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Judicial Sale Generates Valuable Revenue For The County & Surrounding Municipalities

The totals from February's judicial sale have been finalized and the effects will be felt in a very positive way with the injection of over \$300,000 into the operations of local boroughs, cities, townships and authorities, while also returning properties to the tax rolls for future revenue generation.

Lackawanna County Commissioners Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick M. O'Malley have reported that \$325,294.50 will be distributed to area communities in addition to 134 properties being put back on the tax rolls, creating annual cash flow.

"This was a win-win for everyone," explained Commissioner Corey O'Brien. "The judicial sale not only generated much needed revenue for the county, municipalities and authorities, but it also put properties back on our tax rolls so that additional funds can be derived in the future."

"The 2012 judicial sale has provided a revenue stream to the local boroughs, townships and municipalities," said Commissioner Jim Wansacz. "Communities are going to be receiving money that they never did before and, even better, properties are going back on the tax rolls to generate future revenue for a variety of operations."

"This is good government at work," noted Commissioner Patrick O'Malley. "Our staff is working very hard to cut costs and generate revenue that can be used either now or as a future reserve. The bottom line is we are doing everything that we can to not place any additional burden on county residents."

A breakdown of the distribution to the townships, municipalities, boroughs, school districts, authorities and special trusts are as follows:

Benton Twp. \$312.35; Blakely \$97.38; Carbondale School District \$ 27,537.89; Carbondale City \$7,890.99; Carbondale Twp. \$42.67; Lackawanna River Basin \$1,081.17; and Scranton City \$4,327.87.

Also, Scranton OECD \$8,268.47; Scranton Sewer Authority \$9,758.65; Clifton Twp. \$41.55; Covington Twp. \$275.47; Fell Township \$41.06; Jefferson Twp. \$5,302.76; and Lackawanna Trail School District \$9,847.10.

Also, Lakeland School District \$248.25; LaPlume Twp. \$160.60; Mid Valley School District \$3,370.79; North Pocono School District \$1,773.47; Old Forge Borough \$813.68; Portnoff Law \$71,666.84 (collections for 2005-2011 North Pocono, Mid Valley and Abington Heights School Districts school taxes); and South Abington Twp. \$1,121.22.

Also, Springbrook Twp. \$301.26; Throop Borough \$249.69; Valley View School District \$14,330.83; First Trust Savings \$202,639.25 (collections for Scranton School District Municipal Revenue Services Loans); Public Asset Management \$13,004.31 (collections for Riverside School District); and First National Community Bank \$5,288.93 (collections for Old Forge School District).

The overall total of these disbursements is \$325,294.50.

Ron Koldjeski, director of the county's tax claim bureau, provided a breakdown of the distributions that were made to the county and its offices through the sale, which also generated more revenue for the municipalities, school districts and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Recorder of Deeds (recording fees)	\$8,040.00
Recorder of Deeds (Transfer Tax)	\$215,258.06

(The State, school districts and various boroughs get a distribution from the transfer tax amount, not the county.)

Lackawanna County Commissions	\$58,642.29
Lackawanna County Sale Fees	\$209,388.27
Lackawanna County General Fund	\$114,550.25
Lackawanna County Library Fund	\$7,968.33

The costs involved in doing the sale were as follows:

Total to County in commissions, fees and taxes	\$390,549.14
Total costs, legal fees, title searches, sheriff services, etc.	<u>\$290,624.00</u>
Total positive cash flow to county	\$99,925.14

This amount is \$57,000 more than the original projection.

Continuing with the positive revenue flow news, the Commissioners reported that the hotel tax collection for May was \$124, 367.90.

For the same period in 2011, the total was \$88,535.36, an increase of \$35,832 or 40.4%.