FREE REPORT

Tax Sale Intelligence

San Bernardino County · May 2025 Auction

Welcome

You're holding real data from San Bernardino County's May 2025 tax sale. Not predictions. What actually happened.

This report shows which areas sold, which didn't, and why it matters if you're thinking about buying.

What is a Tax Sale?

When someone doesn't pay property taxes for 5+ years, the county sells that property to recover the money.

The key: minimum bid is usually just the back taxes—not what the property is worth. That's the opportunity.

Win the auction, get a tax deed. The property is yours. But it's as-is, with no guarantees on title or condition.

> **EXAMPLE**
> A property worth $50,000 has $8,000 in unpaid taxes.
> Minimum bid: $8,000. One bidder could get it for that.
> Multiple bidders? Price goes up—but often still below market.

Who is This Report For?

- People curious about tax sale investing
- Investors researching San Bernardino County
- Anyone who wants real data before bidding

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Understanding the Numbers

01 Sell-Through Rate

What percentage of properties actually sold.
High (80%+) = buyers wanted them. Low (<50%) = avoided.

EXAMPLE

Apple Valley: 7 properties, all 7 sold = 100%
Cedarpines Park: 64 properties, only 2 sold = 3%

02 Opening Bid vs Winning Bid

Opening = minimum (back taxes). Winning = final price.
Big gap = many bidders wanted it.

EXAMPLE

Joshua Tree parcel: Opened $14,350 → Sold $252,300
That's 17x the opening bid. Fierce competition.

03 Overbid Percentage

How much above minimum buyers paid, on average.
257% = buyers paid about 2.5x the opening bid.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Don't expect to win at minimum. Budget higher.

04 Withdrawn

Removed before sale—usually owner paid taxes last minute.
305 properties withdrawn from this auction.

REAL EXAMPLES FROM THIS AUCTION

The Profit Potential

Let's break down what actually happened—and what it means.

Example 1: Big Bear City Lot

APN: 0313-251-03 · Location: 1012 Sequoia Dr, Big Bear City

$7,850
Opening Bid

$59,800
Winning Bid

What does this mean for an investor?

The county's assessed land value was $42,063. The buyer paid $59,800. That's above the assessment—but Big Bear has strong vacation rental demand.

If comparable lots sell for $80,000-$100,000, the buyer has $20,000-$40,000 in potential equity. If they build a cabin, the value could double or triple.

24 people bid on this property. That competition tells you something: smart investors saw value here.

Example 2: Baldwin Lake Parcel

APN: 0314-022-38 · Location: Fifth St, Baldwin Lake

$3,000
Opening Bid

$22,600
Winning Bid

What does this mean for an investor?

County assessed this at only $5,468. Buyer paid $22,600—4x the assessment. Why pay so much above assessed value?

Assessments are often outdated. The buyer likely researched recent sales and saw lots selling for $30,000-$50,000. Even at $22,600, there's margin.

With 7 bidders competing, multiple people saw the same opportunity.

> **THE LESSON**
>
> Assessed value ≠ market value. Smart buyers do their own research.
> Competition at auction often signals that experienced investors see value.

What Can You Do With Your Capital?

Based on real results from this auction, here's what each budget opens up.

$0 – $50K

Desert Lots & Remote Parcels

This budget gets you vacant land in areas like Baldwin Lake, Lucerne Valley, or 29 Palms. In this auction, many parcels sold for $5,000–$25,000.

Strategy: Buy low, hold for appreciation, or resell to cash buyers.
Many desert lots double in value over 5–10 years if the area develops.

Example from auction: Baldwin Lake parcel sold for $22,600.
Risk: Remote areas can be hard to resell. Check road access carefully.

$50K – $100K

Mountain Lots & Better Locations

This range opens up Big Bear, Joshua Tree, and Apple Valley—areas with proven resale demand and stronger buyer pools.

Strategy: Buy buildable lots in desirable areas. Either sell to builders or hold for someone who wants to build their own home.

