Changes are challenging, and the theme for the 2015 Spring Workshop in Murfreesboro, Tennessee ended up being aptly named! Not our usual hotel, more time with vendors, and a few other changes, but we can call it a success! Over 300 members and guests attended our 2015 Spring Workshop “The Challenge of Change” including 22 supporting vendors!

Multiple topics were offered ranging from “Commissioners’ Good Governance” to “Improving Maintenance Management” to “Affordable Housing Development – What Are Your Options”. There was something for everyone regardless of the role at your agency—large, medium or small! “News from Washington” featured panelists Saul Ramierz and Joe Schiff discussing the latest political issues and how they impact housing authorities; the good, the bad and what changes may be coming next. They discussed the importance of keeping skills sharp and how opportunities for transforming communities are created.

Other sessions covered financial updates with Brian Alten and Clair Russ with BDO; caring for aging tenants and summer programs throughout the state; the importance of partnering and becoming a sponsor with the Summer Food Services Program with Robin Bailey of the USDA Food and Nutrition Services; capital funding and modernization with Johan Cauthen and Stan McCall; UPCS; and tax credits, which are always of particular interest to housing authorities.

Charles C. Weathers, founder of Tales of TAHRA

Commissioner of the Year — CHARLES D. SMITH

The 2015 TAHRA Commissioner of the Year Award was presented to Charles D. Smith from the McMinnville Housing Authority for outstanding service on the Board of Commissioners. Smith is currently Chairman of the Board of Commissioners where he has served on the Board continually for 57 years. Vice President of Commissioners, Jo Alred presented the award at the 2015 TAHRA Spring Workshop held in Murfreesboro, TN. Jo received the 2014 SERC-NAHRO Commissioner of the Year.

Charles strongly believes in the mission of the McMinnville Housing Authority and in providing affordable housing for the low income residents of the community. TAHRA congratulates Charles Smith and appreciates his hard work and dedication.
Greetings Everyone!

Spring is about to leave us and hot summer days are fast approaching. We have enjoyed the spring colors, the smell of fresh cut grass and the laughter of children playing outside. We anticipated that spring would also be a time of growth for the FHA with progress being made in at least one area of our redevelopment plan and some of our residents experiencing personal growth.

The Franklin Housing Authority is excited about the future as well as the past accomplishments. In 2014, we saw residents move from public housing to their own homes and some residents moving to Section 8 properties where they began to take on more responsibility for their rental payments.

Our annual report for 2014 was completed and we want to share some information from that report.

- Total of 626 people in public housing with 262 of those being minor children
- Average family income of $12,114, an increase of $700 from 2013
- Average monthly rent of $264
- Twenty landlords participating in the Section 8 program
- Forty Section 8 vouchers were leased at year end

REDEVELOPMENT: The next phase of redevelopment, Reddick Apartments, is being finalized and we hope to announce a groundbreaking in the next few weeks. This 65-unit development will be located next to the Reddick Senior Residences and will contain varying types of housing for families.

HOUSING: The Franklin Housing Authority waiting list is still closed with almost 150 families on the waiting list for housing. The list includes those seeking one, two, three and four bedroom units. Dates have not been set to accept applications in the future.

PROGRAMMING: The Residents Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) and Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program staffs are impacting our residents each day through their work and commitment. They continue to build relationships not only with our residents but with our partners. Below are some of the activities for the quarter:

- Several residents were chosen to receive a laptop and services from Comcast. These were awarded at a ceremony in March with Franklin Mayor Ken Moore and County Mayor Rogers Anderson attending to help make the presentations.
- The Homeownership Academy began in January. Each session is attended by between seven and ten residents. Participants are learning about all aspects of homeownership from what is needed in order to buy a home, how the homebuying process works and what to expect after you have purchased a home. The program is proving to be a success with two of the participants having gained increases in wages, one has improved their credit score 50 points and one has secured employment.
- Regular in-home visits were conducted with residents participating in the ROSS program to assist them in determining their needs to help them move toward self-sufficiency.

