



**Warren C. Evans  
Sheriff**

# Media Alert

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## Evans says decision to halt foreclosure sales kept 3,500 families in their homes long enough to take advantage of Obama plan

At least 3,500 Wayne County families were spared from having their homes sold at foreclosure sales long enough to have the opportunity to take advantage of President Obama's Homeowner Affordability and Stability Program (HASP), Sheriff Warren Evans announced today. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Evans announced a stoppage of foreclosure sales in Wayne County and none were held on the scheduled dates of February 4th, 5th, 11th, and 12th, 2009 in anticipation that federal relief was forthcoming.

“The stoppage of foreclosure sales in Wayne County that I instituted means new hope has been given to thousands of families at a time when not much else has been going their way due to the economy,” Evans said. “From the beginning, my intent was to slow the process down until homeowners could receive the help that was coming from the Federal government.”

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, less than two weeks after Evans' announcement, most of the nation's largest mortgage lenders – Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, JP Morgan, Wells Fargo, CitiBank, Bank of America and others, announced a self-imposed moratorium on foreclosures of occupied homes in anticipation of President Obama's February 18th announcement of the HASP initiative.

Evans said that the moratorium imposed by these lenders, which ended on Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, validates his initial decision to afford homeowners in Wayne County a chance to avail themselves of the federal relief.

“Had I not taken the unprecedented step of stopping these sales, 3,500 families would have lost their ability to apply to their lenders, or Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, for relief under the President Obama's Homeowner Affordability and Stability Program,” Evans said. “They would have lost all rights to obtain a mortgage modification to try to keep their homes.”

### **Sales slowly resume**

Since March 2<sup>nd</sup>, a trickle of Sheriff sales has resumed, but only properties for which lenders provided sworn affidavits stating that they received no Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds, or if they did, what attempt(s), if any, were made to modify the homeowner's loan. That week, for example, only 42 properties were sold at the Sheriff's sale – approximately 10% of an average week and a far cry from the 3,500 that would have gone to sale in the first three weeks of February. Last week, only 74 houses were sold at the sheriff sales held on Wednesday and Thursday.

Evans said now that the President's plan to protect homeowners has been implemented, he has allowed foreclosure sales to resume without restriction to the lenders. That's because under the new federal programs, homeowners whose mortgages are owned or guaranteed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac could have their mortgage terms significantly modified. Homeowners, whose mortgages are serviced by a private bank or mortgage company, could have their mortgage payments reduced to 31% of their monthly income. Both programs have income guidelines.

“Effective immediately, I am discontinuing the requirement for TARP-related affidavits from lenders,” Evans said. “I applaud the majority of lenders who imposed their own moratorium of foreclosures, which was a clear indication of their desire to work with distressed homeowners. Now that President Obama's plan is in effect, homeowners should have the protections they need to stay in their homes whenever possible.”

Evans added that later this week, his office will be posting information and links on the Sheriff's Office website to help homeowners and lenders maximize their participation in President Obama's Homeowner Affordability and Stability Program. The Sheriff's web address is [www.waynecounty.com/sheriff](http://www.waynecounty.com/sheriff). Interested persons are also encouraged to review information that is posted on Wayne County's Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program at <http://www.fightmortgageforeclosure.com/information.aspx> or to seek additional information at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

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