The 2015 Executive Directors’ Symposium was held at the Hyatt Place which is the newest hotel in downtown Nashville, located just one block from the newly-constructed Music City Center Convention Center and within walking distance to Nashville’s famous Honky-tonk Row. This symposium is designed as training for executive directors of housing authorities and is geared to address specific issues faced primarily by executive directors.

The Roundtable Discussion of “Hot Topics” kicked off the symposium on Sunday. Over the years this session has become a participant favorite. It was designed to revive interest and communication among fellow executive directors, and participants say that they feel comfortable addressing any topics which may help improve their leadership skills during this session. This year appeared to be no exception!

Monday started with Larry Russell of Organizational Management Group delivering a session on HR Essentials. This intensive workshop began with essential management principles and practices required for successful organizational performance. Mr. Russell discussed the basics of sound management processes. Following this portion of the program, he explored the relevance of effective management processes and their relationship to current employment law with the participants. The program concluded with a discussion of practical, proven approaches for providing effective, legally defensible HR systems including effective employee selection procedures, performance evaluation processes, training opportunities and discipline/discharge procedures.

In the afternoon session, participants reset their way of thinking. The session titled Informal Discussion of Peer Concerns was an opportunity to discuss any concerns relating to housing authority management. Executive directors offered suggestions to help each other in their roles as agency leaders.

Tuesday’s session began with Cable Agreements with a Financial Component. Presenter Larry Cherry with Housing Authority Specialist, ComVest Corporation, asked the question, “Do you have untapped financial potential from your cable provider?” This session provided viable ways to gain financial avenues for your agency without changing what you are already doing.

Tuesday also featured a session titled "TAHRA Events".

Upcoming Events

- **Strategic Planning Retreat**
  October 25-26, 2015
  Embassy Suites
  Murfreesboro, TN

- **2016 Spring Workshop**
  April 24-27, 2016
  Cool Springs Marriott, Franklin TN

- **2016 Annual Meeting**
  September 18-20, 2016
  Meadowview Marriott Resort & Convention Center, Kingsport, TN

To download~Tales of TAHRA~ and back issues visit www.tahranet.org.

Earlier issues back to November 2004 are available at:
http://talesoftahra.googlepages.com

Continued on page 7
Greetings Everyone!

Well, my two years as TAHRA President are coming to an end. In some ways it is hard to believe two years have already passed.

We started off with the goals listed below

- making TAHRA a worthwhile financial and time-wise investment for its members;
- keeping its members informed of current and potential legislation that affects public housing and redevelopment authority members;
- developing strong partnerships within the industry.

Our spring workshops, “Sharpening Your Tools” and “The Challenge of Change,” included great training and even attracted attendees from other states. We traveled to Orange Beach for our “Waves of Change, Oceans of Opportunity” annual meeting last year and our “Rhythm of the Future” is in full swing! We have also had some stand-alone training on topics from fair housing to OSHA regulations helping members stay up to date on the latest regulations.

TAHRA has been well represented at SERC, NAHRO and PHADA levels with many of our members serving on various committees and at the executive board level.

Through a tremendous effort by TAHRA’s legislative committee and members, many benefits were achieved for the thousands of low and moderate income families and individuals we serve across the state of Tennessee. The committee worked especially hard on key Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) issues relating to the QAP and property tax evaluations. Our ‘Day on the Hill’ event was very successful both years, partnering with THDA, The Affordable Housing Coalition, Habitat for Humanity, TN Mortgage Bankers and TN Development Council. On the federal level, we had good representation both years at the NAHRO Legislative Conference asking for regulatory and administrative relief with the funding restraints under which we operate.

Through much hard work and involvement by many across the state, we have made great strides toward the goals for this term. Many thanks to everyone who helped make all of these things happen and have participated in any way. All of this is above and beyond the day to day work which has to be done at your own agencies.

It has definitely been a busy and uncharted path that we have traveled. Change is always just around the corner and we have experienced many changes relating to regulations, program availability, faces and job titles. A new board is stepping up, and I know they will be great and serve TAHRA well. It has been an honor to serve you as president, and I want to thank all of you who have offered your support and words of encouragement. My term has allowed me to make some lasting friendships for which I am most grateful. I look forward to serving TAHRA in a new role and capacity!

—Joyce

Around the State

CROSSVILLE

Megan Swafford and her two children (8 months and 2 years) have been living in a motel in Crossville for the past month. A product of the foster system since she was 13, Megan has lived with ex-boyfriends and extended family, when the option was available. But that’s all about to change, as Crossville Housing Authority Executive Director, Don Alexander welcomed Megan along with fellow residents Will Copp and Dakota Richardson, as well as local and state dignitaries, to a ribbon cutting ceremony July 7th at the Harper Apartments—a complex for aged out foster care youth in Crossville, Tennessee.

