

NEWS RELEASE

JOSEPH A. SMITH, JR.
COMMISSIONER OF BANKS

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CONTACT:	HA NGUYEN	DISTRIBUTION:	STATEWIDE
PHONE:	919/733-3016		

2,500 Foreclosures Prevented Through State Home Foreclosure Prevention Program

RALEIGH—The N.C. Office of the Commissioner of Banks (NCCOB) announced today that the State Home Foreclosure Prevention Project (SHFPP) has enabled over 2,500 North Carolina homeowners to avoid foreclosure. There are over 5,000 other homeowners that have met with free non-profit housing counselors to get advice and assistance in dealing with their finances and mortgage problems.

"We are thrilled our program has given so many homeowners the tools they need to avoid foreclosure," said Mark Pearce, Chief Deputy Commissioner of Banks. "At the same time, the current economy has led many homeowners to struggle for the first time to pay their mortgage and other bills. We urge these homeowners to call our State hotline to get help from experienced counselors."

Homeowners seeking help from SHFPP can receive free assistance over the phone by calling toll-free, **1-866-234-4857** (8:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., Mon.-Fri.; 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sat.). In addition, homeowners may wish to meet with a local counselor directly. A full list of these counselors and additional information can be found at www.fightncforeclosure.org.

NCCOB estimates the impact of avoiding foreclosures on these homes has prevented \$218 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 agency, the program has prevented foreclosures in 99 of North Carolina's 100 counties. Foreclosure filings in North Carolina are up 14% this year due to the economic downturn and job losses, but North Carolina has one of the lowest foreclosure rates in the country (36th out of 50 states, according to RealtyTrac's latest foreclosure report: www.realtytrac.com/contentmanagement/pressrelease.aspx?channelid=9&acct=0&itemid=8116).

SHFPP involves 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 campaign aims to raise awareness about the State foreclosure prevention program, and involves 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 announcement airs on Fox 50 and is available at www.fightncforeclosure.org.

NCCOB regulates state-chartered banks, thrifts, savings and loans, trust companies, and more than 850 mortgage lenders/servicers/brokers and 9,900 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. # # #