

**COUNTY OF RICHLAND
OFFICE OF COUNTY TREASURER**



DAVID A. ADAMS
COUNTY TREASURER

P.O. BOX 11947
Columbia, SC 29211
(803) 576-2275
TDD (803) 748-4999

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, 16 December 2004

2004 Tax Sale Final Numbers

Lower Costs - Fewer Properties Sold - More Bidders - Larger Bids

Columbia, SC - Significant changes were made by the Treasurer's Office in conducting the 2004 Tax Sale. Those changes led to lower costs, greater public awareness and an increased use of technology.

"Our tactics changed to help our taxpayers. We wanted to help taxpayers stay out of the tax sale," said Richland County Treasurer David A. Adams. "We lowered penalties and were aggressive in notifying the public - it resulted in fewer properties going into the tax sale."

- Approximately \$30,000 each year was/will be saved in advertising costs while at the same time giving taxpayers more notice to be able to pay their delinquent bills.
- \$5,000 a year was/will be saved in changing from Instant Film cameras to digital technology and a computerized filing system for mandatory photos of delinquent properties.
- A tax sale director and organizational chart was established for the first time, saving money in department costs while enhancing efficiency and accountability.
- Delinquent properties were penalized \$70 in 2004, cutting the cost to the taxpayer in half. In previous years the costs added were as high as \$138.00.

"I established clear policies for the first time that made the process easier for our staff to use in educating the public about the tax sale process," Adams said.

The 2003 tax sale began with 1,775 properties and 1,471 sold. That number dropped to 1,282 in 2004 and only 1,074 actually sold.

The 2004 tax sale had the most registered bidders in history with 446 participants generating \$29 million. In 2003, there were 273 bidders that bid \$20.7 million.

Properties that go to tax sale have 365 days to be redeemed by the owner. Approximately 10% of the properties that go to tax sale actually change hands.

"We helped our citizens stay out of the tax sale and helped all of our taxpayers by using the tax sale to generate enough to pay off the county's outstanding delinquent taxes," Adams concluded.

-30-

For More Information, Contact:
Kendra Dove, 803/576-2275