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Alameda County
Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE

“THE WORST IS YET TO COME”

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors Economic & Budget Forum



Photos: Supervisor Keith Carson addresses the audience at the Elihu Harris State Office Building Auditorium to inform community partners of the impact that the economic recession is having on the County budget.

On March 26, 2009 community partners gathered at the Elihu Harris State Office Building Auditorium to hear a presentation about Alameda County’s economic outlook, the State and Federal Budget, the State of the County’s Finances, and the steps being taken towards the future. The major problem is that County revenues will decrease while case loads for programs such as CalWORKs, Food Stamps, and General Assistance continue grow.

The Alameda County budget is taking a significant hit due to the economic recession. The property tax homeowners pay in Alameda County make up 58% of the County’s General Fund. In 2008 there were 8,288 properties foreclosed in Alameda County. Since 2007, the number of foreclosed homes has risen approximately 280% and homeowners are having their properties reassessed at lower values. Increased foreclosures and the decline of home values means that the County will lose much needed revenue to pay for essential services.

As the economy continues to decline more people will lose jobs and their homes making the safety net services the County provides even more critical. There are approximately 71,700 people unemployed in Alameda County and the number continues to grow.

“The Federal and State Budget crisis, the downturn of the market and providing retirement benefits for employees are holding the County’s budget hostage. The County needs to maximize all resources during this recession.” Supervisor Keith Carson continued, “We as a County need to aggressively move away from ‘business as usual’ to secure Stimulus Package funds.”

The County is taking steps to bring departments together to coordinate and apply for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and will continue to engage community partners in the process. ARRA funds are only temporary and will not be the magical solution everyone wants. The ARRA funds will play a role in helping to stimulate growth in some areas, yet the County will certainly be challenged to continue to provide an acceptable level of service.

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