TAHRA 2016 Spring Workshop
FACING THE FUTURE—TOGETHER

The 2016 TAHRA spring workshop “Facing the future—together” was without a doubt the most attended and best workshop to date! The success of our meetings is only accomplished with the support and training provided within the TAHRA organization. President Jim Payne welcomed over 350 members to this year’s workshop held in Franklin, Tennessee. For those who missed it, following is a brief overview of the sessions provided at the workshop.

Disaster Preparation was presented by Ed Ellis, Knoxville field office director, HUD and Gary Stockton, emergency services coordinator, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency. We asked each agency these questions: Do you have a disaster plan? Are you ready when the next disaster hits your community? What actions will your agency take toward recovery? Those who attended heard the answers and learned what an “All Hazards” approach is.

Commissioner Training was delivered by Attorney Mickey McInnish. Topics covered included fair housing, ethics for commissioners, staying out of trouble, and working with staff and attorneys. A mock board meeting was presented to show what happens behind the scenes.

Public Housing Program Occupancy, a two-day session presented by Janice Gibbons, trainer/management analyst at The Nelrod Company, explored the topics of fair housing and non-discrimination issues, waiting list management and tenant eligibility, applicant selection from wait list, interviews and verifications, denials

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Hello Everyone!

On behalf of the entire TAHRA board, I want to thank every person that made this year’s spring workshop, “Facing the future – together,” a huge success! I appreciate the hard work and dedication that went into the workshop by the committees, speakers, sponsors and exhibitors…your hard work did not go unnoticed.

SERC’s Annual Conference is scheduled for June 16-22 at the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, Biloxi, MS. This year’s event promises to be yet another great conference on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. “Helping solve the housing puzzle” is this year’s theme for a conference which is chocked-full of sessions and activities to keep us hopping.

The Executive Director’s Symposium will be held August 14-16 at The Lodge at Buckberry Creek, Gatlinburg, TN. This elegant lodge is like stepping back in time, yet with all the modern amenities. Pristine Smoky Mountain views will surely put your worries and troubles behind you and help you focus on the issues we all face together. This location will definitely be a treat for our symposium this year. There are plenty of walking trails and great places to relax and reflect, not to mention hiking, fishing, and scenic drives are just minutes away. DON’T FORGET TO ATTEND THE MEETINGS!!

Our TAHRA Annual Conference will be held September 17-20 at the Meadowview Marriott Resort, Kingsport, TN. The annual conference is a “must-attend” for all. Located in the beautiful, rolling foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Meadowview Marriott Conference Resort & Convention Center is close to Bristol Motor Speedway. Our committees and volunteers are still planning the meetings, sessions and activities, so please check out the website for further details in the upcoming weeks. I’m confident there will be something to suit everyone’s needs.

Please mark your calendars now for each of these upcoming events. What a beautiful state we live in! I’m hoping to see each of you soon!

~Jim
Mowing tips

Nine mowing tips to cut the lawn of your dreams

From Popular Mechanics

Cutting grass is an art, as any well-groomed ballpark shows. Follow the tips below to turn your lawn into a field of dreams:

1. Plan Your Attack
Your dad says the only way to mow a lawn is to trim the edges first, which puts the clippings back into the grass to be mulched by the mower. He’s not wrong, but you can also mow first and then trim, which takes advantage of the mower’s large cutting area to reduce time spent trimming. Pick one approach to avoid constantly swapping tools.

2. Cut a Wide Collar
We’re not talking dress shirts here. The collar is the border that you mow first around the lawn’s perimeter. Cut it wide enough to turn the mower around without driving into a flower bed.

3. No Buzz Cut, Please
Scalping is the gruesome term for cutting too short. It can leave ugly brown patches in areas of uneven ground and strain root systems. “This leads to weeds breaking through the turf,” says Pat Callahan, director of grounds, landscaping, and turf at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Cool-season grasses are cut to 2½ to 3½ inches; warm-season grass is cut to 1 to 3 inches.

