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## Memphis Business Journal

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# Shelby County Sheriff, Memphis Area Legal Services partner to educate renters on foreclosure, eviction

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As a result of the rise in foreclosures and evictions in the city, the Shelby County Sheriff's Office and **Memphis Area Legal Services** are working to educate citizens on the subject.

As part of the partnership, sheriff's deputies and civil process servers are delivering pamphlets about the process to property owners and renters summoned to court. Statistics show there was a 180% increase in foreclosures in Shelby County from 2000-2008 and 9,047 people renters were evicted in the last six months of 2008. The Sheriff's department and civil process servers handled 1,261 of those evictions and private process servers delivered 7,786 notices during that time. The partnership was created as part of the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act signed into law in May. The law requires 90 days before tenants can be forced out.

Webb Brewer, director of advocacy for Memphis Area Legal Services, said the most important part of the process is that renters or homeowners open and read all letters about the properties they inhabit. Legal services will offer assistance to anyone who asks.

The goal of the partnership, said Shelby County Sheriff Mark Lutrell, is to tell renters about their rights.

"Some renters have not been told by landlords about a pending eviction," Lutrell said in a statement. "Our goal is to ensure property owners, especially tenants, understand their legal options before they're evicted."

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