



Perspectives

2007 OCTOBER
THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS COUNCIL OF HOUSING OFFICIALS
HOSTED A GREAT
ANNUAL MEETING AT THE
ABRAHAM LINCOLN HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2007

The conference opened at 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday with Mr. Alan Roman presenting “IDENTITY THEFT.” He reminded us what a serious crime identity theft is. It is imperative that all resident information be strictly confidential, as the law requires. Records containing personal or confidential information about residents, applicants and employees are for the use of the housing authority exclusively. You must stress that all housing authority employees are forbidden to disclose this data to anyone without authorization, including other employees who do not need the information to conduct Authority business.

AHRMA followed with “CREATION OF A CONSUMER-DRIVEN HEALTH INSURANCE POOL.” Presented by Terry Courtney of Clifton Gunderson, Financial Services.

That evening AHRMA hosted the Banquet, followed by their Annual Meeting,



Mr. David W. Madden, Chief Operating Officer, Ozark Housing Authority
Ozark, AL.

Mr. Madden discussed how his housing authority had secured a regulatory waiver under FR-5128-N.01, Regulatory Waivers for Public Housing Programs to Assist with Transition to Asset Management.

Second, he discussed at length “How and Why to change your Public Perception.” He concluded by stressing the importances of keeping any nonprofits that are established completely and totally separate from your housing authority. He handed out HUD NOTICE PIH-2007-15 (HA) Issued: June 20, 2007. He also distributed copies of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Ozark Housing Development, Inc.

The morning concluded with an informative session on “How to Communicate with Legislators” presented by Bill Jacobs, Monitor, and panel Dave Wagner and David Madden.



Dr. Humor (Dr. Stuart Robertshaw, CEO National Association for the Humor Impaired)

Dr. Humor presented his gift of “The Healing Power of Humor” and “Increasing the Joy, Laughter and Fun at Work.” The group broke into small groups, and were asked to come up with fun activities for your housing authority staff. The following are the suggestions:

- Face masks-staff members wear for a day
- Write funny stories about contact with clients
- Playground day(hula hoops,etc.)
- Rent a comedy 1x a month to watch
- Ice cream, pizza party, potlucks, etc.
- Potluck with employees and family
- “No pants” Friday?
- Attend comedy club as a group
- Scavenger hunt
- Identify staff member’s baby pictures
- “Dress Day” theme-50’s, disco, etc.
- Lottery raffle for time off
- Game day (board games)
- Tye dye staff shirts
- Funny hat day
- Joke day-bring a joke to share
- Employee of the month with extra benefits

THE ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET WAS HELD THURSDAY EVENING

Ms. Debbie Smith, President welcomed all in attendance. In the absence of Ms. Debbie Helman, Chairperson of the Public Relations Committee, Ms. Smith introduced Ms. Teresa Greenstreet to present the Annual Awards. Ms. Greenstreet presented the following awards:

Miscellaneous Achievement Award

This award recognizes an agency or organization that is deserving of an award, which does not fall under the other achievement awards.

In a time where HUD is not providing funds for new housing, as well as not providing enough funds for the overall operation of existing HUD housing, Knox County was proactive and created/maintained 138 units of affordable housing, which at one time was financed with various federal programs, and provided housing at below-market rates. These units went up for sale, and Knox County put together a financing program to keep these units affordable:

- Applied and received a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank
- Issued bonds for part of the financing
- Used non-federal funds from the Housing Authority to finish the project

All in all, 2.5 million was raised to “maintain affordable housing” in his community, which would otherwise gone to a private investor, and turned into market rate units. They not only purchased the property, but made renovations and improvements to add to the quality of life for the properties residents.

Knox County reacted to the sale and potential loss of affordable housing in it’s’ community by “finding a way” to save these units and maintain them, and the residents in them.

THIS DESERVING AWARD FOR MISCELLANEOUS ACHIEVEMENT GOES TO DON TOMLIN, RETIRED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE KNOX COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY. CONGRATULATIONS DON!



**MARGIE HULICK, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR KNOX COUNTY
ACCEPTING FOR DON TOMLIN!**

Outstanding Achievement for Creativity Award

This award recognizes programs that produce housing in an innovative manner, improve the efficiency of administrative operations or improved client services.

