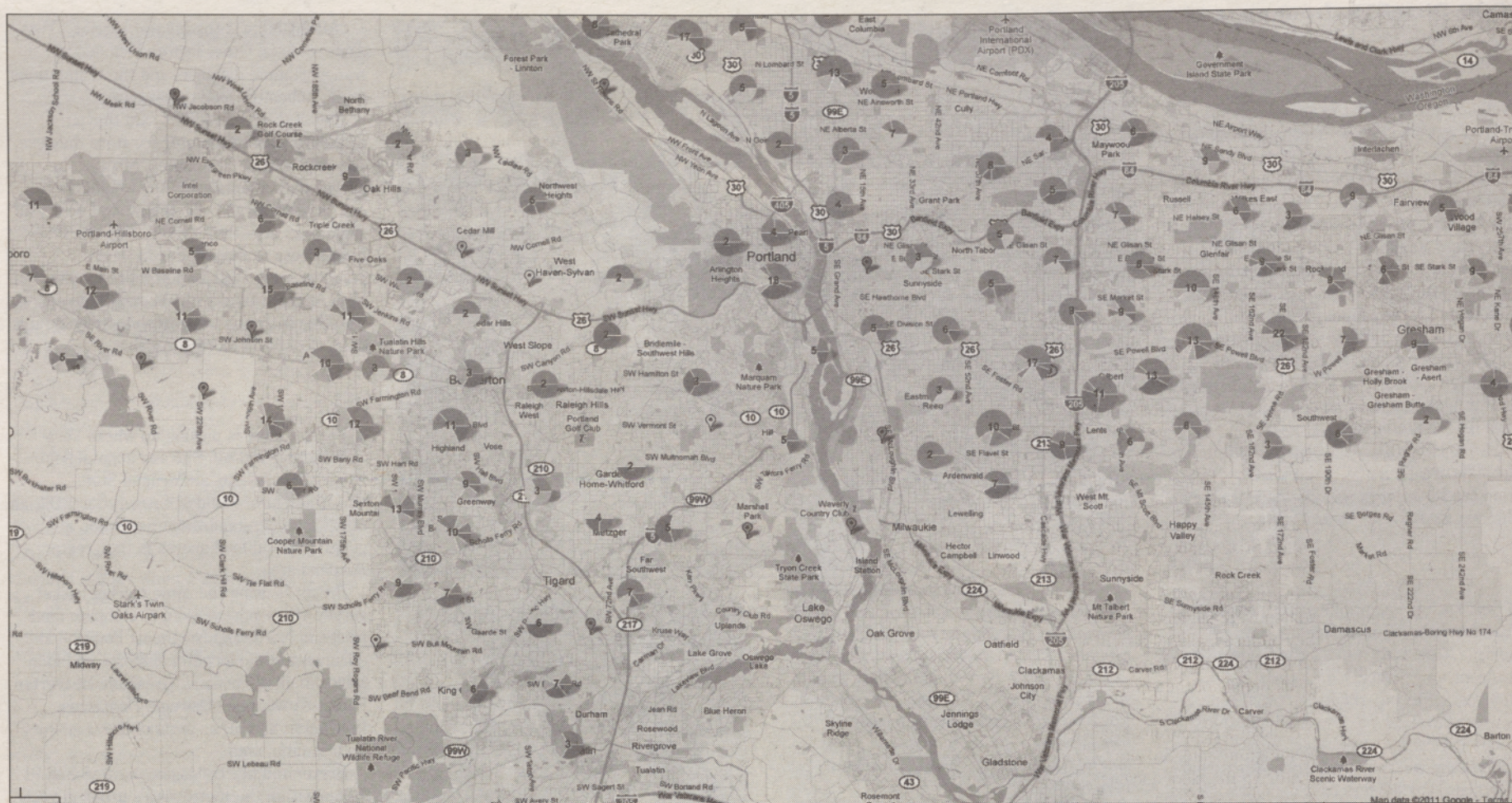




The number of foreclosed homes per neighborhood in the Portland metro area



Campaign targets 'bank blight' of Oregon's foreclosed homes

Activists with the group We Are Oregon crisscrossed the city on Dec. 2, placing lawn signs in the yards of empty bank-owned homes. The signs carry a simple message: "Another home without a family, thanks to bank blight"

Losing a home has devastating impacts on a family's livelihood," says Angela MacWhinnie with We Are Oregon. "Effects of foreclosure reach much further than the family losing their home. High foreclosure rates mean communities suffer lower property values, more crime and less money for schools and other public services."

The Center for Responsible Lending estimates that \$9.2 billion dollars in lost home equity over the last three years can be attributed to nearby foreclosures in Oregon.

"I'm facing foreclosure right now. In a few

months, my home could have one of these signs in front of it," said Thomas Wilczak, of Gresham. "We have to spread the word, and remind everyone that these houses are homes before they are bank assets."

"I think people don't know how big this problem is," said Axcelle D. Bell, who lives in Southeast Portland. "Banks have been quietly moving into our neighborhoods, taking over, so we're drawing attention to the problem by putting out these signs."

We Are Oregon has is currently organizing Portland homeowners to demand a halt to foreclosures in Portland until banks are held accountable to community needs.

For more information go to weareoregon.org.

Source: We Are Oregon. Photos courtesy of We Are Oregon.

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