

## *News Release*

### **OTTAWA COUNTY TREASURER ANNOUNCES SUMMER INTERN RESULTS October 18, 2011**

Grand Haven, Mich. — Bradley Slagh Treasurer of Ottawa County announced results today of a Summer Intern program that was completed in August 2011

Ottawa County Treasurer, Bradley Slagh has found a way to more efficiently follow the state code for posting property in Ottawa County in the final stages of the tax foreclosure process and at the same time doing it in a more cost-effective manner. The new procedures also helped some of those property owners to learn how they might avoid losing their property to the county.

The General Property Tax Act for the State of Michigan requires that every property going through the tax foreclosure process have a notice of intent to foreclose physically posted on the property before the process can move to foreclosure and property auction. “It never seemed enough to me just to post a notice on the property that the county was going to foreclose,” said Slagh. “I wanted to find a way to have personal contact with the property owners and to let them know the seriousness of the problem and that there may be help available to avoid foreclosure – if the property owner was interested.”

In the past, Slagh and the previous treasurer had used an outside contractor to post signs at each property at a cost of \$45 per property. This summer Slagh decided to hire a college intern, who was studying finance at a local university, to place the signs on the 736 properties that had to be posted and to do something else. “I wanted the intern to try to make contact with every property owner who was about to lose their property in the tax foreclosure process,” Slagh said.

The intern made contact with about 15 percent of the property owners on the day the signs were posted on the property or within days of the signs being posted. “In the past, posting notices provided no additional contact with the property owners so this was a big step forward for us,” Slagh said.

In addition to making contact with property owners, the cost of the posting program dropped significantly. Instead of \$45 a parcel, Slagh estimates that it cost \$10 or less per parcel to do the work, a savings of more than \$25,000. “These are dollars not being tacked onto the property’s taxes and while the savings may seem small – to a struggling property owner every little bit helps,” he said.

The intern benefited from the program because he was able to perform meaningful work that greatly affected the public. “This wasn’t a ‘make work’ kind of job that just kept an intern busy. This was a very important job where the intern had to make decisions in the field that impacted people’s lives. He gathered data that will help us communicate more effectively in this year and it also gave him a chance to gain an understanding of tax law and other operations of the treasurer’s office,” Slagh said.

For more information on the new program contact Ottawa County Treasurer Bradley Slagh at [bslagh@miottawa.org](mailto:bslagh@miottawa.org) or call 616-994-4501