

In The Spotlight with: Kathy Fortney, Medina County Clerk of Courts

By Kate Feeks

“Every day you wake up - wake up with a purpose” says Kathy Fortney, the Medina County Clerk of Courts. Her purpose on **Law Talk** was to express her thoughts on the astounding rise of foreclosures in our county. The rate of foreclosures has increased 71% since the year 2000. In 2000, 337 cases were filed at the court and today for 2009 they have escalated to 1,160.

“1,160, count that many homes ... as you drive down the street! They belong to the men, women and children in our community losing them. Are you feeling it now?” Fortney says as she explains the importance of the huge responsibility of her office and others that work each day to make a difference in the lives of these people.

A Medina resident all her life, Kathy Fortney started working with Medina County Clerk of Courts in 1968. She is a member of the Medina County Professional Women’s Club and President of the Clerk of Courts Association.

Kathy is an officer of the Medina County Courts and is responsible for maintaining all court records. These court records include civil, criminal, and domestic relation cases. The Clerk of Courts also issues subpoenas, jury summons, warrants for arrest, passports, automobile and watercraft titles, collecting revenue related to court costs, bonds, fines and foreclosure transactions. The Clerk's office also handles and records notary commissions issued to Medina County residents by the State of Ohio.

Along with the Medina courthouse office, Kathy is in charge of offices in Wadsworth, Brunswick, and Medina. The Clerk's office in the courthouse is in charge of court documents, while the others are responsible for issuing motor vehicle titles.

The responsibility of the Clerk involves a great deal of work. “It is a big operation” explains Fortney. And it’s not just foreclosures in our county that have spiked in recent years. For example, civil cases, builder disputes, insurance claims and malpractice issues, have all escalated. The sizeable workload has become a real challenge not only for the Clerk’s office, but for the sheriff’s, prosecutor’s and judges’ offices as well.

The future of Medina Ohio depends on recovering the job losses of our residents. As Fortney put it, “Getting people back to work ... is something we need to concentrate on, so that our residents can be self sufficient again. We want to keep people in their homes ...”.

To learn more about the functions of the Medina County Clerk of Courts as well as more information on foreclosures watch for an interview with Kathy Fortney by Attorney John Celebrezze on **Law Talk** throughout the month of April.