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BGR Report Outlines Major Overhaul of Assessment System in New Orleans

The Bureau of Governmental Research today releases In All Fairness: Building a Model Assessment System in New Orleans. In the report, BGR looks at the steps the new citywide assessor must take to create a fair, efficient and transparent assessment system in Orleans Parish. The report is available on BGR’s web site, www.bgr.org.

This spring, voters will elect a single assessor for all of Orleans Parish, ending the inefficient district-based system that has long failed to produce accurate assessments. These assessments have deprived the city of needed revenue, inflated tax rates and created inequitable tax burdens among residents.

Consolidation of the seven assessor offices is necessary for reform, but it does not guarantee it. In All Fairness calls for a major overhaul of the office’s structure and practices. It makes recommendations aimed at reorganizing the office, identifying the highest quality personnel, revamping valuation methods, tackling nonprofit exemptions and educating the public on how the office operates. The report also calls on the Louisiana State Legislature, the city and the current assessors to address issues that will hamper the incoming assessor. In all, the report makes roughly two dozen recommendations critical to building an effective assessment system in New Orleans.

“Assessor consolidation opens the door to significant improvement of our assessment system,” said BGR Chairman Hans B. Jonassen. “An effective office would strengthen the city’s tax base, control millage rates and create equity among taxpayers. We shouldn’t let this opportunity pass us by.”

BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information call 525-4152 or visit BGR’s web site, www.bgr.org.

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