

**- East County Citizens for Fair
Lending Practices -**

Dear Neighbors,

If you're like us, you've noticed the alarming growth in number of payday loan and cash on demand stores in East County. On virtually every main road in our communities you see dozens of these stores offering money on the spot to already cash strapped families. It seems like a new one pops up every week. In fact, this is one of the fastest growing industries in the entire county. According to the Oregonian they now outnumber 7-11 stores and Starbucks stores combined within the State.

These stores offer short-term loans with annual percentage interest (APR) of up to and in excess of 500% with renewals. Most borrowers find themselves unable to pay the loan back and are forced to pay even more interest and fees to simply extend the loan. Borrowers often find themselves in a worse financial position than when they first approached the payday lender.

This industry is doing business by taking advantage of those who have fallen on tough times. We are talking about working families hit with unexpected medical bills or the loss of a job and who need to choose between food, housing, heating, health care and transportation. We simply can't stand by and watch these shops take advantage of families and individuals in need any longer.

Unfortunately, the 2005 legislature failed to pass a bill that would have clamped down on payday lending including the interest and fee costs. If we are going to do anything about this growing problem we will have to act locally. We believe we have a moral obligation to do something immediately to protect the families of East County. And we need your help.

We have co-founded ***East County Citizens For Fair Lending Practices***. This new group of concerned local leaders and neighbors is launching a local effort to stand up to pay day lenders. During the next four weeks both the Cities of Gresham and Troutdale will be considering new local ordinances to finally start to protect vulnerable families and individuals from the practices of payday lenders. Our grassroots effort will rally the citizens of East County to make sure these are fair proposals for both sides and if so, get them approved.

With the first hearing expected to be in less than two weeks in Gresham, we must act immediately! Please join us at our first meeting on Monday, March 6th at 7pm at Courtyard Fountains, 2nd Floor Lounge, 1545 SE 223rd Ave. Gresham. At this meeting we will develop our plan of action as these proposals come before both Gresham and Troutdale City Councils.

Please RSVP for the meeting with Marah Hall via e-mail at marah@robbrading.com or 503-661-3786. Thank you for your time and consideration. This is an urgent situation and together we can make a difference for the individuals and families of East County.

Sincerely,

Rob Brading

Paul Warr - King
Gresham City Council