

NEWS RELEASE

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2,000 Foreclosures Prevented through State Program Fight NC Foreclosure public awareness campaign finds early success

RALEIGH—The N.C. Office of the Commissioner of Banks (NCCOB) announced today that more than 2,000 homeowners have avoided foreclosure through the State Home Foreclosure Prevention Project in its first ten months of operation. In addition, over 700 homeowners have taken action as a result of the Fight NC Foreclosure campaign launched last month.

"Foreclosures don't have to happen," said Mark Pearce, Chief Deputy Commissioner of Banks. "Calling our free hotline may be the difference between a foreclosure and keeping your home."

Fight NC Foreclosure is an expansion of the State Home Foreclosure Prevention Project, involving a network of State agencies, HUD-certified counselors, legal service providers and non-profit organizations working together to help homeowners avoid foreclosure. The Fight NC Foreclosure public awareness campaign highlights a toll-free number, **1-866-234-4857** (8:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sat.), available to any homeowner who needs free foreclosure assistance. For additional information, visit the campaign website at www.fightncforeclosure.org.

To date, the State Home Foreclosure Prevention Project has helped prevent 2,040 foreclosures and provided foreclosure prevention and budgeting advice to over 6,000 homeowners. NCCOB estimates the impact of avoiding foreclosures on these homes has prevented \$175 million in neighboring property value declines and financial system losses. Utilizing 34 local non-profit counseling agencies across the state and one national non-profit phone counseling agencies, the program has prevented foreclosures in 97 of North Carolina's 100 counties.

The foreclosure prevention and public awareness campaign was launched on September 15th by NCCOB, the Attorney General's Office, the Center for Responsible Lending, Capitol Broadcasting, the N.C. Association of REALTORS®, State Employees Credit Union, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The public service announcements began airing on Fox 50 and are available at www.fightncforeclosure.org.

Foreclosure filings in North Carolina are up 10.6% this year due to the economic downturn and job losses. According to the most recent data from the Mortgage Bankers Association, nearly 60% of North Carolina foreclosures occur on prime-rate mortgage loans – loans with low interest rates to homeowners with good credit. The State and its partners hope the latest campaign will reach homeowners who may have not have difficulty paying bills in the past and are unaware of the availability of free resources to assist them.

NCCOB regulates state-chartered banks, thrifts, savings and loans, trust companies, and more than 900 mortgage lenders/servicers/brokers and 9,500 loan officers, as well as numerous consumer finance companies, check-cashers, and other financial services. NCCOB is funded by industry fees and assessments and not taxpayer dollars.

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