your Dec. and Jan. paychecks. Keep them and compare them to your Feb. 2018 paycheck(s) and read the line for Federal Withholding to know that you will be keeping more of your hard-earned wages to spend, save, or give away in whatever manner you choose.

Happy New Year ... we are on the road to Make-America-Great-Again 😊 through self-reliance, independence, liberty, and equal-justice under the laws of our U.S. Constitution.

SATURDAY MORNING LIVE FOR DECEMBER 30, 2017 ~
 “WE’RE LIVE – WE’RE ABOUT LIBERTY – WE’RE FOCUSED ON YOU!”

[From Forbes.com:](#)

2018 Income Tax Brackets: The number of brackets remained the same at seven. Rates overall, however, have come down. For individuals, these lower rates are scheduled to expire in 2025 unless Congress extends them.

The top rate will fall from 39.6% to 37%. The bottom rate remains at 10%, but it covers twice the amount of income compared to the previous brackets.

2018 Rate	Individuals	Married Filing Jointly
10%	Up to \$9,525	Up to \$19,050
12%	\$9,526 to \$38,700	\$1,905.00 plus 12% of wages between \$19,051 to \$77,400
22%	38,701 to \$82,500	\$8,907.00 plus 22% of wages between \$77,401 to \$165,000
24%	\$82,501 to \$157,500	\$28,179.00 plus 24% of wages between \$165,001 to \$315,000
32%	\$157,501 to \$200,000	\$64,179.00 plus 32% of wages between \$315,001 to \$400,000
35%	\$200,001 to \$500,000	\$91,379.00 plus 35% of wages between \$400,001 to \$600,000
37%	over \$500,000	\$161,379.00 plus 37% of wages over \$600,000

2017 Rate	Individuals	Married Filing Jointly
10%	Up to \$9,325	Up to \$18,650
15%	\$9,325 to \$37,950	\$1,865 plus 15% of wages between \$18,650 to \$75,900
25%	38,701 to \$91,900	\$10,452.50 plus 25% of wages between \$75,900 to \$153,100
28%	\$91,900 to \$191,650	\$29,752.50 plus 28% of wages between \$153,100 to \$233,350
33%	\$191,650 to \$416,700	\$52,222.50 plus 33% of wages between \$233,350 to \$416,700
35%	\$416,700 to \$418,400	\$112,728.00 plus 35% of wages between \$416,700 to \$470,700
39.6%	over \$418,400	\$131,628.00 plus 13.9% of wages over \$470,700

2018 Standard Deduction Examples: The standard deduction in 2018 as the law currently exists is \$13,000 for a couple filing jointly. That number will jump to \$24,000. For single filers it jumps from \$6,500 to \$12,000.

The personal exemption, currently at \$4,150 for 2018, would be repealed. That's the bad news. The good news the child tax credit gets a big boost.

It currently sits at \$1,000 and starts to phase out at \$110,000 in income for couples and \$75,000 in income for everybody else. Under the new law, the credit doubles to \$2,000, \$1,400 of which is a refundable tax credit. Further, it doesn't start to phase out until \$400,000 in income for couples and \$200,000 for singles.

2018 Itemized Deductions: Several key changes are coming for itemized deductions. State and local taxes can still be itemized, but they are now capped at \$10,000. This concession attempts to address the uproar from states that levy big taxes on their citizens.

Interest on mortgages for primary and secondary residences is still deductible. The limit, however, has come down from loans up to \$1 million to loans up to \$750,000.

Medical expenses in 2017 and 2018 are deductible to the extent they exceed 7.5% of income (down from 10%).

[More information on 2018 taxes from Doughroller.net.](#)

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Introduction of WC Assessor Keith Willnauer

Taxes have been in the news of late, including property taxes

Typically, the Assessor’s Office has already finalized the new property tax bills ... has this process been delayed or are you on time to get out the new assessment bills shortly after the first of the year?

What has been the greatest challenge in putting together this year’s tax assessments?

You were kind enough (?) to put together an analysis of [my personal property taxes over 2015 through 2018](#).

Annually my taxes went up last year 12.83%

2018 projected increase is 12.88%

2015 – 2018 overall increase is 27.39%

Avg. annual incr. of 7.64%

- State share of property taxes (PTx) from 2015 -16 went down: -4.25%
- 2017 saw an increase in the State’s share of PTx of: 4.30%
- 2018 PTx increase due to the McCleary Fix and the delay in local school levy collections have increased the State’s collection to 55.72% and the Local Levy collection to 22.73%; a total of 75.45% that the State and Schools factor into your property tax increases
 - Which is also affected by the avg. increase in property values of 10% across Whatcom County

It appears by looking at the report that the biggest drivers for PTx assessment incr. are due to voter approved taxes and the State’s McCleary Fix.

One item that also stands out clearly is the sharp increase in the **Flood Tax**.

- ❖ 2016 – 0.72%
- ❖ 2017 – 3.39%
- ❖ **2018 – 37.87%**

- What is the cause of this huge increase?
- Your table shows it as a tax impactor affect.
- What does that mean to the average listener to this show?
- State Senator Doug Ericksen has proposed a fix to the heavy impact in 2018 for property owners. Will that pass?
- I’ve heard it’s DOA (dead-on-arrival) due to the shift in Democrat control of the State Senate. True or False?
- Will 2019 see a decrease in property taxes or could the Democrat controlled State Senate delay this further to receive a quasi-tax (income tax) increase to their coffers and fund their pet projects that have been cut due to the need to increase spending for public education?
- Have the new impacts from the Whatcom County Comp Plan Changes and the Hirst Decision and WC moratorium on permitting properties requiring a private-well, been factored into the 2018 bills?
- Have you seen all the properties you estimate to that have been affected by these changes?
- How and Who can people contact for more info?
- Who should they contact if they’d like to see Senator Ericksen’s fix approved?