

Clock ticking on late tax bills

Payments due by March 31 to avoid foreclosure

GENESEE COUNTY

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QUICK TAKE

The highest priced

These are the most valuable properties that Genesee County reports have delinquent taxes and are heading deeper into the foreclosure process. Businesses at these addresses are not necessarily the owners of the properties. The county takes ownership of the properties unless the taxpayer of record is granted a one-year reprieve or taxes are paid by March 31.

- Riverbend Post Acute Continuing Care, 11941 Belsay Road, Grand Blanc. Market value: \$5.5 million. Taxes owed: \$29,637.
- Flint Iceland Arena, 1160 S. Elms Road, Clayton Township. Market value: \$5.2 million. Taxes owed: \$37,299.
- I-75 Merchandise Malls, 4330 W. Mt. Morris Road, Mt. Morris Township. Market value: \$2 million. Taxes owed: \$44,385.
- Grand Court Office Park, 8200 S. Saginaw St., Grand Blanc Township. Market value: \$1.4 million. Taxes owed: \$41,561.
- MMK Properties

LLC, formerly occupied by Brighton Electric Supply, 2452 W. Hill Road, Mundy Township. Market value: \$1.3 million.

Taxes owed: \$32,278.

Source: Genesee County treasurer's office righton Electric Supply, 2452 W. Hill Road, Mundy Township. Market value: \$1.3 million.

Taxes owed: \$32,278.

Source: Genesee County Treasurer's Office

Keeping your property

There are opportunities to keep your property even if it's on the list of 3,185 parcels headed to foreclosure. Here's more information about the foreclosure process:

- A legal advertisement was published in Thursday's Flint Journal and is scheduled to be published again in the newspaper on Thursday and Feb. 2.
- Back taxes and penalties can be paid until 5 p.m. March 31 at the Genesee County Treasurer's Office, 1101 Beach St., Flint.
- Show cause hearings are scheduled for Feb. 16-17 in the county treasurer's office for homeowners seeking a delay to pay the taxes and penalties owed on the property.
- Call the treasurer at (810) 257-3059 for more information.
- A hearing before

GENESEE COUNTY - The Rev. Larry Holley kicked off a series of "Financial Wisdom Seminars" on Thursday, but the executive director of the Children's Dream Center had a financial worry of his own.

Like the owners of 3,184 other properties in the county, Holley got a wake-up notice for overdue property taxes this week in a listing of delinquencies published with Thursday's Flint Journal.

Holley said a potential buyer fell behind on tax payments at the property -a former Kmart store on N. Saginaw Street in Mt. Morris Township -a situation he only recently became aware of.

"I won't be on that list" for long, he vowed.

Holley is probably right. Whether it takes hours, days or weeks, most taxpayers with high-value properties like his find a way to pay off tax debts before March 31 each year, keeping them out of the hands of the county.

When taxes and penalties are higher than the property's value, many others let their real estate go and it ends up with the county Land Bank.

Among the most valuable properties sliding into foreclosure this year are parcels that have been in a similar position before.

Flint Iceland Arenas, owned by Flint General's owner Dr. Khaled Shukairy, and John McGinn, owner of I-75 Merchandise Malls at I-75 and Mt. Morris Road, have avoided losing properties before when late tax bills were paid off.

"These taxes will be taken care of shortly," Shukairy said Thursday about this year's \$37,299 debt.

The overall number of properties headed into foreclosure is about the same compared to the same point last year, and there are about the same number of properties - fewer than 60 -estimated to be worth \$250,000 or more.

Taxes and penalties on this year's list date back to the 2003 tax rolls and were turned over to the county for collection because cities or townships were unable to collect.

The Flint Journal could not reach representatives of some properties Thursday and others had little to say.

At Riverbend Post Acute Continuing Care, 11941 Belsay Road, Grand Blanc, a spokesman said he wasn't familiar with the tax debt of nearly \$30,000.

Reid Aaron, regional vice president for Tri-State Health Investors, a management company, said the business isn't the owner of the property and is continuing to work at its mission.

"Our job is to provide health care ...," Aaron said. "I don't know anything at all about the tax situation."

Also among the noteworthy properties on the foreclosure list is the former Russellville Ballroom, 6058 N. Irish Road in Richfield Township. The property already is in trouble, facing a hearing today with the Township Board over its condition and plans for it.

At that session, the board could decide to seek bids for demolishing the former nightclub, dance hall and restaurant. St. Augustine University in Southfield owns the building.

Genesee County
Circuit Judge Joseph
J. Farah is scheduled
for 8:30 a.m. Feb. 24.
Call (810) 257-3262
to inform the court if
you plan to object to
the tax billing.

Kildee said he's been told by some taxpayers that they wait to pay taxes because they can't get access to money until after taxes are due or because they can make more than the approximate 18 percent penalty that they end up paying.

Although most high-value property ends up being claimed, there have been exceptions.

Last year, the county acquired a commercial property near I-75 and Miller Road which has a market value of about \$800,000, Kildee said.

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