According to Alexander, funding for the project was made possible thanks to the combined efforts of the Bank of Putnam County, THDA, Home Away from Home and the Crossville Housing Authority. Alexander told the gathering that the new apartments had replaced “old trailers that had long since outlived their usefulness.” Tennessee State Representative Cameron Sexton commended Alexander and his staff, as well as the staff from the Department of Children’s Services, noting that this project was the result of a joint effort of community and government agencies, working together.

Assistant Director of Independent Living with the Department of Children’s Services, Dave Aguzzi says he is grateful for this partnership with the Crossville Housing Authority. With its spacious one bedroom apartments, bright kitchens, and washer and dryer in each unit, Aguzzi noted that Harper Apartments will offer youth who have been aged out of the foster care system a “stable next-step towards independent living”—something Megan Swafford has been looking forward to for a very long time. Harper will be her first home. As Megan knows, “home” is not a word to be taken lightly, and she doesn’t. At Harper, Megan says she is looking forward to the “little things” like making dinner, doing dishes, even taking out the trash. Most of all, Megan says, she’s looking forward to coming home...at last.

—Reda Spurlock, Tennessee DCS.
KINGSPORT—

Resident achieves American Dream

After a year of hard work and determination, single mom Davina Kilgore achieved the American dream of homeownership in June.

Various officials joined together with Davina and her family on June 29th to celebrate her purchase of a new home in the Harmony Ridge subdivision of Kingsport.

“I was in a Section 8 apartment, and my kids kept saying they wanted a yard to play in,” said Davina, 32, a day care teacher at First Presbyterian Church in Kingsport. “If it hadn’t been for my kids, I don’t think I would have gotten to this point in my life.”

Davina applied for Habitat for Humanity, but her income was just above the limit.

She then turned to Eastern Eight Community Development Corporation and was approved for the homeownership program last June.

In the past year, Davina has taken various homeownership and financial courses, as well as a Steps To Economic & Personal Success (STEPS) class through Kingsport Housing and Redevelopment Authority’s Family Self Sufficiency Program.

“I have learned a lot and I’ve grown a lot,” she said. “I’m so thankful for the program and the classes to get me ready for this.”

Davina was able to purchase the new three-bedroom, two-bath home – appraised at $142,000 – thanks to a zero percent interest “New Start” loan from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, along with other financing products.

Although the home was constructed by Eastern Eight, Davina said her kids—Gabriel, 7, and Isabella, 6 – put in “sweat equity” to help in the process.

“My kids are the reason I did this, to get a better place for them to grow up and call home,” Davina said.

Eastern Eight’s Executive Director Retha Patton congratulated Davina on her accomplishments, saying she is a true homeownership success story.

“We dedicate this to your hard work and perseverance,” Patton told Kilgore.

Eastern Eight acquired the Harmony Ridge subdivision a few years ago and has since worked to develop lots at the site. The property includes a total of 72 lots.

Patton thanked officials with the City of Kingsport for their willingness to help in the development of the property. She also thanked KHRA for its support in helping families achieve greater self-sufficiency through homeownership.

“It takes all of our resources to make these types of projects work,” she said.

DAD’s Day at Kingsport Park and Recreation

Kingsport Housing and Redevelopment Authority partnered with Kingsport Parks and Recreation’s Summer Camp Program to host a Fathers’ Day Event on June 18th. The event was staged at the V.O. Dobbins Community Center and field.

Residents were encouraged to attend the event with their children to enjoy a day of fun, food and fellowship. More than 100 kids took part in the activities.

In the morning, storyteller Jerry Muelver from the Jonesborough Storytelling Guild was on hand to entertain the crowd, and Bays Mountain Park Ranger Bob Culler brought “Chia” the vulture to show to the kids. Kingsport Fire Department’s Barry Brickey and Sparky the Dog also entertained the group, while representatives from the Sullivan County Health Department and Mountain States’ Health Resources Center were on hand to promote healthy living and good nutrition.

Following lunch, the kids played various outside games and were treated to snow cones served by KHRA’s Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) staff.

The event was held in conjunction with Fathers’ Day events across the country to encourage fathers to spend time with their children. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encourages housing authorities nationwide to hold similar Fathers’ Day events each year.

