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New York's Land Banks Report Statewide Progress ***Newly Launched Association Releases Report Highlighting*** ***Impact of Nine NY Land Banks***

Newburgh Community Land Bank recognized for raising \$3 million to stabilize neighborhoods

Newburgh, N.Y. - Today, the New York Land Bank Association (NYLBA) released *New York State Land Banks: Combating Blight and Vacancy in New York Communities*, a report on the early accomplishments of the state's first nine land banks over the last two years.

New York State Land Banks: Combating Blight and Vacancy in New York Communities is the first publication to be released by NYLBA, a statewide network of the nine land banks in New York State, from Erie to Suffolk County. The report is a resource for local officials, state leaders, public and private funders, and other parties interested in the value and role of land banks in communities combating property vacancy, abandonment and blight.

The Newburgh Community Land Bank, established in 2012, has enabled the City of Newburgh to address its inventory of tax-foreclosed, vacant properties. Since the Land Bank's inception, the Land Bank has acquired 28 properties and has raised almost \$3 million to reinvest directly into the stabilization and rehabilitation of vacant buildings. The buildings are being prepared for environmental abatement. In the next 12 months, the Land Bank anticipates commencing construction on its entire inventory and attracting another \$5 to \$10 million in public and private funds for projects that will prioritize local hiring and create high quality rental and ownership opportunities in addition to commercial spaces.

Additionally, through its membership in NYLBA, leadership of the Newburgh Community Land Bank expects to benefit from sharing best practices and experiences with other land banks around the state.

"In just two years', we have already seen the critical role land banks can have in addressing vacant properties in Newburgh and across the state," said Michael Vatter, chair, Newburgh Community Land Bank. "Land Banks are an important tool for addressing the goals of healthier, safer, and more vibrant

neighborhoods by taking control of problem properties in conjunction with our efforts to streamline development processes and improve code enforcement.”

The report, issued statewide by NYLBA members, was developed with support from the Center for Community Progress, CenterState CEO, the Ford Foundation, and SUNY Buffalo State. It is available online at www.centerstateceo.com/NYLBA

"Land banks provide a powerful opportunity for communities across New York to take control of abandoned properties, opening up a broader range of options for short-term intervention and pursuit of long-term neighborhood revitalization," said Katelyn Wright, chair, New York Land Bank Association. "We are pleased to offer this report as a way to highlight the great work that's been accomplished in just the last two years in tackling vacant and abandoned properties that threaten the vitality of neighborhoods across the state."

"Land banks provide a unique tool that puts the ability to address blight and vacant properties into the hands of municipalities and neighbors, resulting in community-driven revitalization of our urban cores," said Robert Simpson, president of CenterState CEO, in Syracuse. "As this report details, we are already seeing the impact of land banks, with the creation of more vibrant, stable neighborhoods, and more prosperous communities."

"New York's land bank leaders have worked hard to learn from other land banks around the country about the most effective ways to address vacant and blighted properties," said Tamar Shapiro, president and CEO of the Center for Community Progress. "As the report shows, New York land banks are already strengthening their communities. The newly created NYLBA is a vehicle for land banks to learn from, and support, each other. It will ensure that the positive impacts of land banking continue to increase in neighborhoods statewide."

In October, NYLBA is hosting a statewide summit for New York land bank leaders in Syracuse to support training and development, facilitate the exchange of solutions and ideas, and map out statewide goals for 2015.

Land banking began in New York following the 2011 passage of the New York Land Bank Act, which authorized the creation of ten land banks as a tool to address the impacts of property vacancy, abandonment and foreclosure across the state. In New York, land banks are independent nonprofit corporations focused on the return of vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties to productive use. To date, land banks have formed in nine communities throughout the state and, in June 2014, a new state law passed, authorizing the creation of up to 20 total land banks.

"As the Senate sponsor of the original land bank legislation, I am especially pleased to see the significant progress detailed in the report," State Senator David J. Valesky said. "I have seen firsthand how the efforts of the nine land banks across the state are changing neighborhoods for the better, and I look forward to their continued positive achievements in the future."

"As the co-author of the NYS land bank law, I am gratified to see the incredible progress that has been made as a result of the land banks that have been established throughout NYS," said Sam Hoyt, regional president, NYS ESD, and former NYS Assemblyman. "In addition, I thank Governor Cuomo for recognizing this important tool for combating blight and problem properties across the state and for his continued support of the revitalization of our cities."

According to the U.S. Census, 2012 American Community Survey five-year estimate, there are 270,510 vacant housing units in New York State. The nine existing land banks in New York State are working to convert these property liabilities into assets that advance community-based goals. New York's land banks include:

- [Albany County Land Bank Corporation](#)
- [Broome County Land Bank Corporation](#)
- [Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation](#)
- [Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation](#)
- [Greater Syracuse Land Bank](#)
- [Land Reutilization Corporation of the Capital Region](#)
- [Newburgh Community Land Bank](#)
- [Rochester Land Bank Corporation](#)
- [Suffolk County Landbank Corporation](#)

New York follows in the footsteps of numerous other states that use land banking as a tool to reclaim vacant properties, including Michigan, Georgia, and Ohio. According to research by the Center for Community Progress, there are an estimated total of 120 land banks or land banking programs in the United States.

About the Newburgh Community Land Bank

The Newburgh Community Land Bank is a non-profit organization created in 2012 as one of the first land banks in New York State, with strong support from local government, community groups, and the business community. It returns vacant, abandoned, underutilized, and tax-delinquent properties to productive use in ways that support the community's long-range vision for its future by acquiring, stabilizing, and selling properties to responsible buyers for redevelopment. The Newburgh Community Land Bank is focused on assembling properties for equitable, sustainable revitalization plans. It is governed by an eleven member board of directors consisting of city officers and community and business stakeholders. More information is available at www.newburghcommunitylandbank.org.

About the New York Land Bank Association

The New York Land Bank Association (NYLBA) is comprised of land banks across New York and serves as a resource for problem solving, idea sharing, and advocating for resources and other means to improve land banking at the local level and in the state as a whole. More information is available at www.centerstateceo.com/NYLBA.

About CenterState CEO

CenterState CEO is a regional business leadership organization, chamber of commerce, and economic development strategist, based in Syracuse, New York. CEO represents 2,000 members of all sizes and serves as the primary business resource and catalyst for development in a twelve-county area. The organization advocates for smart business, facilitate regional growth and promote community prosperity through results-driven partnerships, planning and problem solving. More information is available at www.centerstateceo.com.

About Center for Community Progress

Founded in 2010, the Center for Community Progress is the only national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization solely dedicated to building a future in which entrenched, systemic blight no longer exists in American communities. As a national leader on solutions for blight and vacancy, Community Progress serves as the leading resource for local, state and federal policies and best practices that address the full cycle of property revitalization, from blight prevention, through the acquisition and maintenance of problem properties, to their productive reuse. More information is available at www.communityprogress.net.

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