

BACK TAX SALE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q – When where and what time is the back tax sale held?

A – State law requires that the sale be held on the fourth Monday in August each year in or near the County Courthouse. Sale commences at 10:00 a.m.

Q - How many years must a property be delinquent before it is offered for sale?

A – In Audrain County, a property must be delinquent for two years before it offered at the back tax sale. Other Missouri counties offer at three years and some, some after two years and some after one year.

Q - How much do I have to pay to buy a property at a back tax sale?

A – The sale is conducted like any other public auction. The starting bid is the combined amount of the unpaid tax, interest, penalty, advertising cost and any other cost related to the sale. If more than one person bids on the property, the property is sold to the highest bidder, and the cost would be the amount of the final bid. If you are the successful bidder you must pay the amount of your bid *immediately* after the completion of the sale.

Q - Is the property legally mine the day of the sale?

A – NO. If you are the successful bidder on the day of the sale, you will receive a “Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase.” This “Certificate” becomes a part of the permanent record in the Collector’s office and verifies that you were the successful bidder on the day of the sale. After a one year waiting period you can present your Certificate, 30 year lien search and the original owner and any lien holder notifications to the County Collector in exchange for a “Collector’s Deed.”

Once, the Collector’s Deed is properly recorded, you are the lawful owner of record.

Q - Why must I wait one year before receiving a deed?

A – Because the owner of record on the day of the sale has a one-year right to redeem the property. That is, any time during the next one year following the day of the sale, the owner can come forward and pay to the Collector all tax, interest, penalty, advertising cost and all related costs and will again become the full owner of record. This is called “Redeeming the property.”

Q - If someone “Redeems” his/her property, how do I get my money back?

A – If the property is “redeemed” the County Collector will collect the money from the original owner. You will then receive all the money you paid on the day of the sale plus interest(interest is paid only on the amount of unpaid tax and expense of the sale and is not paid on the surplus) from the County Collector. Once you receive the money your “Tax Sale Certificate Of Purchase” becomes invalid and must be returned to the Collector at the time you receive your money back.

Q – Who pays the taxes during the one-year redemption period?

A - You, the holder of the “Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase,” will be billed for the tax during the one-year redemption period.

Q -What can I do the property to improve or change it during the redemption period?

A – As a Tax Certificate Holder you have a vested interest in the property, but you do not have right to improve or make changes to the property until after you receive a Collector’s Deed. If you choose to improve or make changes without A Collector’s Deed any cost you incur will not be reimbursed in the redemption of the property.

Q – If a property does have other liens, how do I get them removed from the record?

A – You are required to do a 30 year lien search 90 days before the end of the one-year redemption period and before applying for a Collector’s Deed. You must notify by certified mail any lien holder as well as the previous owner of your intent to apply for a record a Collector’s Deed. If you do not receive back a response from any lien holder within the 90 day period they are forever barred from enforcing their lien against you and the property. The reason you must notify the previous owner is to provide a warning that the one-year redemption period is ending.

Q – What happens if no bid is received at the tax sale?

A - The property must be offered at the sale each year for three years. If not sold at any of the three sales, the property can then be purchased anytime after the third sale in the Collector’s office at a price agreed to, by you and the Collector (with no redemption period). The new state statute on a third year sale, states that the Collector must collect all taxes due for that property. No longer can we let the third sale go for any amount.

Q – How do I obtain a list of the properties prior to the sale date?

A – The list of properties to be offered at the sale is published in the Mexico Ledger, which has county wide distribution, once a week for three consecutive weeks with the last publication at least 15 days prior to the sale date. Property owners can remove their property from the sale list by paying any time prior to the scheduled hour of the sale.