

NEW UNDERTAKINGS, NEW STAFF

BY JOSIE FAASS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's a new year, and there are new things in the works at RSF! More specifically, we've welcomed some new faces to our team - which in my opinion, is the best way possible to be starting off this new year and new decade.

Much of what we focus on has an important spatial component. Land Value Tax (LVT), for example, is all about identifying the portion of land's value that originates, not from the actions or investments of the owners, but from the publicly-provided benefits (like schools, safety, and infrastructure) its owners enjoy as a result of their exclusive access to said land. Recapturing that unearned increment and using it to fund the very public goods that create that enhanced value generates stable public revenues and deters both urban sprawl and land speculation, while helping to ensure land is put to its highest and best use.

We believe that LVT is an all around winning proposition, and clearly, the physical nature of land is a core element. But of course, LVT represents a departure from the status quo - a reshuffling of tax burdens, with some land uses and owners seeing lower tax bills as a result and others seeing increases. Since our efforts through the Center for Property Tax Reform are all about working with communities - full of real neighborhoods, people, and businesses - the importance of correctly identifying these "winners" and "losers" cannot be overstated.

Recognizing the truth in the old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words," RSF has hired Kevin Frech as an intern from Temple University's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program to serve as our Full-Stack Geospatial Analyst. In this role, Kevin will do the



preliminary work to create an online mapping interface, which will give users the ability to manipulate tax rates (ranging from current scenarios to full LVT with two-rate options in between) to see exactly how tax burdens fall across parcels under the various scenarios. This is a complex undertaking, but ultimately we expect it to yield a tool suitable for inclusion on the RSF and CPTR websites, and a way to explain the concept with clarity when talking with curious, or even skeptical, local officials or community group representatives about what would

really happen if their city or town embraced LVT.

As we embrace the new year and forward-looking projects, we are also focused on leveraging the Foundation's past work. Making sure that RSF's roughly 100 years worth of documents and other materials are properly cataloged and easily accessible is key to enabling everything we'll do this year, and in all the years to come. To this end, RSF is pleased to welcome Sanjida Sadeque to the staff as our new Office Organizer.

Sanjida comes to us with a background in chemistry and plans to study information sciences, and will be working in our Manhattan office for the next few months under the direction of our Operations and Finance Manager Gail Lambert.

As I've said before, RSF is small but mighty. Even with these new (temporary) additions, you can still count our staff on one hand, but that doesn't slow us down!

Calling All Authors!

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Who: Anyone who can write critically about today's world in a way that reflects the ideas of Henry George.

What: Blog posts for our website and this newsletter.

When: Anytime and all the time - we're always looking for authors.

Where: Check out "Blog Author Information" on our website for full details.