



Jackson County properties in forfeiture status: 762 located in city



About 1,861 properties in Jackson County are in the forfeiture process with the county.

Lisa Satayut | June 21, 2013

JACKSON, MI – About 1,861 properties in the county are in the forfeiture status with the county treasurer for non-payment of taxes, at least for now. “The number is still high compared to past years but we will continue to do whittle that number down,” Jackson County Treasurer Karen Coffman said. About 762 of the properties are located in the city. These do not include mortgage foreclosures.

Since 2008 the number of parcels foreclosed on in Jackson County for non-payment of taxes has risen an astonishing 435 percent. In Michigan there is a three-year forfeiture and foreclosure process. Parcels are forfeited to the county treasurers when the real property taxes are in the second year of delinquency. Real property taxes which remain unpaid as of March 31 in the third year of delinquency are foreclosed upon by the county treasurer. The county has two tax foreclosure auctions every year, usually in **August** and **September**. In 2008 there were 55 tax foreclosures. In 2009 that number almost doubled to 104. In 2011 there were 226 foreclosures and in 2012 there were 294. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority announced this year for the first time its **Step Forward Michigan program** has been expanded in an effort to help homeowners facing tax foreclosures due to non-payment of taxes. In the past, this program was focused on mortgage foreclosures only. The change took effect Jan. 15. “MSHDA has given money to help taxpayers, we have not had dollars to this extent since the Obama stimulus,” Coffman said. “It’s a much more structured program.”

The Community Action Agency is the agency that homeowners would contact about the program. “We were one of seven states to receive funding because we are considered a hardest hit area for foreclosures,” said Tami Farnum, CAA program operations manager. She said the funds originally come from the U.S. Department of Treasury. They are funneled to MSHDA and then local agencies like the CAA helps homeowners fill out the MSHDA application. Farnum said there are multiple programs available but homeowners must qualify. Through the program the state will make a payment to the mortgage company (if applicable) and a separate payment to the county treasurer for up to a total of \$30,000. The funds are available through MSHDA’s Loan Rescue Fund Program. Homeowners must have experienced an involuntary hardship that lead to their inability to pay the mortgage payments or the property taxes. But, homeowners must be able to sustain their mortgage and tax payments going forward. Properties that have already been foreclosed on are ineligible.

For more information on the Step Forward Michigan program and eligibility requirements call the Community Action Agency at (517) 784-4800.

© 2013 MLive.com. All rights reserved.