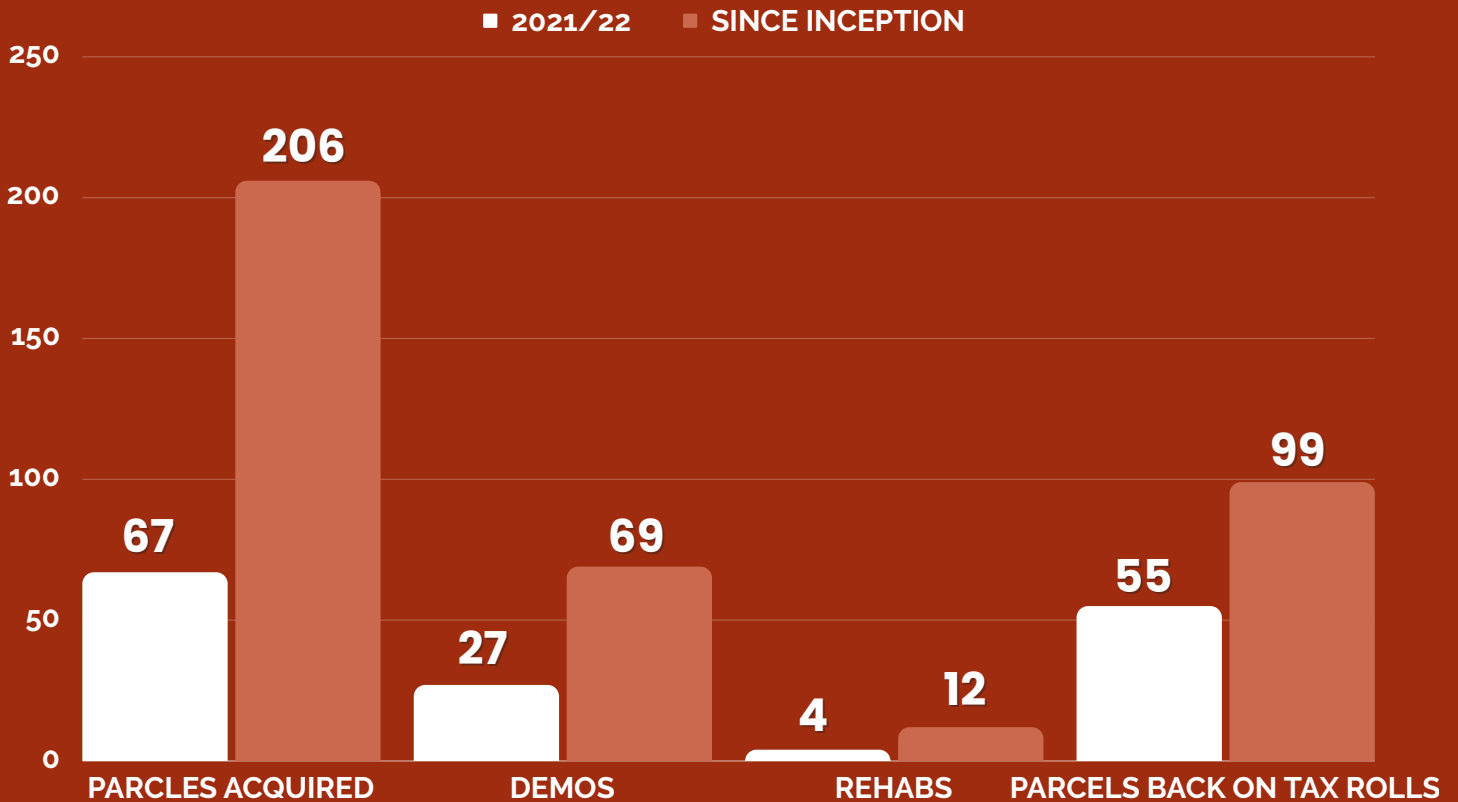




ANNUAL REPORT

2021/22



MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

The last two years have been a time of phenomenal growth for the Athens County Land Bank – full of demolitions, rehabs, exciting new state grant funds and the very first renovation carried out by the Land Bank itself.

In mid-2021, we were informed that the Ohio legislature had created a \$500 million fund for Land Banks and other organizations to access money for demolition of blighted properties and the remediation of environmentally contaminated sites known as “brownfields.” An advantage of this program is that it allowed us to use public money to demolish structures on private property with no transfer of that property to a public entity. We immediately began working with leaders around the county to identify properties that were good candidates. At the end of February 2022, we applied to remove over 45 blighted structures and mobile homes in a majority of the 14 townships of Athens County. We were awarded the full \$740,000 for which we applied and demolition began in late 2022 with an expected completion date in early 2024.