Example from auction: Big Bear lot sold for $59,800.
Upside: These areas have vacation rental potential if you build.

$100K – $250K

Properties With Structures

Now you can compete for improved properties—land with houses or buildings.
Remember: 100% of improved properties sold in this auction.

Strategy: Buy distressed homes, renovate, and flip or rent.
Tax sale homes often need work, but the discount can justify it.

Competition is fierce here. Be prepared to bid aggressively.
Example: Barstow improved property sold for $151,100 (opened at $7,800).

Larger Capital Brackets

$250K – $500K

Premium Properties & Multi-Parcel Deals

At this level, you can target the best properties in the auction—homes in established neighborhoods, larger acreage, or multiple adjacent lots.

Strategy: Buy quality, not quantity. A single well-located property with a structure can generate rental income while appreciating.

You can also buy multiple smaller parcels to diversify risk.

Example from auction: Summit property sold for $525,300. That buyer had capital—and 13 other bidders to beat.

$500K+

Portfolio Building & Development Plays

With serious capital, you're not just buying properties—you're building a portfolio or positioning for development.

Strategy: Acquire multiple properties across different areas. Some for cash flow (rentals), some for appreciation (land holds), some for active projects (renovations or new construction).

At this level, you can also target commercial-zoned properties or larger land parcels suitable for subdivision.

The May 2025 auction moved $10.9 million total. With $500K+, you could have captured a meaningful slice of the best inventory.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You don't need $500K to start. Many profitable deals in this auction closed under $25,000. Start where you are, learn the process, and scale up as you gain experience and confidence.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Putting It Into Practice

01 Start With High Sell-Through Areas

Properties that sell = areas with buyer demand.
Apple Valley, Baldwin Lake, Victorville, Yucca Valley (100%).
Joshua Tree (91%). Start your research in these areas.

02 Avoid Red Flag Areas

Cedarpines Park (3%), Strawberry Lodge (0%),
Valley of the Moon (0%). Buyers stayed away for a reason.

03 Look for Improved Properties

Every property with a structure sold—100%.
More competition, but also more demand when you resell.

04 Do Your Own Research

Before bidding, verify: road access, zoning, liens, condition.
This report shows patterns—not which property to buy.

IMPORTANT

Tax sales are "as-is." No guarantees on title or condition.
Problems after purchase are your responsibility.

MAY 2025 AUCTION SUMMARY

The Results

1,076 Parcels Listed · $10.9M Total Sales

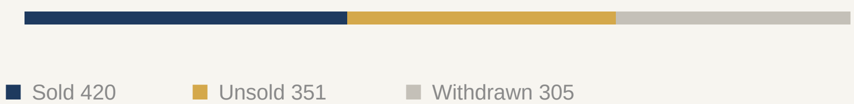
54.5% Sell-Through

$8,200 Median Bid

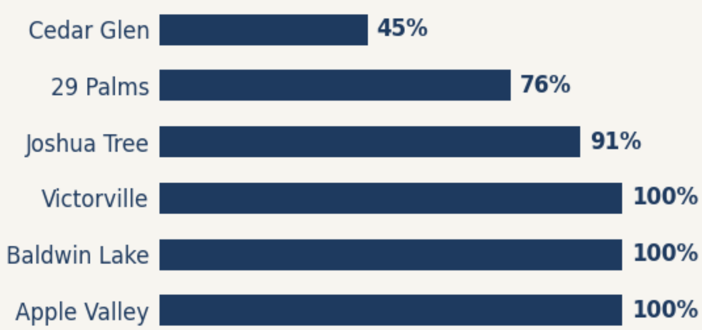
257% Avg Overbid

420 Sold

Auction Breakdown



Top Areas by Sell-Through



KEY INSIGHT

Every property with improvements sold—100% sell-through.
Vacant land has less competition but requires more research.

Want Scored Parcels for the Next Auction?

Our Premium Watchlist includes detailed analysis and research notes so you can bid with confidence.

Get it → sbctaxproperties.com/watchlist