4. Watch Your Speed
Haste can make a waste of your lawn. This is particularly true with tall or wet grass, which resists a swift cut. But even in dry conditions, a rushed job leads to uneven shearing and leaves behind clumps of poorly mulched clippings.

5. Don’t Look Down
Fact: You’ll mow straighter if you focus about 10 feet ahead of the mower rather than directly at the wheels.

6. Bag the Bagging
Picking up clippings prevents them from getting tracked into the house, but mulching as you mow puts the grass particles back into the turf, providing nutrients such as nitrogen to the soil. You’ll end up with healthier turf.

7. Alternate the Pattern
Grass leans in the direction in which you mow it. Switching up your pattern from week to week encourages grass to grow straighter and healthier.

8. Trim Ambidextrously
A typical straight-shaft string-trimmer head spins counterclockwise and is operated right to left. This means that, if you’re in the right-handed majority, you’ll waste time walking sideways or backward. Grasp the trimmer handle with your left hand so you can simply walk forward and make a cleaner job of it. You’ll find it’s faster, safer, and less tiring to trim this way.

9. Edge and Trim at Once
Hold the string-trimmer head vertically to cut a clean edge (along a curb, for instance), and turn it horizontal to trim around bushes or landscape features. Don’t trim and edge in separate trips. “Look at your property and find a continuous path you can follow to trim and edge in one pass,” says Steve Byrne, president of Edgit, which makes trimmer accessories. “This gets the job done quickly without having to backtrack.”

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Susan Minor — TAHRA legislative committee

TAHRA legislative committee

Several TAHRA members attended the NAHRo Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. in April. The group met with staff from Senators Alexander’s and Corker’s offices. There are two bills that are especially important to housing authorities.

• HR 3700-Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016. This bill passed unanimously in the House with Tennessee’s entire delegation present and voting. If you see your congressperson, please thank him for supporting this bill. The bill was sent to the Senate’s banking, housing and urban affairs committee and has bi-partisan support. There is a possibility that this bill will get added to another bill in the Senate. Tennessee Senator Bob Corker is on the banking committee. We encourage you to contact his office to ask the bill be moved forward.

• HR 4816-Small Housing Agency Opportunity Act presented by Congressman Palazzo from Mississippi. This bill also has bi-partisan support including Congressman Steve Fleischmann from Tennessee who is one of the co-sponsors. This bill will save costs and provide regulatory relief as well as relieve administrative burdens for housing authorities under 550 units. We are encouraging all our PHAs to contact their representatives and ask them to support this bill. There is a letter you can use to send to your congressman. Contact Susan Minor at sminor@franklinhousingauthority.com for a copy. A similar bill (S 2292) has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Tester and Fischer.

We need your help - please reach out to your Senators today urging them to approve and enact HR 3700. We are also in the process of determining how - and if - we want to participate in a Day on the Hill next year. You will receive a survey shortly, if you have not already. Please take a moment and give us your feedback about this event.

Pictured left: Members of TAHRA as well as some residents from MDHA recently attended the NAHRo Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. Representing TAHRA left to right were: Winston Henning, Jackson Housing Authority; Thomas Rowe, Murfreesboro Housing Authority; Sean Gilbert, KCDC; Susan Minor, Franklin Housing Authority; Darlene Morton, Franklin Housing Authority; and Michael Miller, Bolivar Housing Authority.
KCDC staff and board of commissioners, joined by Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero, Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett, THDA Executive Director Ralph Perrey, and others held a ceremony to break ground on The Residences at Five Points, on Wednesday, May 11 at 2 p.m. In spite of the forecast of 100% chance of rain and possible hail, a huge crowd including city and county officials, Red Stone Equity Investors, HUD officials, and a host of community and neighborhood members were in attendance to support this major step in The Five Points Master Plan. The rain held, and the sun was shining!