Thanks to all our community partners for making this event a big success!
AROUND THE STATE

JCHA—

Ribbon cutting ceremony

Keystone Development Incorporated, a non-profit entity of the Johnson City Housing Authority, celebrated the opening of its first apartment complex with a ribbon cutting ceremony on August 11th. Many state and federal officials were present as well as representatives from partnering agencies to show their support. Specifically, Alan Court Apartments will help to meet the needs of homeless veterans in the Northeast Tennessee region. These seven beautifully designed units provide high quality features for residents including energy efficient heat pumps with a SEER rating of 15.5, programmable thermostats, energy star certified doors and windows, durable brick and fiber cement siding exterior, indoor and outdoor LED lights, and handicap accessibility including roll-in showers.

Residents living in these units are part of the HUD VASH Program and are assigned case managers from the local VA to assist them in their journey to self-sufficiency and success. Many local apartments require a higher rent amount than is covered by a VASH voucher and are located in deteriorating neighborhoods. JCHA is now able to offer safe, clean, and affordable housing that is located near the support services that veterans need.

This project has been in partnership with many agencies including the Johnson City VA, Tennessee Housing Development Agency, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, the Bank of Tennessee, and the city of Johnson City. JCHA hopes that Alan Court Apartments will be the first of many new apartment complexes to help end homelessness among the veterans of Johnson City.

JCHA receives state wide recognition for pest prevention

The Pest Control Department of the Johnson City Housing Authority (JCHA) has received state wide recognition for its advanced and successful methods of pest prevention and removal. In 2014 the housing authority sponsored a one day seminar to teach pest control techniques, with an emphasis on bedbug treatment, to over 40 other housing and pest removal agencies. The teaching material was also available as an online resource. Since that time, the department has had the opportunity to present at various other training events throughout Tennessee.

In July JCHA had the privilege of taking part in the 1st Annual Tennessee Cockroach and Bed Bug Management in Low-Income Multifamily Housing Meeting held at the University of Tennessee. Other presenters for this seminar included Dr. Dini Miller (Virginia Tech University), Changlu Wang (Rutgers University), Dr. Karen Vail (University of Tennessee), Doug Bost (Orkin Pest Removal Services), and Susannah Reese (Cornell University). The session taught by JCHA employees Adam Williams and Lee Braddock included information about types of treatment for roaches and bedbugs, the habits and characteristics of bedbugs, JCHA’s steam technique for bedbugs, and how the entire housing authority works as a team to be more proactive. A demonstration was also conducted to display the technique and equipment used in removal.

JCHA recognizes the importance of resident participation regarding pest issues and is readily available to counsel tenants in issues such as housekeeping, clutter control, and the importance of retraining from acquiring used furniture from unknown sources. In addition to one-on-one counseling with residents, the pest control department participates in resident council meetings and bi-annual community health fairs to provide informative handouts and models. By informing and discussing these topics with residents, department employees are able to gain their trust and allow them to feel comfortable in reporting pest issues.

Nearly 750 public housing units are inspected and serviced by the pest control team. Pest control is a function of the Modernization and Inspections Department. While in the unit conducting pest control services, employees are cross trained to perform other tasks such as conducting unit inspections, monitoring health and safety issues, monitoring lease violations, and performing HVAC filter replacement. JCHA has experienced the most success through utilizing in-house pest control services. Through consistent inspections, precise record keeping, advanced treatment techniques, community outreach, and cross-training employees, bedbug numbers have steadily declined and other pests such as roaches are a rare occurrence. JCHA is proud to offer its residents top-quality service in this important area of tenant care.
You, as housing providers to those families most at risk of being homeless, continue to shine. We here at HUD are in awe of your ability to accomplish more doing less. You have served more families this year than last, brought back more units online and added new units to your inventories. You have truly met our vision.

So where do you go from here?

• Stay aware of updated changes to program regulations and guidance such as the Capital Fund Program; the new procurement regulation; HCV Portability; RAD, Project Based Voucher, CSSR, rental determination and the list goes on. If you can’t remember where we are with things or what update or version we are on now, reach out to your HUD Team in the field office and we can point you to the most current guidance.

• One resource that might assist as you go about your business can be found on the HUD web page, and the acronym is POST. It is the Public and Indian Housing One-Stop Tool for PHAs and here is the link: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/post. Remember that your field office also has resources it can make available to you through our internal systems should you need help so please continue to reach out to us.

HAPPY Birthday HUD!

By: Patricia Basham, TAHRA Historian

In 1965 the Public Housing Administration was elevated to Cabinet-level and was designated the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Robert Weaver was the first HUD Secretary. Public housing money was plentiful and many PH projects were built. Urban renewal was also funded and UR tore down dilapidated rental units and residents were relocated into the new “projects.”

