

Register of Deeds and Endicott College students produce Homestead PSA

By Staff reports

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Beverly, Mass. — In his continued effort to make Essex County residents aware of the benefits of the Homestead Act, Register of Deeds John O'Brien has released a public service announcement that will be airing on all local public access cable television stations. The video was created by the students of the media department of Endicott College under the direction of Professor Dennis Lanson at no cost to the taxpayer.

O'Brien said: "This shows how government officials can reach out to our local institutions of higher education and as a class project have them produce a first-class public service announcement for free. Haley Parizo, Steven Chamberlain and Corey Leeds of Endicott did a remarkable job in the production of this public service announcement. Because of their work, we didn't have to hire a private communication company, which would have cost the taxpayer thousands of dollars. I think this is a lesson for all of us in government, particularly in these tough economic times that we all need to become very creative in order to alert the public to important programs such as the Homestead Act."

"We are fortunate that we have so many colleges in our area that are ready, willing and able to assist us," O'Brien added. "All we need to do is ask."

O'Brien also offered his thanks to the citizens who have availed themselves of the homestead protection and agreed to tell their story to others. They include: Salem Police Lt. Conrad Prosniewski, Marianne and Frank Silva of Danvers and Nichole Coppola of Peabody.

O'Brien said he is planning more projects with Endicott's media department in the next several months.

Dean Laurel Hellerstein said: "We have a strong digital filmmaking program in the School of Communication at Endicott College. We are always pleased when our best production students can get involved in community-related projects."

Effective March 16, 2011, the new homestead law will provide changes to the current homestead. Some of the changes include:

- Automatically protects up to \$125,000 in home equity without filing
- Protects up to \$500,000 for those who file for homestead protection
- Allows spouses to both file – currently only one may file
- Clarifies that there is no need to re-file after refinancing
- Provides coverage for homes kept in trusts.

"According to the new law, all currently existing homesteads shall continue in full force and effect." O'Brien said.

For further information on the new Homestead Act, contact the Registry's customer service department at 978-542-1704 or 978-542-1705 or e-mail them at southernesssexcustomerservice@sec.state.ma.us.

To View the PSA, go to salemdeeds.com/newwebsite/media.aspx.