



# Delaware County Commissioners

Jeff Benton  
Barb Lewis  
Gary Merrell

County Administrator  
Tracie Davies

Deputy Administrators  
Dawn Huston  
Aric Hochstettler

Clerk to the Commissioners  
Jennifer Walraven

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 28, 2022

Contact: Jeff Benton, Land Bank Chairman and Delaware County Commissioner,  
[jbenton@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:jbenton@co.delaware.oh.us), 740-833-2103

### Delaware County Land Bank Marks Fifth Anniversary

DELAWARE, Ohio — On Dec. 28, 2017, the Delaware County Land Bank came into existence. Five years later, it has helped facilitate a wide range of projects in the county that are returning previously abandoned or blighted properties to productive use.

“We owe a tremendous debt to our late County Treasurer Jon Peterson for leading the way on creating this organization,” said Jeff Benton, a County Commissioner and current chairman of the five-member board that governs the Land Bank. Peterson passed away in October 2019.

A land bank — or land-reutilization corporation as it is legally known — is a public entity guided by appointed representatives. In Delaware County, these include members from the County Commissioners’ Office, the Treasurer’s Office, Delaware City and currently Orange Township. Staff from Delaware City, the Treasurer’s Office and the Commissioners’ Office have provided administrative assistance with grant applications. The Delaware County Finance Authority and the Delaware County Economic Development Department also have played key roles in helping the Land Bank do its work.

Among the Land Bank’s projects completed or in progress are:

- Sale of the Old Jail and Sheriff’s Residence, 20 W. Central Ave, Delaware: In October 2021, the historic building was sold to the Delaware County Historical Society (DCHS) for \$350,000, which was \$200,000 more than previous attempts to sell without the Land Bank’s involvement had yielded. The DCHS is redeveloping the building as office and museum space.

-cont’d-

- Sale of the Sunny Vee Nursing Home, 54 W. Lincoln Ave., Delaware: In March 2022, the long-vacant facility was sold for \$100,000 at an Auditor's auction to a Columbus couple who intend to renovate and return it to the private home it once was. The Land Bank performed the environmental reviews that enabled the sale to occur. The sale price repaid back taxes owed to Delaware City Schools and other public agencies.
- Facilitated Site Revitalization and Brownfield Remediation Grants from the Ohio Department of Development: Seven grants totaling more than \$718,000, including one for the Sunny Vee property, have been awarded throughout the county. Several of these projects have set the stage for economic-development projects in the cities of Delaware and Powell.
- Pushed through dozens of tax-foreclosure cases: Of the four cases that went to public auction, more than \$25,000 in back taxes were collected and the properties are being redeveloped.

“We are also very proud of the fact that the Land Bank has received a clean audit from the State Auditor's Office,” Benton said, “and we have developed comprehensive policies and procedures that will help us address problem properties. We have also accumulated more than \$150,000 in funds from the fees we earn with these sales, and that will enable us to take on even more projects in the future.”

Benton added: “We are very fortunate in Delaware County where real estate is in such high demand, but also that we have such great communication with our cities, villages and townships. By working together, we are returning these parcels and buildings to productive use and we are all helping maintain the quality of life we are known for and protecting property values for our landowners.”

###