Many things changed public housing from the “old” way to the current way. Public housing was created to pay its own way with rental income and was required to have rent ranges, and residents were admitted when there was a vacancy in their rent range. Higher paying renters covered the operating cost of the lower paying renters. Minimum rents covered utility costs. Most PHAs had money above their operating expenses, known as residual receipts, they sent back to HUD each year. No one sent residents a check to live in public housing. Then high inflation increased the maintenance, utility and operating costs faster than the rental income increased. Public housing decreased services and maintenance of the units. Housing authorities were not permitted to increase the minimum rent to cover the costs. In 1969 the Brooke Amendment was passed. The Brooke Amendment set limits on the amount of rent paid by tenants. This deeply cut the income PHAs needed to operate. In the 1960s tenant rents covered 100% of operating costs of PHAs and most sent money back to HUD. Now tenant rent only covers 25% of the operating costs at some PHAs. HUD must develop a system, and get Congress to pass it, to allow rents in public housing to be established so the total rental income from all residents covers a greater share of our public housing operating budgets. We must find a way to prevent our need to rely on large congressional appropriations so we can survive for 50 more years. If HUD would actually let people in our industry make suggestions, it might be amazing what ideas would develop.
TAHRA was an important part of this year’s 75th SERC Annual Conference June 14-17, that had over 700 SERC members in attendance.

Baskets from every state were raffled to raise $2,500 in scholarships that contribute to the continuing education of student residents throughout the SERC region. KCDC’s own Mary Castleberry took home Tennessee’s scholarship basket. KCDC Executive Director Art Cate presided over the state basket raffle at the celebration party on Monday.

Also on Monday, three golf teams from TAHRA teed–up to compete in the SERC Scholarship Annual Golf Tournament, “Battle of the States and Vendors.” The tournament provides an excellent opportunity for vendors and members to come together for friendly completion while getting to know each other better.

The conference was chock-full of sessions for members to attend. The hard work certainly paid off as members were treated to a memorable evening event celebrating 75 years of service. Thanks to all the TAHRA members who serve on various SERC committees to make this a successful and memorable conference, as well as members who served on the SERC committees, for making this a successful conference.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S SYMPOSIUM

Continued from page 1.


This session updated participants on housing authority software and provided the public housing authorities (PHAs) with access to a more user-friendly approach to meeting their information needs. In addition, PHAs received the latest information and guidance on THARMT and insurance coverage for RAD properties.

As a busy executive, it is hard to find the time to renew. TAHRA hopes that all who attended this year’s symposium traveled back to their authorities feeling revived, reset and renewed!

~TALES OF TAHRA~ wins SERC/NAHRO Newsletter of the Year

“Tales of TAHRA” won the South Eastern Regional Conference (SERC/NAHRO) Newsletter of the Year Award for Outstanding Journalistic Excellence. Newsletters in our 10 state region were judged on:

APPEARANCE – 10 Points. Does the newsletter catch your eye? Does it have a visual rhythm? Does it have a mix of long and short articles? Does it have page appeal and the use of color, screening, boxes, type styles and graphics?

CLARITY – 5 Points. Are pictures, clipart or other graphics in focus and have good contrast? Is text clear and easy to read? Do photos have framing to set them apart from the article? Does newsletter have too many font types which make it hard to read?

FORMAT – 10 Points. Is the layout easy to read? Are articles separated by lines, borders, etc. to keep them separate from each other? Is text too big or too small to prevent easy reading? Do continued articles tell what page they are continued on? Are titles easy to read and preview the article’s content?

CONTENT – 20 Points. Are articles appealing to residents? Does the newsletter include notification of events, educational content, community announcements or other items of interest to residents? Is the Housing Authority well served by the content it displays? Does the content make a positive impression on residents?

STRUCTURE – 5 Points. Are words used in proper sentence structure? Is the correct grammar used? Are words spelled correctly? Is the proper punctuation used?

Remember to keep sending those articles, events, ads and any items you would like in the TOT Newsletter to Paula Robertson at prdsgns@gmail.com.

TAHRA Board 2013-2015 comes to an end

TAHRA appreciates the time and service to our elected board officials of the 2013-2015 term. Your time and dedication has provided our association with a successful path for the next two years. For those of you who are willing to take your time and talents from your housing authority, we encourage you to participate in TAHRA either as a committee member or perhaps serve as a future board official.
AROUND THE STATE
HRS—
Computer Resource Center

Highlands opened its Computer Resource Center every Thursday this summer from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Residents could come to the center to search online for jobs, create resumes, check emails, and even learn new computer skills! The Highlands summer intern taught a new skill weekly and was available to work one-on-one as needed with residents. Also provided at the Thursday programs were community resource information and English-Spanish translation services. The program was a big hit with the Highlands community residents!