Perhaps our greatest triumph was the amazing rehab of a house on N. Akron Avenue in the Village of Buchtel. The house had been sitting, tax delinquent and abandoned, for more than 10 years. It was in surprisingly good shape structurally and had some elements that we knew would make it attractive in a tight housing market. We commenced the renovation with Sanborn Family Builders in late spring 2022 and sold the house just after New Year’s 2023. Through this renovation, we helped improve the neighborhood, solved drainage issues, constructed a shared driveway for the neighbor, and created a welcoming home for a family, all this while putting a high-value home on the tax rolls and strengthening confidence in our ability to execute such a complex project. As a result of that success, we’ve started a second, smaller rehab on Maple Street in Glouster, expected to be finished by early 2024.

As we head into a new year, your county Land Bank has more than 50 active projects across Athens County, including 5 commercial buildings in downtown Glouster. Through engineering studies and some immediate repairs, we hope to attract developers to aid in spearheading revitalization. This is a long-term project without a guaranteed outcome, but we have found that when you start the ball rolling, momentum gathers and progress is possible. Stay tuned as our journey continues.

– Ric Wasserman,
Athens County Land Bank Chair

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



OUR FIRST RENOVATION

Buchtel, Ohio

This house on N. Akron Avenue in Buchtel was in rough shape when the Land Bank acquired it, but upon inspection, we knew the bones of the structure were solid. While many folks who have purchased properties from the Athens County Land Bank have completed renovations, we've never taken one on ourselves. Our waste diversion team began by removing the many piles of trash and debris from the house before removing all remaining fixtures, drywall, and more. Recyclables such as hard plastics, electronic materials, scrap metal, fabric, and books were diverted to the appropriate sites via aid from Rural Action's Zero Waste team.



Once the house was essentially taken down to the studs, Sanborn Family Builders came in to begin work on the renovation. The house was updated from top to bottom including a new roof, siding, windows, doors, trim, carpet, drywall, electric, plumbing, and gas while the kitchen and bathrooms were furnished with new appliances and fixtures. The dilapidated addition that was attached to the kitchen was removed and replaced with a new deck with a view of the Wayne National Forest. Overall, it now has 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, a separate laundry room, and an unfinished basement with a small garage. It was on the market for less than 2 weeks and is now home to a local family.



GLOUSTER CITGO

Glouster, Ohio

This privately owned property is a former gas station now being used as feed and seed store. The ground around it was heavily contaminated by its years as a service station. We were able to secure a grant from the Ohio EPA to remove buried pipes and excavate soil contaminated with benzene and other harmful contaminants. The grant includes ongoing monitoring of the soil on this and surrounding parcels.



Photo courtesy of Glouster First Friday

SEDALIA PARK

Glouster, Ohio

A community park now sits on the site of the old "Wonder Bar" tavern after the Land Bank tore down the old building. The Land Bank acquired it after the owner gave up on a difficult renovation. Fears that one of the exterior walls was about to collapse led to the decision to demolish it. The Glouster Revitalization Organization approached us about turning the site into a park that everyone in the village could enjoy. Many public gatherings have been held there since its creation including the popular "First Friday" events during the summer.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



HUNTER'S GARAGE

Chauncey, Ohio

The village of Chauncey had their eye on this property due to its location next to the village's water plant. This old, abandoned service station was an eyesore full of asbestos, with lots of underground contamination issues. Treasurer Ric Wasserman negotiated a sale with the owner and we immediately applied for an Ohio EPA grant to clean up the property and demolish the building. The property was then transferred to Chauncey where they will eventually build a storage shed for their large equipment.



JACKSONVILLE-TRIMBLE SCHOOL

Trimble, Ohio

Built in 1927, this school building had stood for close to a century, but sat empty for the past 40+ years. Though the building was loved and appreciated, many understood that tearing it down meant real progress for the township. After sitting abandoned with damage from a devastating fire and exposure to the elements, there was no practical way to save the structure. This project was a year in the making, but through community collaboration between the Village of Trimble, the Athens County Port Authority and Tetra Tech, we got it done!



614 W. HIGH STREET

Nelsonville, Ohio

Lifelong Nelsonville resident Marcie Denney had been living next to the house at 614 W. High Street for several years while it was in a severely dilapidated state. After the gentleman who owned it became ill and moved out, the house became a nightmare for the neighbors. Marcie approached the Land Bank about acquiring it, and after a lengthy foreclosure, she submitted a rehab plan and was able to buy the house. After hauling out several dumpster loads of trash, they were able to begin working on the house, shoring up the ceiling and walls, and putting in new subfloors.

