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HOUSING NEED SEVERE IN MOST MN COUNTIES—'09 COUNTY PROFILES **— Even many employed cannot afford to rent or own —**

St. Paul, MN (June 19, 2009) – Many, including many employed, still cannot afford to live where they live. That's the living bottom line from the Minnesota Housing Partnership's (MHP) newest housing profiles of each Minnesota county, just released. The [county profiles](#) paint a picture of continuing housing need, especially for lower-paid occupations. In many areas, workers such as police officers, retail salespeople, and teachers cannot afford the costs of either renting or owning a home.

As an online resource, MHP's housing profiles pull together data specific to each of Minnesota's 87 counties—including changes in home prices, rental costs, foreclosures, homelessness, and unemployment. The profiles also include information about families paying more than they can afford for housing.

For instance, since 2001, rents have risen much faster in Greater Minnesota than in the Twin Cities. While already-high rents in Twin Cities counties increased 18%, other areas showed substantially higher increases. Kanabec, Pine, and Mille Lacs Counties had the highest rent increases—up by 56%—followed by Le Sueur and Crow Wing, with increases of 54% and 51%, respectively. Rochester, Duluth, and St. Cloud area counties also posted significant rent increases, especially Dodge County, now counted as part of the Rochester metropolitan area.

The housing profiles examine five occupations: an elementary school teacher, a registered nurse, a police officer, a food preparation worker, and retail salesperson. In comparing typical earnings for these jobs to local housing costs, owning a median-priced home is affordable to all of these workers in only four counties: Grant, Kittson, Lincoln, and Pipestone. These counties have homes that are among the least expensive in the state. In not one county is renting a typical 2-bedroom apartment affordable to all five occupations.

Between 2007 and 2008, the number of foreclosures increased in more than three-quarters of Minnesota counties. The most significant percent increases were in Stevens, Mahnommen, and Clearwater counties; the largest decreases were in Wilkin and Lyon counties. Overall, foreclosures statewide were up by 29%.

MHP's County Profiles can be found at: www.mhponline.org/research/county-profiles

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Data for the County Profiles is gathered from a variety of sources: the U.S. Census Bureau, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and the Minnesota Department of Revenue. Besides these government sources, the profiles rely upon high quality research by local non-profits on homelessness and foreclosures. (Leigh Rosenberg, Research & Outreach Manager rosenberg@mhponline.org 651-925-5543.)

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The Minnesota Housing Partnership, a statewide nonprofit, advances the preservation and creation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people as a means of strengthening communities and families. MHP provides local governments and nonprofit housing organizations access to loans, grants, and technical expertise to plan and construct housing; it also advocates for and educates people on sound housing policies. MHP's work in Greater Minnesota is primarily supported by The McKnight Foundation.