

Tax foreclosure ordered for 329 county properties

By Daily Telegram staff

ADRIAN — A judge ordered foreclosure Monday on 329 Lenawee County properties that owe taxes from 2011.

The list is shorter than last year's 385 properties that reached a foreclosure hearing in Lenawee County Circuit Court. Owners have until March 31 to save the property from an auction sale.

"That is the last date to pay up the taxes or make arrangements with the treasurer," said Assistant Lenawee County Prosecutor Douglas Hartung during the hearing. No redemption is available after March 31, he said.

At a hearing three weeks ago, there were 446 properties on the county treasurer's foreclosure list.

So far, 16 owners have made payment arrangements, said Treasurer Marilyn Woods.

Her office was busy Monday with property owners paying taxes to avoid a final foreclosure next month. Others were paying 2012 taxes to beat a March 1 deadline to avoid going into the foreclosure process next year, she said.

Additional help for homeowners in hardship situations is available this year, Woods said. Owners unable to pay taxes can apply for help through A Step Forward, a program operated by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

Woods said property owners can seek the assistance through the Community Action Agency office in Adrian or at the website, www.stepforwardmichigan.org.

Only one couple appeared in court for Monday's hearing. They said they are in the process of acquiring title to a house following a parent's death and were denied a homestead tax exemption because it is not in their name.

Judge Timothy P. Pickard said arrangements must be made to pay the taxes and avoid losing the property. An appeal of the millage rate may be made after the title is cleared.

Any properties ordered foreclosed Monday that are not redeemed by the end of March can be sold in the treasurer's annual auction in August.

There were 87 properties on the auction block last year. A total of 94 reached the county auction in 2012.