As important as providing safe, affordable and architectural pleasing housing is the program challenge of moving residents to be self-sufficient and mainstreamed. It's in this category that the Peoria Housing Authority should be recognized for its efforts to use its new River West and River West South housing portfolio to incentivize residents to seek education and employment as a requirement for residency. Coupled with its self-sufficiency program that diverts income increases into an account, which is then paid to the resident when they leave public housing, it provides encouragement to; residents who really want to escape public housing.

Adding physical and program resources through community collaborations like the Peoria Public Library, Peoria School District 150 and providing neighborhood catalysts like the Frank Campbell Community Center, which anchors the River West Neighborhood, and contribute to enhancing the lives of the children and adults who reside there.

A mixture of compassion and tough love prevails to change the face of public housing in Peoria. The Peoria Housing Authority has accomplished, and outstanding reversal from the 1990's when its residents had very little to look forward to. It is truly committed to encourage self-sufficiency through housing choice and real monetary opportunity, so the public housing becomes past history rather than generational acceptance and status quo.

THE 2007 IAHA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT FOR CREATIVITY GOES TO PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY.



**BRENDA COATES, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR PEORIA HOUSING
PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY
CONGRATULATIONS TO BRENDA
AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
STAFF!**

Outstanding Achievement in Resident Relations

This award recognizes an agency or organization that has developed programs that enhances the lives of the residents.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) awarded the Housing Authority of Henry County a 2007 award of merit for their living skills program.

The Housing Authority of Henry County requires all new residents of their Family Developments to attend Living Skills Class before taking possession of their new home. The two hour class, presented by their Police Officer, Occupancy Coordinator and Resident Initiatives Coordinator, is a result of need demonstrated by tenants and staff. The rental lease, HAHC Policies, HAHC services and programs, housekeeping and basic maintenance, and contact information are presented.

The results are impressive; tenants show improved voluntary involvement with HAHC programs, reduced unnecessary maintenance calls, and better adherence to lease terms

THIS AWARD, OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN RESIDENT RELATIONS GOES TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF HENRY COUNTY.



**KATE BARTON, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
CONGRATULATIONS KATE
AND STAFF!**

HUD Staff Award

This award recognizes a HUD staff person for their outstanding leadership qualities and exceptional contributions to Illinois Association of Housing Authority Members

This award goes to an enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and courteous person.

We would like to recognize this HUD staff person for his stability in leadership throughout the many years he has been at HUD. Mr. Chester Piontek has dealt with our Housing Authority for a long time. He has always been pleasant, and strives to work with you and any problems which may arise. On many occasions, I have had to contact Chester Piontek with a Capital Fund Question or Budget Revision. If I leave a message on his telephone, he calls back almost immediately. He is very responsible, friendly, knowledgeable, and professional. Chester has been a firm stable icon in Chicago for many years.

THE 2007 HUD STAFF AWARD GOES TO CHESTER PIONTEK, FACILITIES MANAGER.



**MR. STEVEN MEISS,
DIRECTOR
ILLINOIS OFFICE OF PUBLIC
HOUSING ACCEPTING FOR
CHESTER PIONTEK.
CONGRATULATIONS
CHESTER!**

Outstanding Achievement for Operational Excellence

This Award recognizes an exceptional qualified person who has made an outstanding contribution at their agency, improved the administrative operations and enhanced the general functioning of the agency as documented by the performance standards established by HUD.

In 1994, this small housing authority was a small troubled agency, whose reputation locally had suffered. The director's salary was discovered to have substantially increased without board approval, although modernization grants had not been applied for – nor mod work done – for several years, and routine maintenance work was slow, and of poor quality. Several tenants were months in arrears with their rents, with no effort at collection. HUD compliance was poor or often nonexistent, and as a result, operating funds had been severely cut. What funds were available were insufficient to pay monthly expenses, and employees were not sure of getting a check on payday. All of the accounting procedures, and most of the other office jobs were still being done by hand

with pencil and paper. Letters, etc. were typed on an old typewriter, with carbon copies. Most of the record-keeping forms being used were old, having been run off on mimeograph machine years earlier.

