

# THE SACRAMENTO BEE

## Local Business News

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### **Protesters disrupt foreclosure auctions on courthouse steps**

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A large crowd of protesters disrupted several foreclosure auctions today on the Sacramento County Courthouse steps, winning temporary cancellation of one Sacramento foreclosure and sending an auctioneer to the hospital with chest pains.

Bidders on the homes, all declining to provide their names, called the ACORN protest the first major disruption of an established auction schedule that plays out every weekday at the courthouse following 37,000 foreclosures in the capital region since Jan. 2007.

About 75 statewide members of the Association for Community Organizations for Reform Now, in the capital for a lobbying day on housing issues, delayed at least three auctioneers from selling foreclosed homes today.

"Many of the sales that are happening now are around houses that could be saved by the (loan modification and refinance) plans starting to be implemented," said Amy Schur, California director of ACORN.

The group organized the protest with bullhorns, whistles and chants of "Save Our Homes," to make its case for a moratorium on foreclosures until plans unveiled in March by the Obama administration have a chance to work.

Organizers called the Sacramento action the newest in a series of protests by its "Home Defenders" in the Bay Area and Southern California.

As the first auction was to begin at 9:30 a.m. on the Sacramento County Courthouse steps, Los Angeles ACORN member Kathleen Thompson-Boons asked an unidentified auctioneer with LPS Financial Services of Sacramento "to stop the auction."

When the auctioneer resumed seeking bids from nine potential bidders, Thompson-Boons asked again, prompting the auctioneer to say, "If you're not going to bid, then go away."

Seconds later, protesters surrounded the group, chanting, blowing whistles and creating a commotion that made it impossible to hear. The auctioneer, who had a pacemaker according to associates, began to collapse and was later taken to a local hospital.

The protest continued for about 90 minutes. ACORN members left after cheering a concession by LPS Financial Services to cancel a specific requested foreclosure auction for one Sacramento family. Minutes later, as the group left, the auctions resumed as scheduled.

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