~TAHRA~
wants to see your
Faces!
Please submit names and photos to tahra@att.net or prdsgns@gmail.com

PROCUREMENT CORNER
by Terry McKe Co-Chair, TAHRA Procurement Committee

Level at Which Architectural/Engineering Firms Must be Used

The Board of Architectural and Engineering Examiners announced a change to Public Chapter No. 403 (SB0978/HB0823), which amends Tennessee Code Annotated § 62-2-107 to increase the threshold for public works projects that require a registered architect, engineer, or landscape architect from $25,000 to $50,000. This law became effective on May 8, 2015. A copy of the new law is available for review on the website of the Secretary of State at http://state.tn.us/sos/acts/109/pub/pch0403.pdf. This changes TCA 62-2-107, which establishes the requirement for Architectural/Engineering involvement on public works projects:


(a) Neither the state, nor any county, city, town or village, or other political subdivision of the state, shall engage in the construction or maintenance of public works involving architecture, engineering or landscape architecture for which the plans, specifications and estimates have not been made by a registered architect, registered engineer or registered landscape architect.

(b) (1) Nothing in this section shall be held to apply to such public work if:

(A) The contemplated expenditure for the complete project does not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000), and the work does not alter the structural, mechanical or electrical system of the project; or

(B) The contemplated expenditure for the complete project does not exceed one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000), the project is located in a state park, and the work is solely maintenance, as defined in the policy and procedures of the state building commission.

(2) For a public work located in a state park, existing plans may be used as a basis of design if the plans have been designed and sealed by a registered architect, engineer, or landscape architect and a registered architect, engineer, or landscape architect reviews such plans for compliance with all applicable codes and standards and appropriateness for the site conditions of the project, makes changes if required, and seals the plans in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.

(c) For the purposes of this chapter, “public work” does not include construction, reconstruction or renovation of all or any part of an electric distribution system owned or operated directly or through a board by a municipality, county, power district or other subdivision of the state of Tennessee, that is to be constructed, reconstructed or renovated according to specifications established in the American National Standard Electrical Safety Code, the National Electrical Code, or other recognized specifications governing design and construction requirements for such facilities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, “electrical distribution system” does not include any office buildings, warehouses or other structures containing walls and a roof which are to be open to the general public.

As always, if I can be of help to you, feel free to contact me at tmckee@kcdc.org.
Congratulations to our local poster contest winners: Marlayna Ferrell, Dori Bullard and Kimberly Gaw. Their posters have advanced to the state competition in Nashville.

These students are part of our Public Housing and Section 8 Programs at JCHA. The poster contest was held in partnership with the Coalition for Kids After School Program that meets in our Keystone Development.
Summer Filled with Fun!

McMINNVILLE—Summer was packed full of fun this year at the activity centers at McMinnville Housing Authority. MHA operates three resident activity centers, and various activities were held in all three. Two centers held Fathers’ Day events with 77 in attendance at one and 65 at another. The mayor even helped serve food. Two part-time staff members and lots of volunteers made it all possible. Kids at all three centers had an opportunity to go swimming and eat out several times. Fourteen of our children were transported to the two week Red Cross Swimming course and twenty-two got to take a fun trip tubing/boating. The back to school party was the best yet with one-hundred-eighty-four children and seventy-eight adults attending. The stilts-walking juggler was a hit! The kids always enjoy the dunking booth and the giant blow-up slide. Hickory Creek School registration and book give-away tables were the hot spots of the day. The children and families left with their school supplies, a new haircut, prizes and excitement. The Hamilton Street Center received a grant from the Noon Rotary Club to build a beautiful courtyard. Volunteers from the McMinnville Garden Club provided the art, garden and creativity with the children helping. This is a needed, cheerful, and bright area for children to enjoy sitting outside to relax, read or have a picnic. Lots of veggies were grown this summer in the garden. The kids loved watering the pretty flowers too!

McMinnville Housing Authority school registration at the “Back to School Bash” party. The line 20 minutes before it even started!
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Questions?
Contact Paula Robertson at prdsgsn@gmail.com

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Yes, we want our business in Tales of TAHRA, the official publication of the Tennessee Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

~ Strategic Planning Retreat ~

EMBASSY SUITES
Murfreesboro, TN ~ October 25—26, 2015

TAHRA has a custom web page for your guests to book their reservations. This web page will be a location where your attendees can gain information about your upcoming event as well as conveniently book their reservation.


We recommend making sure this link is attached to any information you send to your guests. Your attendees may also call 1-800-EMBASSY, the hotel directly at 615-890-4464 to make reservations.

Your group code is TME.