The project is the implementation of Phase 1 of the Five Points Master Plan, which was developed through many meetings and with community input to replace the outdated public housing properties, Walter P. Taylor Homes and Dr. Lee L. Williams Senior Complex, with new affordable housing. The 90-unit development will cost approximately $10 million, and will be funded primarily through low-income housing tax credits from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA). The City of Knoxville has invested $800,000 annually for 10 years to the total master plan project. Phase 1 will use a portion of these funds to upgrade infrastructure, widen existing streets, and for construction of new sidewalks to improve walkability and connectivity of housing to the nearby community.

The Residences at Five Points will consist of three stories and will feature 84 one-bedroom units and six two-bedroom units. The property will include two elevators, and community space including a meeting room, computer stations and on-site laundry facilities. The site also will offer green space with a picnic pavilion.

KCDC’s Strategic Plan identified the revitalization of the Five Points neighborhood to be a priority project as long as 10 years ago. The ultimate goal was to reduce the density of units on the original footprint from 500 at its highest point to approximately 300 units of new construction. Previous activities were the demolition of 183 units on the footprint and construction of 122 units of affordable housing on scattered infill lots. Construction included duplexes, single family homes and two six-unit developments. This also included the adaptive re-use of the vacant Eastport School and construction of The Residences at Eastport, which both are Leed Platinum Projects and have won national awards for innovation. When HUD released the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD), KCDC used this tool as an opportunity to continue its strategic plan objectives for this neighborhood. Phase 1 will be KCDC’s first new construction RAD units. The total master plan is estimated to take up to four new construction phases to complete.

Franklin—

Franklin Housing Authority—a high performer

Franklin Housing Authority (FHA) received HUD’s High Performer Award for being one of the best housing authorities in the nation. Derwin Jackson, FHA’s executive director, attributed the high performer status to the committed FHA board, staff and community partners working to ensure the optimal customer service delivery to FHA residents. FHA was designated a high performer for both its public housing and housing choice voucher (HCV) programs. The HCV program has been operating for a little over a year, and to be recognized as a high performer is a tremendous accomplishment. The hard work staff members exhibited to achieve high performer status illustrates the vision Mr. Jackson had when he assumed the position of executive director several years ago, after leaving Meridian Housing Authority which is also a high performing authority.

The High Performer Award is determined by the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), which is a report broken down into several categories. The most important factor considered in awarding the high performer status was the condition of FHA’s buildings. Mr. Jackson credits the dedicated housing operations and maintenance staff for maintaining the buildings and ensuring residents have comfortable dwellings.

The HCV high performer status is directly attributed to the dedicated work of the HCV staff and the commitment of the many landlords who rented their apartments and homes through the HCV program. These homes must meet strict inspection norms and building codes. Often these units are rented at rates far less than can be attained in Franklin and Williamson County; however, these dedicated landlords expressed a desire to give HCV participants an opportunity to improve their lives by giving them a decent and affordable place to live and raise their families.
Ground breaking at Keystone Development

Keystone Development, Inc. moved one step closer to providing affordable housing for former foster children and homeless veterans by recently breaking ground on a new apartment complex in Johnson City. Located in the King Springs area, the two-phase project will provide 24 supportive housing units for both individuals and families; one-half of these units will be completed during the first phase of construction. Each of the 12 units being constructed in phase one will have one bedroom and measure 750 sq. ft.

The initial phase of construction will use a $500,000 Housing Trust Fund grant from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) to build units designated for teens aging out of foster care and veterans battling homelessness. The THDA grant will be matched by funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, Bank of Tennessee and the Johnson City Housing Authority.

Residents of the Baker Street apartments who were formerly in foster care will also have access to supportive services provided by Youth Villages and the Tennessee Department of Social Services. The Mountain Home Veteran’s Administration will provide support for veteran’s living in the apartments.

THDA Executive Director Ralph M. Perrey said the project is aligned closely with THDA’s efforts to provide more housing opportunities for teenagers leaving the foster care system. “When teenagers leave foster care, we find that many times the difference between them being successful or not is having access to safe, affordable housing,” said Perrey. “This is a project that we hope serves as an example for others looking to help address this issue where they live.”

Johnson City Mayor Clayton Stout also delivered brief remarks during the ceremony. Officials with Keystone Development said the project will help meet the need for more affordable housing options for two groups of individuals who greatly need it.