FRANKLIN HOUSING COLLABORATIVE: The Franklin Housing Collaborative is a 501c3 and is the nonprofit for the Franklin Housing Authority.

Education for our children is one of the focus areas identified through the strategic planning process. Through our partnership with FSSD and WSC, we are working with our residents to help motivate our children to stay in school and get an education so they are equipped for the next phase of their lives whether that be a four-year college, community college or trade school. If you would like more information about the strategic plan and the FHC committees contact Susan Minor in our office at 794-1247, ext. 229.

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Housing Day on the Hill

Members of TAHRA and the Legislative Committee were very busy during the months of February and March.

Starting in January we began the planning process for the 2015 Housing Day on the Hill working with partners from the Affordable Housing Coalition, Tennessee Mortgage Bankers Association, Tennessee Housing Development Agency, The Development Council, Habitat for Humanity and Tennessee Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities. The 2015 Housing Day on the Hill was held on February 25th–26th at the Sheraton Downtown Nashville Hotel.

The morning of February 25th was focused on legislators' visits with our position paper centering on three main points:

- Request the General Assembly to not impose legislation that would increase the operating cost of public housing
- Request the General Assembly to assist us in addressing our aging housing stock
- Provided the General Assembly with information on the economic impact affordable housing activities accounted for in state and local taxes.

Later that afternoon we were honored when the Governor’s Chief of Staff Mark Cate opened the legislative session as our keynote speaker. Participants were provided breakout sessions on:

- Legislative Updates and Effective Communication with Legislators
- Mortgage Financing, Opportunities and Challenges
- Fair Housing Updates
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit 101

On February 26th we closed out the conference with a keynote address from Christopher Ptomey, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, Habitat for Humanity International, Washington, D.C.

Although we only had 21 public housing authorities represented at this year’s legislative day, we were successful in visiting the majority of members in the General Assembly.

We attended the 2015 NAHRO Washington Conference which was held at the Renaissance Washington, D.C. Downtown Hotel on March 15th–18th.

The beginning of 2015 and the 114th Congress marks the beginning of a new era in Washington. Following the midterm elections, the Republican Party has established a majority in both the House and Senate while a Democratic president remains in the White House. Our nation has emerged from a deep economic recession, but the recovery has been uneven, and low-income families continue to struggle to meet their everyday needs. Seniors continue to grow as a proportion of our population, and the end of military conflicts abroad has meant the return of more veterans in need of safe, decent and affordable housing. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that one in five American children lives in a household whose income is below the poverty line. As long as these vulnerable populations continue to exist, public housing authorities and community development agencies will continue to step up to the challenge of building stronger communities and ensuring that all Americans have a stable, affordable place to call home.

During our congressional visits we focused on what matters:

- Responsible Funding
- Regulatory Relief
- Increased Flexibility
- Small Housing Authority Reform Proposal
- Barriers to Eligibility

TAHRA was represented by 15 members, 10 from public housing authorities and 5 board commissioners. Just as last year we were able to meet with Senators Corker’s and Alexander’s legislative assistants at the same time which provided us with more time to discuss our Federal Position Paper. We were also able to meet with all of our congressional members.

A huge thanks to those who were able to attend the 2015 State’s Housing Day on the Hill and 2015 NAHRO Washington Conference. A lot of great work was accomplished through their efforts.
On-site RAD meetings at KHRA

During March 2015 Wendy Ramsey, Special Housing Programs/Relocation Coordinator, held mandatory meetings to inform public housing residents how they may be affected by the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) as authorized by the Department of Housing & Urban Redevelopment (HUD). She and her staff held meetings in all of KHRA public housing sites and discussed what might happen and what would not happen in their community, depending on where they currently live.

