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City of Philadelphia Publishes Names of Property Owners Owing Delinquent Real Estate Taxes

*Effort designed to encourage taxpayers to pay real estate taxes for
City services and School District*

Philadelphia – The City of Philadelphia Law Department announced today that it is publishing names of some property owners owing delinquent real estate taxes in Philadelphia. Names of more than 1,260 delinquent property owners already named as respondents in civil tax action foreclosure lawsuits will appear in the Philadelphia *Daily News* on Monday, February 25, 2008. These include properties authorized to be sold at Sheriff's Sale in May, June, or July 2008 under the new tax collection initiative announced in September of 2007.

“Real estate taxes are a major part of our funding, both for the City’s general fund and for the School District,” said Shelley R. Smith, City Solicitor. “Most Philadelphia residents pay their real estate taxes on time. Today, we are shining a spotlight on those who have ignored their taxes and ignored our warnings. These accounts have been delinquent for many years – some for decades. It is time for owners to settle up. If they do not, the Sheriff will offer the properties to new owners who will pay their taxes like everybody else.”

The City has also posted the names of the delinquent property owners, their addresses, and the amount of their delinquencies on the City’s website at www.phila.gov/law/tax_delinquent.html. The effort is designed to encourage property owners to come forward and settle their delinquent tax accounts. The Law Department intends to remove names promptly upon notice from the City’s collections counsel, Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson LLP, that they have paid in full or are current on payment plan agreements. The advertisement and posting will also give the public a new opportunity to see which properties might be available at Sheriff’s Sale.

Since the collection initiative began in September 2007, the Linebarger firm has filed 1,470 lawsuits and collected about \$13 million for the City and School District of Philadelphia. Hearings on the lawsuits began last week before Common Pleas Judge Gary F. DiVito, who signed orders directing the sale at Sheriff’s Sale of

48 properties owing a total of \$2.1 million in delinquent real estate taxes. These court hearings will continue on a regular basis from this point forward.

Taxpayers who receive notices and letters from Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP may call toll-free 866-209-2747 or locally 215-790-1117 to speak with a taxpayer assistant. Payment arrangements are available, and are based on income for homeowners of modest means (for example, a household income of up to \$43,260 for a family of four). In addition to its main office at 4 Penn Center, 9th Floor, Linebarger maintains an Express Taxpayer Assistance Office in the Suburban Station concourse at 1600 JFK Boulevard, where taxpayers can meet with representatives without an appointment Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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