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August 13, 2009

ATTORNEY GENERAL TO OFFER MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE AT STATE FAIR

Madigan's Fair Tent to Offer Support to Help Illinoisans Combat Recession

Springfield - Attorney General Lisa Madigan visited the State Fairgrounds today to outline a variety of services that her office is offering along with useful consumer information and resources at this year's Illinois State Fair. The Attorney General's office will sponsor special events and exhibits and provide materials especially designed to help Illinoisans survive the tough financial times, including providing daily mortgage assistance for Illinois homeowners facing foreclosure and a new resource guide providing advice on navigating the downturn in the economy.

This year's Illinois State Fair runs from Friday, Aug. 14, until Sunday, Aug. 23 in Springfield.

"Illinoisans are looking for assistance during these tough economic times," Madigan said. "With an average attendance of 735,000 people each year, the State Fair provides a great opportunity for us to talk to people who are visiting from around the State and to arm them with the tools they need to make it through this economic crisis."

Free mortgage counseling will take place in Attorney General Madigan's fair tent on Grandstand Avenue weekdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and weekends 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. through a partnership between the Attorney General's office and not-for-profit housing counseling agencies. Certified housing counselors will offer visitors to the Attorney General's tent advice on mortgage foreclosure issues including: what to do if a homeowner has fallen behind on mortgage payments; received a foreclosure notice; or is having trouble contacting his or her lender. Homeowners may also receive assistance in applying for a home loan modification.

In addition, if homeowners feel that they have been a victim of mortgage rescue fraud, they may file a formal consumer complaint in the Attorney General's tent. If they are unable to do so while at the State Fair, homeowners can call the Homeowner's Referral Helpline at 1-866-544-7151 for assistance.

Partnering agencies - including the City of Springfield Department of Community Relations, Homeownership Coalition for People with Disabilities, Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc., the Springfield Urban League, METEC of Peoria, and Mid-Central Community Action of Bloomington - will join housing counselors from Attorney General Madigan's office in providing one-on-one counseling to determine the options that might be available to help homeowners save their homes from foreclosure.

In June 2009, Illinois ranked ninth in the nation for total foreclosure filings. Illinois saw almost 69,000 foreclosure filings in the first half of 2009, up nearly 30 percent from the first half of 2008. Additionally, during this year, an estimated 1.7 million adjustable rate subprime loans are expected to reset upwards, negatively impacting more than 200,000 Illinois homeowners.

Attorney General Madigan also is launching a new resource guide at the State Fair - [Every Cent Counts - Tips for surviving tough economic times](#). This guide offers important consumer advice on recession-focused topics such as how to deal with credit card debt and understand credit reports, protecting against identify theft, understanding debt collection and settlement companies, and avoiding high interest payday and tax refund loans. The guide is available at the Attorney General's website www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov.

Attorney General Madigan's State Fair tent also will provide a variety of resources and activities designed to educate and protect Illinoisans from consumer fraud, hazardous children's products, sexual predators, and the dangers of the Internet.

In addition, special exhibits and displays located throughout the fairgrounds will feature contributions from the Attorney General's office. The Attorney General's exhibit at Conservation World, located in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Tent, will offer information on how Illinois residents can conserve energy. The Attorney General's display in the Heartland Area exhibit will focus on

the methamphetamine epidemic and its effect on agricultural communities, including tips on safeguarding anhydrous ammonia tanks from would-be meth makers.

Attorney General Madigan is the official starter for this year's "Carlberg Design Parade Run," a two-mile run/walk sponsored by the Springfield Road Runners Club that begins at 5:30 p.m. in front of Ethnic Village. Madigan will then join her staff at the Annual Twilight Parade that begins at 6 p.m. at the corner of 9th Street and North Grand Avenue and ends at the Grandstand inside the Illinois State Fairgrounds.

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[Return to August 2009 Press Releases](#)