This was the situation Deborah Smith inherited when hired as director in March 1995. Although most directors work their way up through the ranks, Ms. Smith came to the job “off the street” with no public housing experience whatsoever. Needless to say, this was a sink or swim situation. She had to instantly begin to learn the 1,001 details of how to properly run a housing authority, and do so handicapped by a lack of operating funds to equip, and supply the office and the maintenance department, and to pay bills, utilities, and payroll. Existing staff also proved to be uncooperative, and in time, both employees quit, and had to be replaced.

Ms. Smith used basic common sense management techniques to bring the agency back to life. In the intervening 12 years, her management program has effectively brought the PHA into the 21st century. She instituted a “get tough” policy for residents of on-time rent payments, took old past due accounts to court for collection and evicted non-payers. Account balances are monitored, and quick action is taken on any who fall behind. Modernization grants were sought, awarded, and wisely utilized. The offices were remodeled; all units have undergone annual updates inside and out. A new maintenance storage building was built. Perhaps the most important are the major improvements she has made in tenant management, and the financial well being of the PHA. Whenever possible, monies not earmarked for other purposes were wisely invested, and have grown from nothing in the beginning to a respectable reserve account over the years. The result of Ms. Smith’s work is a well run housing authority, which HUD as affirmed by awarding the Edwards County Housing Authority a High Performer designation over a period of several years.

IT IS AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE TO NOMINATE THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF EDWARDS COUNTY, DEBORAH SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2007 IAHA AWARD FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE.



**DEBBIE SMITH,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EDWARDS COUNTY
CONGRATULATIONS DEBBIE!**

David W. Morgan Award

The David W. Morgan Award recognizes an individual who has made outstanding accomplishments at their agency and exceptional contributions to the Illinois Association of Housing Authorities. The David W. Morgan Award was initiated in 1987 by the Illinois Association of Housing Authorities in honor of the late David W. Morgan, one of the leaders in the foundation and development of the Illinois Association of Housing Authorities.

Through the years we have all witnessed major change in the affordable housing industry. Although some of these changes have been very challenging, this Agency's Director embraces change as an opportunity for growth and improvement, and moves full speed ahead. The Illinois Public Housing Finance Corporation was formed to assist Illinois public housing authorities in the issuance of bonds to finance capital projects; she serves as one of the initial Board of Directors. She currently serves on the Executive Board for IAHA and has served on several other committees to support housing. Her involvement in these organizations demonstrates her dedication to the affordable housing industry.

When HUD mandated transition to property based management, our Director immediately took action to incorporate the change, spending many hours at trainings, research, and planning with staff to move our agency forward. By October 15, 2006 this agency was transitioned, and ready to meet the stop-loss requirements.

Diane oversaw prudent use of all federal funds received to modernize and update agency properties, bringing back pride to our residents, which overflowed to their neighborhoods. She also campaigned for revenue bonds from the Illinois Public Housing Capital Fund Program to modernize one of our most popular properties, created 96 updated apartments', and enhanced marketing appeal. Finally, she managed the demolition of 32 units in our oldest development to create more green space, additional parking, which enhanced the overall appearance while providing increased protection for our residents.

GREATER METROPOLITAN AREA HOUSING AUTHORITY OF ROCK ISLAND COUNTY IS VERY PROUD OF THEIR AGENCY AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS THEY HAVE ACHIEVED UNDER THE DIRECTION THEIR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIANE FULLER. BECAUSE OF THIS, HER DEDICATION TO THE INDUSTRY AND HER UNSURPASSED LEADERSHIP ABILITY, WE PROUDLY NOMINATE DIANE FULLER FOR THE DAVID W. MORGAN MEMORIAL AWARD.



DIANE FULLER, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, GREATER METRO
HOUSING AUTHORITY!

The evening concluded with “Entertainment by “JED.” A great time was had by all!



The following were presented on Friday morning:

“HUD UPDATE ON CURRENT ISSUES” – presented by Steven Meiss, Director
Illinois Office of Public Housing

OIG – “PHA’S NEED GOOD INTERNAL CONTROLS” – Presented by Barry McLaughlin, Special Agent in Charge for OIG’s Region V Office of Investigations, and Heath Wolfe, Regional Inspector General for Audit for OIG’S Region V Office of Audit.

