



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

Most Mortgage Foreclosure Cases Will Now be Heard in Branch Court

The Chief Judge of Lake County has announced that uncontested mortgage foreclosure cases will now be heard in Branch Court due to the remarkable increase in the number of cases filed annually. Chief Judge James K. Booras of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit announced that the change will be effective, June 2, 2009.

Mortgage foreclosure proceedings have been previously heard in the Civil Division in the downtown campus of the Lake County Courthouse. Citing an increase of foreclosure case filings of nearly 100% since 2004, Chief Judge Booras decided that the foreclosure caseload needs more court time, and more space.

Court records show that mortgage foreclosure case filings increased 96.9% from 2004 to 2008. In 2008, 3,357 cases were filed seeking to foreclose mortgages in Lake County, compared to 1704 in 2004. Additionally, the Court Administrator for the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit found that the court calls went from an average of 125 cases per day in the last half of 2006 to an average of 249 cases per day in the last half of 2008.

The plan calls for uncontested mortgage foreclosure cases to be heard in the Park City Branch Court located at 301 S. Greenleaf Avenue, Park City, on the first four Friday mornings and all day every other Tuesday, effectively doubling the amount of court time devoted to uncontested foreclosure cases. In addition, complicated or contested foreclosure cases will continue to be heard in the Chancery Courtroom of the Main Courthouse. Chief Judge Booras noted that Lake County Circuit Clerk Sally D. Coffelt has accommodated the change by specially training branch court clerks in civil case procedures, in order to better assist homeowners whose foreclosure cases are assigned there.

Chief Judge Booras said, "For the last year or more, the days when mortgage foreclosure cases were heard in the main courthouse, we had people jammed in the hallways, and as many as four judges at one time pitching in to help with the call. We clearly needed to respond to the mortgage foreclosure crisis, and we needed to be creative. We have the highest caseload per judge in the State, and 100% of our judicial resources are committed to the existing caseload, so it is a question of where we have to sacrifice. We've analyzed available resources and have decided to make more court time available for foreclosure

cases, and to do it out of the Branch Court facility. The Branch Court has plenty of easily accessible parking, which will simplify the process of coming to court for most people. The Court is also working on other measures to provide information to homeowners being summoned to court on a mortgage foreclosure, including an informational brochure, reproduced with permission from the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago. We have also beefed up our on-line "Center for Self-Representation" in order to offer more information to homeowners facing mortgage foreclosures who cannot afford attorneys. There is understandably a lot of anxiety out there, and we're trying to do what we can to make sure that people have the information they need in order to make the decisions that are best for themselves and their families."

-Directions to the Park City Branch Court may also be found on the court's website: <http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/> From the website, in the center of the page near the top, click on "Maps and Directions to Our Facilities".

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