“Keystone Development created a Home for Youth program in 2013, and we are excited to expand the partnership with the Department of Children’s Services and Youth Villages, and to continuing our relationship with the Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.” Keystone Development President Richard McClain said. “We look forward to the meeting the needs of our community with this new development.”

This property was purchased in early 2015, and Keystone removed four deteriorated houses from it to get to this stage. Construction is targeted to begin in June, and we expect it to be completed by late 2017.

The project is one of three similar projects in the state that have received grant funding from THDA. The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) was created by the THDA board of directors to provide financial support for innovative, affordable initiatives that serve the housing needs of Tennessee’s most vulnerable residents.

Funding for the Housing Trust Fund comes entirely from earnings generated through THDA’s Single Family Mortgage program. HTF grants are awarded through a competitive application process. Since 2006 THDA has provided over $68 million in HTF grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations across the state.

Johnson City honors young adults for achievements with special event

Several young adults were recognized for their recent accomplishments as participants in the Homes for Youth Program. A picnic was held in their honor at Winged Deer Park and attended by Youth Villages case workers, members of the Homes for Youth board, and community volunteers. Some of the youth were awarded with plaques to celebrate important milestones such as graduating high school and gaining employment. Christy Short was recognized as the first graduate of the program. During her time as a Home for Youth participant, she has married and secured full-time employment at an assisted living home. Christy’s successful transition to independent living is an inspiration to others entering the program as well as their case workers who provide mentorship.

Many groups from the community worked together to help sponsor this event including Johnson City Housing Authority, Youth Villages, ETSU Department of Social Work, Bethany Christian Services, LIX Ministries, and Tri Cities Baptist Church. Homes for Youth would also like to thank the local business who donated food items and door prizes. These businesses were Barberitos, Chick-fil-a, Beef O’ Brady’s, Nationwide, Menchie’s, Jason’s Deli, Food City, Cheddars, Carmike Theater, M-Squared Designs, and Lifeway Christian Book Store.

The Homes for Youth program offers assistance to youth who have no permanent residences and few resources. These young adults are given transitional housing and provided with case management through Youth Villages. If you know someone who could benefit from these services, contact the Johnson City Housing Authority for more information.
admission for criminal & drug activity, and calculation of utility allowances. Other issues faced by public housing managers were also discussed.

In the session **Procurement**, presented by Mike Gifford, owner of Housing Agency Procurement Assistance (HAPA), members learned about “Quotes, bids and proposals: 40 things you may not know about Housing Agency Procurement (but really should).”

**OSHA Training**, presented by Charles Reynolds, CECM, senior partner, Safety and **Health Compliance Management, and Maintenance**, delivered by various experts in the field, provided important information regarding safety and health rules. Specialty areas discussed in the maintenance portion of the session included plumbing, refrigeration, and basic carpentry. OSHA Training dealt with identifying shop safety hazards, the proper procedure for electrical lockout/tag-out, the proper selection, use and maintenance of personal protective equipment, hazard recognition, and the hazards of biohazard bloodborne pathogens.

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Section 8 Fair Housing, presented by Tennessee Housing Development Agency’s Donna Duarte, director of civil rights compliance and Bruce Balcom, assistant chief legal counsel. Donna pointed out that fair housing knowledge is essential for public housing authority personnel. She also discussed the PHA’s individual housing obligations.

RAD was presented by Chad Ruppel, director public housing programs/RAD, USDHUD – field monitoring and evaluation division. This session was intended to provide PHAs with comprehensive information on the RAD program, including application requirements, conversion options, eligibility requirements, planning concepts, uniform relocation assistance, tenant notification requirements and financial changes brought about through conversion. The latest notices and guidance were discussed in detail.

One of the highlights of the workshop was provided by Stan M. McCall, president of Strategic Management Team, Inc. Stan and his team provided a huge portrait frame for all the attendees to have their photos made with friends and colleagues.

On Tuesday evening, many members took advantage of the shuttle to Downtown Nashville to sample the boot-scooting fun that only Nashville offers. Everyone returned safely from an evening of kicking up their heels.