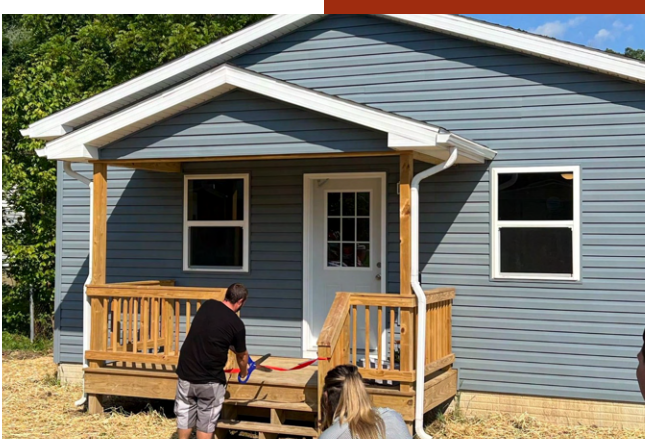


36 W. 2ND STREET

The Plains, Ohio

Formerly occupying these two parcels in The Plains was a burned out house that was demolished by the Land Bank. Once demolished, this property quickly began garnering interest. The lots were sold to a local developer who recently completed the above beautiful single-family home! A second residence is currently under construction in this neighborhood by the same builder. This is an excellent example of how addressing one severely blighted property in a neighborhood may lead to a ripple effect of reinvigoration that extends throughout a community.

COMMUNITY IMPACT



PARTNERSHIP WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF SOUTHEAST OHIO

As organizations with overlapping impact areas, working with our local Habitat for Humanity has been an organic partnership. When a Land Bank lot that meets Habitat's criteria becomes available, the lot is transferred to Habitat so the work necessary for a new build may begin.

Habitat's ReStore, located in Athens, has been an excellent location to drop off quality building materials taken from Land Bank houses before they're demolished.

As of 2023, Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio has completed 4 new single-family homes on Land Bank lots with two more on the way! You can learn more about our local Habitat organization at habitatseo.org.

PARTNERSHIP WITH RURAL ACTION AND THE ZERO WASTE PROGRAM

When we determine that a structure will be demolished, our Property Manager Jody Barnes makes note of items such as recyclables or construction materials that could be removed. Rural Action's Zero Waste program has been an invaluable partner in providing guidance as to which items can be recycled, as well as transporting the sorted recyclables.

Materials recovered include bricks, scrap metal, aluminum siding, hard plastics, electronics, books, fabric, cans, glass, and more. Certain construction materials have made their way back into the communities from which they were salvaged. Waste diversion is an important aspect of our overall strategy, and we're excited to see how this evolves with Rural Action as a partner.





PARTNERSHIP WITH HAPCAP

The Athens County Land Bank and Hocking Athens Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP) have been working collaboratively on a variety of revitalization projects throughout Athens County. Funded by Athens County Job and Family Services, HAPCAP's Subsidized Employment Program (SEP) takes a coordinated, holistic approach to stabilizing individuals and families by addressing the factors that may be contributing to poverty and unemployment.

By working closely with HAPCAP SEP volunteers, the Land Bank has successfully advanced projects which include maintaining all Land Bank properties by providing general upkeep, waste diversion, and materials management.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GLOUSTER REVITALIZATION ORGANIZATION

Dedicated to community revitalization, the Glouster Revitalization Organization (GRO) was founded in late 2018. The Land Bank was asked by GRO to acquire and demolish the old "Wonder Bar" building that once housed an iconic tavern that served a famous hot dog that bore the tavern's name.

In early 2019, the Land Bank acquired the building and executed a demolition using partial funding from the Neighborhood Initiative Program. GRO then commenced the building of Sedalia Park, mentioned in the "Project Highlights" section.

The Land Bank continues to be in contact with GRO as they have supported our initiative to acquire vacant downtown buildings in Glouster and repurpose them for future development.



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COMMUNITY ACTION

OUR IMPACT

Since its inception, the Athens County Land Bank has made it a goal to impact as many communities across the county as possible. Partnerships with local governments and organizations have been the key to a broader range of blight remediation.

State and federal programs like FEMA's National Infrastructure Protection Plan and Ohio's Building Demolition and Site Revitalization program have also been vital in reaching more areas.

NELSONVILLE

BUCHTEL

HOLLISTER GLOUSTER
TRIMBLE
JACKSONVILLE

MILLFIELD

CHAUNCEY

THE PLAINS

ATHENS

CANAANVILLE

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STAFF:

**JODY BARNES
PROPERTY MANAGER**

2021/22 FINANCIALS

REVENUES:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Program Revenues:		
Operating Income and Contributions	\$145,744	\$140,687
General Revenues:		
Grants and Entitlements Not Restricted to Specific Programs	30,459	47,566
Contributions and Donations	394,600	249,450
Sale of Property	10,000	43,825
Miscellaneous	8,924	12,225
 Total Revenues	 589,727	 493,753

EXPENSES:

Professional Contracts and Services	136,985	515,421
Administration	32,283	46,489
 Total Expenses:	 169,268	 561,910
 Change in Net Position	 420,459	 (68,157)
Net Position at Beginning of Year	313,179	733,638
Net Position at End of Year	\$733,638	\$665,481

STAY IN TOUCH

The Athens County Land Bank is consistently looking for new projects! If there is a blighted property in your neighborhood, reach out and we'll look into ways we might be able to assist.

If you're a contractor interested in placing a bid for our group demolitions, sign up for our bid specifications email list! The form can be found on our website.

Stay up to date with our ongoing progress by following our Facebook page!

CONTACT US:



(740) 592-3231



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