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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES \$4.6 MILLION
IN DEBT OWED BY BANKS HAS BEEN COLLECTED**

*City Comptroller ahead of schedule for planned 2012 bank debt collection;
Only \$1.1 Million Remains*

Mayor Emanuel announced today that the Administration is far ahead of schedule in collecting debt owed to the City by banks in fees, fines and penalties on vacant and foreclosed properties. In May, debt owed to the City totaled more than \$5.7 million; to date, the City Comptroller Amer Ahmad has reduced that amount to \$1.1 million.

In October, Mayor Emanuel outlined a goal for the Administration to eliminate the amount of debt owed to the City by banks in fees, fines and penalties on vacant and foreclosed properties by the end of 2012. Efforts by the City Comptroller has markedly improved the collections process and put the City ahead of schedule.

"This is a new day in City government: the free rides are over," said Mayor Emanuel. "City government needs to work efficiently for the people of Chicago, and by taking a smarter, more aggressive approach to recovering debt. We will not only fully reconcile what is owed but ensure it never reaches this level again."

Today's announcement comes on the heels of the Office of Budget and Management announcing that departments exceeded the 2011 savings goals by \$8 million – from \$75 million to \$83 million - through improved efficiencies, better grants management and a continued freeze on non-essential contract spending.

"During our first week in office we immediately contacted these financial institutions to resolve their debts. We continue to work with the banks to collect the remaining balance and I am confident that we will collect the outstanding \$1.1 million by the end of 2012," said Ahmad. "Every dollar we collect is a dollar we don't have to take away from critical city services that our residents depend on. This improved productivity is the result of commitment from all departments -



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including my own – that we can and must change the way we do business in order to be the responsible, effective stewards of taxpayer dollars that Chicagoans deserve.”

In October, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that by the end of 2012, the City would collect \$2 million in debt owed by banks. Since day one, the Comptroller has been aggressively pursuing outstanding debt owed to the City by improving its collections process, increasing enforcement and consolidating billing. Previously, several City departments performed their own billing and collection functions. With the new reforms, all billing and collection systems will be reviewed and consolidated by the Department of Revenue. By eliminating this unnecessary bureaucracy the City will drastically increase efficiency and improve overall collections.

During the 2012 budget process, Ahmad identified a number of initiatives to increase debt collections that include crackdowns on fleet accounts, bank debts, new building holds, building inspection fees, improved tax audits and EMS collections. The Comptroller has estimated that the City will bring in \$33 million in collections by the end of 2012, which includes \$24 million from improved tax audit collections, \$5 million from individual Debt Consolidation, \$2 million from increased collections on bank property fees and fines; \$1 million from a complete overhaul in Parking Fee collections, and \$1 million from better enforcement of permit and licensing holds on companies who owe the city money.

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