Sessions concluded on Wednesday with the ever-popular roundtable discussions where peers shared concerns and explored possible solutions.

Thanks to the committee, volunteers and vendors for making this workshop a tremendous success!
Cleveland Housing Authority
Lay Street Development Renovations

This project combines phases of exterior upgrades with off-street parking and a mixed-use green space for the community. Amenities include playground, dream basketball court, walking trail and pavilion for picnicking.
New state of Tennessee laws

Recently the Tennessee General Assembly passed, and Governor Haslam signed, laws affecting governmental procurement. These will have relatively minor effects on governmental procurement, but we need to be aware of them.

The Iran Divestment Act (TCA 12-12-101) requires the state’s chief procurement officer to publish and keep updated a list of people it determines engage in investment activities in Iran. People on that list are ineligible to contract with the state or any political subdivision. All bids and proposals submitted to political subdivisions must contain the bidder’s sworn statement under penalties of perjury: “By submission of this bid, each bidder and each person signing on behalf of any bidder certify, and in the case of a joint bid each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of its knowledge and belief each bidder is not on the list created pursuant to § 12-12-106.” Bids cannot be considered nor awards made to anyone without the required statement.

Public Records (TCA 10-7-504) until the intent to award the contract to a particular respondent is announced, this bill classifies as confidential, and not open to public inspection, all proposals and statements of qualifications received by a local government entity in response to a personal service, professional service, or consultant service. This includes requests for proposals or request for qualifications solicitations and related records including, but not limited to, evaluations, names of evaluation committee members, and all related memoranda or notes.

Public Contracts (Amends TCA Title 4; Title 5; Title 6; Title 7; Title 8; Title 9; Title 12 and Title 62) as enacted, prohibits the state or any local government from requiring a company bidding or contracting to provide services on a public construction project to employ individuals who reside within the jurisdiction of the state or local government or who are within a specific income range, unless otherwise required by federal law. This bill defines “public construction project” to mean any construction project for the purpose of erecting, remodeling, altering, repairing, demolishing, or making any addition to any building; or any construction project for the purpose of building, rebuilding, locating, relocating, or repairing any street, highway, or bridge.

Local Government, General (Amends TCA Section 7-51-1802) as enacted this bill specifies that a local government is not allowed to prohibit, as a condition of doing business within the jurisdictional boundaries of the local government or contracting with the local government, an employer from requesting any information on an application for employment or during the process of hiring a new employee, unless otherwise allowed by state or federal law. This bill will not apply with respect to employees of a local government.

As always, if I can be of help to you, feel free to contact me at tmckee@kcnc.org.
In order to meet budgetary and environmental responsibilities, Public Housing Authorities (PHA) need to address rising energy costs.

Indoor and outdoor lighting systems, often overlooked as sources of sustainable energy savings, can have a profound impact. By utilizing efficient lighting systems in your housing units and public spaces, you’ll realize a reduction in energy consumption, utility costs, long-term maintenance expenses and greenhouse gas emissions, while creating a safer environment in which to live, work and play.

Johnson Controls has the experience to create a complete, innovative lighting solution for your community. Updated, well-lit surroundings provide a safe environment for your residents and staff, and efficiencies that deliver savings to your bottom line.

Let us shine a light on the opportunities to enhance your lighting systems.
Executive Director SYMPOSIUM

Mark your calendars to attend this informative symposium where executive directors have the opportunity to address issues and concerns that are of great importance as they fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Go to www.tahranet.org for more information!

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NATURAL GAS
COMPLIANCE FOR MASTER METERS

DOCUMENTATION

• O&M MANUAL
• EMERGENCY PROCEDURES MANUAL
• DISTRIBUTION INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT
• OPERATOR QUALIFICATION MANUAL

AUDITS

• INTERNAL COMPLIANCE AUDIT PLAN
• ASSESSMENT & REVISIONS
• DIMP & PUBLIC AWARENESS REVIEW
• RECORDS REVIEW

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