Struggling homeowners offered mortgage help

Saturday's event brings together borrowers, loan modification experts

By Nathaniel Cary
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The Greenville branch of a coalition founded and run by Greenville native the Rev. Jesse Jackson said it would continue to fight against predatory lending practices and what its local leader called the "national shame of foreclosures" with an event to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and assist local homeowners to modify bad loans.

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition will hold an event Saturday called Save Our Homes and Churches that will bring struggling homeowners and loan modification counselors together to rework loans into manageable payments with lower interest, said the Rev. James Nesbitt, pastor of Beulah Christian Fellowship and chairman of the Greenville chapter of Rainbow/PUSH.

With millions of homeowners facing the prospects of lost jobs and subprime loans readjusting to higher interest rates, Rainbow/PUSH has pushed banks to end predatory lending, Nesbitt said.

"So we wanted to continue the fight as we believe Dr. King would have, by helping hard-working people avoid foreclosure and to keep their homes and churches," Nesbitt said.

The loan modification workshop will be open to homeowners undergoing foreclosure and to those struggling to make payments, Nesbitt said.

It also brings to light a silent but growing problem across the nation that has affected local churches — recession-battered tithing that has left some churches struggling to pay mortgages.

"Churches are struggling because the same people who are losing their homes are members of these churches, so as a result, they can't pay tithes and make contributions to the churches, so the churches are suffering as well," Nesbitt said.

Rainbow/PUSH has partnered with the Office of Housing and Urban Development and Wells Fargo loan counselors for the event, which will be from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday at Greenville County Square.

YOU CAN GO

- What: Home mortgage help
- When: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday
- Where: Greenville County Council chamber, County Square, 301 University Ridge.