Property tax collections in Ascension increase

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DONALDSONVILLE — Property tax collections in Ascension Parish increased in 1987, thanks to a healthy increase of more than $11 million in the assessed valuation of taxable property, Assessor Gerald M. McCrory Jr. said Wednesday.

Total tax collections rose $802,573 over 1986 collections to a total of $15,331,540, McCrory said.

Assessed valuation rose in 1987 to $221,682,190, an increase of $11,615,410 over the previous year. More than $1.5 million of the increase is covered by homestead exemption and is not taxable, he said.

“I think it’s a very hopeful sign for the parish,” McCrory said. “I’m real impressed with the increase that we have and that we’ll have next year.”

More than $24.8 million in taxable property will enter the tax rolls in 1988 as 10-year industrial tax exemptions expire. The increase in valuation will result in an increase in tax collections of $1,736,707, McCrory said.

The increase in the value of taxable property in Ascension is far greater than that experienced in adjacent parishes, McCrory said. Assessed valuation rose just $2 million in St. James and Livingston parishes and $4 million in Iberville.

Valuations declined by $4 million in Assumption and East Baton Rouge parishes, McCrory said.

More than $110 million worth of industrial exemption contracts expired in 1987 and came onto the tax rolls. The industrial units are assessed at a percentage of actual value — 4.05 percent for fertilizer units and 9 percent for chemical units, McCrory said.

Among the largest of the expired exemptions this year were Vulcan Chemicals Co., nearly $50.8 million; BASF Corp., $29 million; Shell Chemical Co., $11.78 million, and Uniroyal Chemical Co., Inc., $8.44 million.

Ten-year tax exemption contracts coming onto the tax rolls next year total more than $422 million, including contracts held by CF Industries, $196.9 million; Shell, $98 million; Ampro, $66.8 million, and Borden Chemical, $31.7 million.

More than $1.76 billion worth of industrial tax exemptions will expire and come onto the parish’s tax rolls over the next 10 years, McCrory said.

Property in Ascension and the state’s 63 other parishes will undergo constitutionally-mandated re-appraisal in 1988 — two years earlier than scheduled, McCrory said.

Re-appraisal, which is normally conducted every four years, is being accelerated because Louisiana’s struggling economy has caused property values to decline, he said.

“We’re going to try to look at every piece of land and every improvement in the parish,” the assessor said.

McCrory said he expects property values to fall in the parishwide re-appraisal but that the decline will not be significant.

“I don’t look for a drastic reduction,” he said.