

# Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds

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Register of Deeds

### Message from the Register ...

#### Berkshire Real Estate 2009: A Status Report

With 2009 now behind us, the staff and I at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds have begun to analyze the final numbers for the past year. I write this status report in order to share with you some of the key data and trends that we have seen.

#### Conveyancing Activity was Slow

As in 2008, conveyancing activity remained very slow in 2009. The Berkshire Middle District recorded 1,926 deeds in 2009, down from 3,236 in 2006. This represents a decline of 1,310, or 40%, over that four-year period. The year-over-year statistics show a similar trend. The 1,926 deeds recorded in 2009 represents a decrease of 553 deeds, or 22%, from the 2008 figure.

County-wide, conveyancing activity showed a similar trend. The three Berkshire registries recorded 3,406 deeds in 2009, down from 7,831 in 2006, reflecting a decline of 56.5%.

Nevertheless, the overall recording volume at the Berkshire Middle District stabilized in 2009, as we recorded a greater number of discharges, mortgages and homesteads. Our registry recorded a total of 20,144 documents for 2009, including both Registered Land and Common Records. This represents an increase of 7% over the 2008 figure.

In keeping with national trends, foreclosure activity was up sharply. In the Berkshire Middle District, we recorded 83 foreclosure deeds in 2009, up from 32 in 2006. Foreclosure activity county-wide showed a similar trend, rising from 32 in 2006 to 149 in 2009.

#### Excise Tax and Recording Fee Receipts Declined

One way to measure real estate activity in the central Berkshire region is to calculate the amount of money that the Berkshire Middle District collects in excise tax and recording fees. We do this by tracking all amounts paid at the recording counter in accordance with Massachusetts law. Recording fees are fixed by statute, and excise taxes are calculated at \$4.56 per thousand dollars of consideration, as stated on certain documents.

In 2009, our registry collected \$3,038,396 in excise tax and recording fees. That figure is off by 9.7% from 2008, and down a whopping 34% from 2005, when the Berkshire Middle District collected \$4,628,614. This decline indicates that the amount of consideration paid for the average conveyance has



declined. It may also indicate that a greater number of conveyances are for estate

**Berkshire Middle District  
Total Documents Recorded  
Common Records & Registered Land**

Document Type	2006	2007	2008	2009
Foreclosure Deeds	32	44	78	83
Deeds	3,236	2,940	2,479	1,926
Discharges	5,175	5,265	4,416	4,889
Homesteads	561	447	486	597
Mortgages	4,977	4,446	3,738	4,341
Mortgages&C	148	143	137	71
<b>Total Documents</b>	<b>23,062</b>	<b>20,971</b>	<b>18,711</b>	<b>20,144</b>

planning purposes, or are intra-family conveyances.

The chart above provides a look at some basic numbers.

I hope you find this status report helpful and informative. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. I look forward to seeing you in the Berkshires this year!

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