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From: Annette Kerber, Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector/Public Administrator

CHANGES IN PROPERTY TAX PAYMENTS REFLECT ECONOMIC TIMES

San Bernardino County, CA — San Bernardino County Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector/Public Administrator Annette Kerber announced today that her office is seeing a shift in the method homeowners use to pay their property taxes. More and more homeowners are paying their property taxes through impound accounts with their mortgage company as homes are bought out of foreclosure. The number of delinquent tax bills is returning to near normal levels with these properties returning to a tax-paying status.

“We know that a lot of homeowners continue to struggle with the current economy,” Kerber said. “However, as we watch the numbers year after year on the amount of property taxes we collect, we are starting to see changes that demonstrate improvements.”

While home values have fallen, lending institutions have implemented stricter guidelines for loan qualification and are requiring the use of impound accounts for payment of property taxes and homeowner insurance. Since 2007, San Bernardino County has seen a 17.3% increase in the number of parcels paid through impound. The number of homeowners who use the website at www.mytaxcollector.com to pay their property taxes continues to rise, but the blend of payments received is changing. Payments by electronic check increased by 12.1% while payments by credit card decreased 11.4%.

“The trend in electronic payments is consistent with behavior seen in the larger economy,” Kerber said. “In addition to wanting to avoid transaction fees imposed by the credit card companies, homeowners are more conscious of debt and are choosing not to pay their property taxes with a credit card.”

Overall, property tax collection has improved over 2008. Thru December 14, total collections are 1.53% ahead of the prior year with 45.8% of the annual tax charge already collected. Once collected, property taxes dollars are distributed to the County, redevelopment agencies, cities, special districts, school districts and libraries.

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