



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Eric Setter/Land Bank Coordinator—Region 1 Planning Council

Email: esetter@r1planning.org | **Office:** 815-319-4459

Winnebago County Trustee Program Auction Results

ROCKFORD, IL — In October 2019, Region 1 Planning Council (RPC) was appointed as the selling agent for the Winnebago County Trustee program. Parcels in the Winnebago County Trustee program are publicly owned tax delinquent parcels with no tax buyer; as designated by state statute.

Region 1 Planning Council conducted its first auction for the Trustee program in May 2020. The Trustee program held approximately 800 parcels for sale. The May 2020 auction marked the first time in the Trustee program's history where properties were made available for online review & bidding. Like a traditional auction, bid amounts were visible and updated regularly to reflect the current highest bid. Minimum bids began at \$500 for vacant lots and \$1,000 for parcels with a structure. Bidding ended for this first auction cycle on Friday, May 22, 2020. The RPC's first Winnebago County Trustee auction generated the following results:

- 163 total properties sold, including:
 - 114 in the City of Rockford
 - 78 structures and 85 vacant lots
 - 53 that had been in the County Trustee program for two or more years
- \$410,000 total property sales, making the average sale price about \$2,500
- Nearly 2,000 unique users went to the auction website (the majority in the final days of the auction)
- Over the next 10 years, the properties sold in this auction will create approximately \$1 million in new tax revenue to our taxing bodies.

Mayor Tom McNamara notes, "This is a big win for taxpayers. The auction results have exceeded our own high expectations for the transition to R1 as the agent for the program. This is a great step forward for the City of Rockford's goal in taking blighted properties and transitioning them to productive taxpaying parcels for our neighborhoods. Thank you to the R1 staff for their leadership and perseverance." With Mayor Ted Rehl adding, "I'm simply grateful that the County Board made a wise decision."

Loves Park Mayor Greg Jury recognizes the importance of community investment, “At a time where local governments throughout the region are recovering from the pandemic, it is great to see the investment made into our neighborhoods through the success of the most recent auction. I’m thankful to the R1 staff and County Board for working together to approach this program in a better way.”

Winnebago County Chairman Frank Haney realizes the importance of blight reduction as a tool to increase the tax base. He comments, “Blight reduction and neighborhood revitalization are critical, especially in the underserved areas of Winnebago County. The improved results are due to a new approach that addresses property maintenance, allows for improved online services, greater bidder participation and competition – all supported by a new partnership of local taxing bodies and a single, local point of accountability at R1. This is a huge win for residents and our taxing body partners as well.”

Region 1 Planning Council expects to reopen bidding for another Winnebago County Trustee auction in July 2020, while in addition showcasing the latest properties to be sold through the Northern Illinois Land Bank. For more information on Winnebago County Trustee auctions, visit www.r1planning.org.

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