“PREPARING FOR A DISASTER” – Presented by Robert Goulka

“STATE OF ILLINOIS MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON” – Presented by IHDA

COUNCIL NEWS

NICHA – Their Annual Meeting is scheduled for November 29 and 30, 2007 at the Irish Cottage in Galena, Illinois.

CICHO – Their next meeting will be January 11, 2008 at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel, Decatur, Illinois

ECHO – Their next meeting will be held November 30, 2007 at the Country Club in West Frankfort, Illinois

EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEWS

If you have any requests for training session for the 2008 Maintenance & Management Clinic please email them to Lynn Deter at wcha@wcopha.org as soon as possible. They are in the planning stage at this time and would like to have everyone’s input as to what sessions people would like to see on the agenda. The dates for that clinic will be April 23-25, 2008. Mark your calendars now.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD THEIR QUARTERLY MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

The follow are highlights from that meeting.

The Executive Board meeting of the Illinois Association of Housing Authorities was held at 11:10 a.m. at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield, Illinois on Wednesday, September 19, 2007. President Debbie Smith called the meeting to order with 16 members and 2 guests present.

Personnel: President Smith recommended moving the Personnel Report to the end of the agenda.

Resolution & Bylaws: Diane Fuller reported that work is being done on the Records retention policy and will forward the draft to the Board in the near future. Discussion took place regarding whether IAHA is registered with the state. Task is not complete yet.

Membership: Teresa Greenstreet indicated that the Chicago HUD field office held training for new Executive Directors and new ED's were encouraged to join IAHA.

Nominating: Peg Barkley, Chairperson reported that there are several board members with expiring terms. She submitted the following committee recommendations: Diane Fuller, Carol Watkins, and herself, Peg Barkley, for a four year term on the Executive Board.

Public Relations: In the absence of Chairperson, Debbie Helman, Teresa Greenstreet presented the following report. Nominations have been received for all IAHA awards.

Legislative: Chris Bleche- no report.

Education: Lynn Deter reported that Project-Based Finance training will be held in Aurora, Illinois on October 25-26, 2007.

Finance: Brent Newman reported on the Treasurer's Report and provided the following amounts. The checking account shows a balance of \$ 64,587.83. The money market account has a balance is \$ 26,898.47.

Brent Newman also reported that the audit is in process. The auditor contracted for Grundy County is performing the IAHA financial audit and should be completed soon. The Treasurer's Report was accepted by unanimous vote.

Council Presidents' Reports

NICHA- Teresa Greenstreet reported that NICHA met in June 2007. The scholarships committee awarded two scholarships to Peoria and Warren County. Nominations for the upcoming IAHA awards are excellent.

CICHO: Tony Hasbargen- no report.

ECHO: Mark Sosnowski reported that SAS112 training was held in Collinsville with approximately 20-25 attendees. Four scholarships were awarded. Group discussed the possibility of hosting a Financial Statement Preparation training.

AHRMA: Julie DePasse reported on the health care pool. An actuarial study will be done. New elevator legislation. ARHMA can no longer perform the inspections. New language required for elevator contracts that state that an independent inspector must conduct the inspection. AHRMA will complete the inspections through the end of the year, and will send out a communication to all members.

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR: Vicki Miles reported that 72 individuals were registered for the Annual meeting. The Maintenance/Management Clinic committee met and Chair/Co-Chairs are in place for all of the committees. Theme is 50's and 60's.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: President Debbie Smith thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Next meeting will be held at the Decatur Conference Center on January 11, 2008.

Senator Durbin's office contacted President Smith regarding the asset management stop loss kit package. Proposal for the 2nd year, instead of losing 24%, may only lose 7%.

PERSONNEL: Diana Etheridge reported on the recommended changes for the Executive Coordinator's contract which will now includes the development and maintenance of the web page. A motion was made by Tom Smith, seconded by Dave Wagner to accept the recommended changes to the Executive Coordinator's contract. The motion was accepted by unanimous vote.

Meeting adjourned.

**REMEMBER MARK YOUR 2008 CALENDAR FOR THE 2008
MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT CLINIC – APRIL 23-25, 2008.
WE WANT TO SEE ALL OF YOU THERE!**