



Treasurer Slusser Announces County's Tax Sale Has Lowest Penalty Rate Recorded In Madison County

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County Treasurer Chris Slusser, announced that the County's annual Tax Sale resulted in the lowest ever penalty rate recorded in Madison County, with a weighted average of just 0.43%. The previous record was 1.52% in 2021.



Treasurer Slusser attributes the low penalty rate on the automated bidding system that the county currently utilizes, along with the high number of participating tax buyers. “We’ve come a long ways in ensuring the integrity of this process and achieving low penalty rates for those who are struggling to pay their taxes,” Slusser said. “The lower the rate, the less it costs a taxpayer to redeem their delinquent taxes. It’s great to see the penalty rate so low this year, which benefits those whose taxes were sold.”

Each county in Illinois holds an annual Tax Sale to collect delinquent taxes which are distributed throughout their taxing districts. Illinois requires these sales, or auctions, so that taxing entities such as school districts, townships, municipalities, libraries, fire protection districts, etc. receive the money levied for that year. This year the Madison County tax sale collected nearly \$3.4 million dollars of those delinquent taxes.

In 2010, the tax sale process in Madison County came under scrutiny when it came to light that former Treasurer Fred Bathon had conspired with at least 3 of the tax buyers to rig the auction, by not accepting trailing bids. Nearly all of the taxes sold that year went for the maximum 18% penalty rate. In exchange, the buyers made significant campaign donations to Bathon.

It was estimated that delinquent taxpayers were defrauded out of as much as \$4 million dollars in excessive penalties. Some even lost their homes because they couldn’t afford to pay the excessively high penalty rates.

After a lengthy investigation by the FBI, Bathon and three of the tax buyers later pled guilty to federal charges of violating the Sherman Antitrust Act, and served short prison sentences. Bathon was sentenced to 30 months in federal prison, but served just 18 months. He was forced to forfeit his lucrative county pension.

“The Property Tax Code was designed to foster competition in bidding at the tax sale, and it is my duty as County Treasurer to ensure that they’re sold at the lowest possible cost. This is a duty that I take very seriously,” Slusser said. “We live in a state with the highest property taxes in the nation, so I always look for any opportunity I can find to provide relief for struggling taxpayers.”

Slusser said there were 40 tax buyers who took part in this years’ annual event, purchasing the taxes on 2,397 parcels.

This year’s automated sale was conducted on Feb 22 and consisted of delinquent 2020 real estate taxes that were due in 2021. Automated tax sales have become the most popular method of conducting a tax sale throughout the state of Illinois. These automated systems capture bids with an accuracy that would be unreachable by any other standard.

Anyone whose taxes were sold should contact the Madison County Clerk's office at 618-692-6290 for more information. If you have questions about the Tax Sale contact the Treasurer's Office at 618-692-6260.