



Monessen mayor says vacant properties leading to rat problem

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MONESSEN, Pa. —

The mayor of Monessen told Channel 11 News Wednesday that vacant properties are leading to a rat problem throughout the city.

Monessen Mayor Lou Mavrakis said several people have reported rats and snakes on their properties, and the situation has gotten so bad that he even wrote a letter to President Barack Obama.



Vacant properties in Monessen

"We lived here all our life. We celebrate holidays here. It's scary," Joann Joseph said.

Joseph told Channel 11 News that she grew up in Monessen and her parents, who are approaching their 90s, still live there. She said the neighborhood isn't what it used to be.

"It's sad. It's sad to see your community fall apart," she said.

Joseph said in the colder months, rats are finding their way into her parents' home. She said an exterminator told them he couldn't do anything to get rid of them permanently because the house next door is still standing.

"Over 60 years they lived there, and then you got that blight next door that causes a rat problem. That's no way for a person to end their final years of their life," Mavrakis said.

Monessen has a total of 400 blighted houses on top of 30 rundown businesses. The mayor said the solution comes down to money.

"We have to have an influx of millions of dollars in order to eradicate this. Nothing else is going to save us. It's impossible," Mavrakis said.

Some residents speculated that the rats could be coming from sewer lines being replaced, but the head of Mon Valley Sewer Authority told Channel 11 News that he hasn't received any complaints, adding none of his crews have seen any problems.