



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

Foreclosure Prevention Workshop Helps Local Homeowners

The City of Perris, committed to keeping as many people as possible in their homes during this difficult economy, played a leading role in organizing a regional seminar last week to assist homeowners confront the challenges facing them during the continuing slowdown.

More than 400 people from across Riverside County came to receive advice and counseling about how to avoid becoming the victim of scams specifically targeting distressed homeowners considering refinancing their properties, pondering bankruptcy or thinking about letting their houses go in short sales.

The City of Perris has for more than two years offered monthly Homebuyers Assistance workshops, events that have proven very popular, drawing dozens of prospective buyers, real estate agents, lenders and mortgage companies working together to place qualified people into available homes.

The regional "Foreclosure Prevention Information Workshop" focused on helping people stay in their homes. The daylong event took place in Moreno Valley, a community hard-hit by the ongoing housing crisis. Representatives of Fannie Mae, Freddy Mac, the Riverside County District Attorney, banks and mortgage companies all attended. Counselors worked individually with homeowners. Regional politicians came out to lend their support as did Jeff Davi, the California Department of Real Estate Commissioner.

The City of Perris contingent included Housing Manager Sabrina Chavez, Redevelopment Project Coordinator Sara Cortes de Pavon and interns Drew Maynus and Travis McClean. Perris Mayor Daryl Busch addressed the crowd. The community group TODEC also attended.

"Our local housing programs have proven an enormous success," Busch said. "We wanted to participate in this larger event to be able to reach as many people as possible. The City of Perris has been very aggressive in organizing housing programs that will benefit our residents and community. I commend our staff for making this event available to many, many homeowners. This is what we are supposed to be doing. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the people who came to help them."

Chavez said the City of Perris has received requests to help organize a workshop focused specifically about how to avoid foreclosures, including data about short sales and loan modifications.

"They want information," she said.

Among the elected officials who spoke were Assemblyman Paul Cook, R-Yucca Valley and State Sen. Bill Emmerson, R-Hemet.

Both said that California, and in particular the Inland Empire, have been hard hit by the housing crisis and subsequent recession. Many homeowners remain at risk of losing their homes.

"Riverside County had its own tsunami," said Cook, referring to the recession of 2008 and the subsequent drop in home values. "No one saw it coming. The implications of it will be felt for years. Some of us will never be the same economically."

Davi, the state's Real Estate Commissioner, said the housing crisis has brought out an assortment of scam artists trying to capitalize on the woes of financially strapped homeowners. A common scam involves a promise to negotiate with the lender to modify an existing loan for an up-front payment. Homeowners should be very wary of anyone asking for money in advance to modify a loan.

Davi suggested homeowners thoroughly investigate any agent or businesses promising to modify an existing home loan or who offers to purchase a distressed property. He suggests checking out their license, getting references from previous clients and asking lots and lots of questions.

"Evaluate the situation, then proceed with the best option," Davi said. "If you smell a rat, get out."

Chris Sorensen, founder of the Homeownership Education Learning Program— which promotes consumer protection through education—thanked the City of Perris for participating in the workshop.

"They've done a great job on a regular basis in assisting homeowners," he said.

Besides the City of Perris, the cities of Moreno Valley and Hemet and Riverside County helped organize the workshop.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch chats with City staffers Sabrina Chavez and Sara Cortes de Pavon at the regional housing workshop on Saturday.



Assemblyman Paul Cook, R-Yucca Valley, and Perris Mayor Daryl Busch were among the elected officials at the regional seminar.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch addresses the 400 people who attended the seminar: "Our local housing programs have proven an enormous success."



Perris Housing Manager Sabrina Chavez, interns Drew Maynus and Travis McClean and Redevelopment Project coordinator Sara Cortes de Pavon with Mayor Daryl Busch.