

## 3 Dayton sites first targets of county land bank

LOCAL NEWS

By Joanne Huist Smith

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**Kentucky buyer has placed deposits on all of the properties.**

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**What is a land bank:** Land banks are meant to hasten the return of vacant and abandoned properties to productive uses. The land bank acquires properties from foreclosures, banks and private owners and sells them to redevelopers. Properties are first cleared of all liens and encumbrances, including delinquent property taxes.

Three abandoned Dayton industrial sites tallying nearly \$900,000 in delinquent property taxes could be the first freed up for redevelopment by the Montgomery County Land Reutilization Corporation, a land bank.

The targeted properties include:

- The former Dayton Electro Plate Inc., 1030 Valley Street;
- Rita Construction, 824 Leo Street; and

- the MPT Real Estate building, 1801 Home Ave.

These properties were selected for the land bank because a developer, with a successful track record in Dayton, sees their potential, said Aaron Sorrell, the city's director of planning and community development.

"We were looking for high-profile properties, with owners who had walked away," Sorrell said. "All the properties have brownfield issues."

The land bank, a project initiated by Montgomery County Treasurer Carolyn Rice, is a non-profit, public corporation created to acquire low-value properties from foreclosures, lending institutions, and private individuals and sell them to organizations who aim to redevelop the community.

Once in the land bank, property taxes and deeds are cleared prior to being released to a developer.

“Our goal is to quickly turn the properties around to new owners,” said Paul Robinson, Montgomery County’s deputy treasurer, adding that could mean within a few days.

The Dayton City Commission today will hear a first reading on a memorandum of understanding with the land bank to establish a procedure for acquiring properties. If approved, the land bank board will vote on the agreement on Feb. 21.

Then on March 9, the Montgomery County Board of Revision will preside over the tax foreclosure cases on the targeted properties and assess if they are truly abandoned.

If the Board of Revision finds in favor of transferring the property to the land bank, there is a 45-day waiting period.

Mike Heitz, managing partner for Garrett LLC, based in Lexington, Ky., said that if the three properties are land-banked, he’s committed to taking them on. The company has given the City of Dayton a \$500 deposit for each property that will go toward expenses incurred during the process.

Garrett LLC — responsible for the transformation of the former Howard Paper Company site at 354 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd., in Dayton, which is now for sale — specializes in acquisition and clean-up of brownfield properties.

- The Dayton Electro Plate Inc. property has been vacant for 16 years and currently has a delinquent tax balance of \$564,246, according to the Montgomery County Treasurer’s Office. The assessed value of the property is \$734,557.

The site was used since 1924 for coating metals with rustproofing materials by an electroplating process. In April 1996, the company ceased operations prior to petitioning for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

Later that year, the Ohio EPA conducted an emergency removal action at the site due to risk posed to both the local population and the environment by the chemicals remaining on-site.

Heitz said he plans to demolish both the Dayton Electro Plant building and Rita Construction.

- Rita Construction, a large warehouse on Leo Street, was certified delinquent in 2009 and \$168,824 in back taxes are owed. The property is valued at about \$1.3 million.

- Heitz said the Home Avenue building will be renovated and a potential tenant/owner has been identified. That site was certified delinquent in 2009 and \$160,786 in back taxes are owed. The building has an assessed value of \$643,740.

“This is about putting properties back into productive use,” Dayton City Commissioner Nan Whaley said. “These are community properties that need to not just be sitting.”