



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/first-friday-land-bank>

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Land banks help to reduce run-down properties, says Pittsburg city official

Goering outlines benefits of land banks during K-State's First Friday e-call

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news

PITTSBURG, Kan. – The manager of an entity that handles abandoned, foreclosed or vacant properties in Pittsburg says the effort has made significant progress in improving the community's health during its first 10 years.

"Citizens often don't realize that housing is health, and if you live in poor housing, your citizens aren't going to be as healthy, for various reasons," said DeAnna Goering, the neighborhood redevelopment manager for the City of Pittsburg.

Ten years ago, city officials created a land bank, a term becoming more widely recognized to represent a way to acquire distressed property – and helping restore life to that property.

"Land banks often get properties in more deteriorated parts of town," Goering said. "In Pittsburg, that's been our northeast quadrant, mostly because it's an older part of town. As we've been getting land bank homes built there, other homes have also been improving. There's less trash out and about. It's improving their community health."

Goering was the featured speaker during the Feb. 7 [First Friday e-Call](#), a monthly online series hosted by K-State Research and Extension that helps to nurture small businesses and inspire entrepreneurship in Kansas. The online discussions, which routinely host dozens of Kansas citizens from the public and private sectors, are available free each month.

A city can create a land bank with authorization from the Kansas legislature, and counties by adopting a resolution. Since 2015, when the Kansas legislature passed the statute establishing the legality of land banks in the state, [23 communities have established a land bank](#) to provide their communities an option for managing run-down properties.

Goering said land banks are authorized to acquire property for residential, commercial or industrial use. Land banks often acquire property through a tax sale, donations or purchase.

Since forming the land bank in Pittsburg, Goering said the City has acquired and sold more than 60 properties, including more than 20 homes, 10 or more lots to expand existing yards and three commercial properties that have improved the downtown area.

The work is not always easy, Goering concedes. The process to acquire and sell property includes an application, pricing a property, meeting with a Board of Trustees, maintaining inventory, processing paperwork, annual reporting, managing maintenance of the property before it sells, and more.

But, she adds, it is gratifying.

“If your municipality is considering a land bank, my suggestion is to have an idea of who might run that land bank from the start,” Goering said. “We were fortunate in our city that they could hire a person to do just that.”

More information on land banks in Kansas, and resources available to help, is [available online from the Public Health Law Center](#).

Goering’s full talk and other First Friday presentations are [available online](#) from K-State Research and Extension.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATION: Links used in this story

First Friday e-calls, <https://ksre-learn.com/entrepreneurship>

Kansas Land Bank Map, <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/resources/kansas-land-bank-map>

Kansas Land Bank Resources, <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/resources/kansas-land-bank-resources>

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