KINGSPORT (KHRA) — Criminal Trespass Policy

Individuals who engage in certain prohibited activities will be banned from all properties owned and/or managed by Kingsport Housing Redevelopment Authority (KHA) in accordance with T.C.A. § 39-14-405 and rules adopted by the Board of Commissioners of KHRA.

KHA will prepare and maintain a “Criminal Trespass List” containing the names of individuals who have been banned from KHA property. The list will be posted in a conspicuous place at each of the properties owned and/or managed by KHRA. In addition, KHA will make every effort to personally notify each person who has been placed on the list. A copy of the list will also be provided to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

KHRA has developed categories of offenses which may support the inclusion of an individual on KHRA’s Criminal Trespass List. The following examples of prohibited behaviors/activities are not intended to be exclusive. An individual may be banned from KHA property for any violation of law or KHA rules and regulations or if it is believed that the person has become a threat or has exhibited behaviors that would threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other tenants.

CATEGORY I: Individuals who commit certain crimes may be permanently barred from entering onto property owned and/or managed by KHRA. These “Category I” crimes include: murder, rape, aggravated assault, child molestation, repeated drug activities and repeated violations of law or KHA rules and regulations.

CATEGORY II: An individual who is found by KHRA to have committed a “Category II” offense may be banned from entering onto KHRA property for a period of up to three (3) years. Category II offenses include: possession of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia for any purpose, robbery, assault, domestic violence, stalking, theft, larceny, burglary, arson, or repeated violations of law or KHRA rules and regulations.

CATEGORY III: KHRA may ban an individual from entering onto KHRA property for a period of one (1) year upon a finding that the individual has committed a “Category III” offense which includes: fighting, public intoxication, disturbing the peace, and other violations of state law or KHRA rules and regulations.

Service of ban notice may be performed by any agent of the housing authority, but the decision to ban any individual from KHRA property shall be approved at the sole discretion of KHRA’s executive director or his designee. A conviction under state or federal law is not required to support the decision to ban any individual from entering onto KHRA property.

Stillman County Regional Health Department partnered with Johnnie Mae & New Vision Youth, Riverview Boys and Girls Club and Riverview Resident Association on Kick Butts Day, promoting the campaign message, “I am not a replacement.” Over 40 youth created individual messages stating that they will not be a replacement smoker for big tobacco. Today, more than 3,000 kids under 18 will try smoking for the first time and over 700 kids will become new daily smokers. Tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., killing more than 480,000 people every year. On March 18th all across the nation health advocates and America’s youth came together to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. The day is about promoting awareness, empowering youth, and encouraging peers to be tobacco-free.
**AROUND THE STATE**

**JOHNSON CITY—**

Greenhouse—“Spreading a Little Sunshine”

Johnson City Housing Authority is proud to own one of the few greenhouses in our community. For weeks landscape technician Randy Littleton has been hard at work carefully tending to thousands of little seedlings in anticipation of a beautiful payoff. The greenhouse is located in the Memorial Park development and provides plants and flowers to adorn all of JCHA’s eight developments.

By raising plants from seedlings and replanting cuttings, JCHA is able to produce an abundant amount of plants for a fraction of the retail value. Having an on-site greenhouse also provides a fun place for residents to volunteer and learn a new skill.

Once a year, the department of Resident Services organizes a flower planting campaign entitled, “Spread a Little Sunshine”. Any resident can receive flowers for their unit that were grown in the JCHA greenhouse. Greenhouse volunteers assist to deliver the plants as well as teach residents how to best care for their new flowers. There are many benefits to planting a flower garden. Residents are able to enrich their life through a peaceful outdoor hobby, add curb appeal to their unit, help to make the community beautiful, and teach others the art of gardening. It’s an activity that residents of any age can enjoy.

It is the hope of JCHA that more residents will engage in gardening as a way to positively impact their community, making their neighborhood a more beautiful place to live.

Any resident can receive flowers for their unit that were grown in the JCHA greenhouse. It’s an activity that residents of any age can enjoy.

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**SHELBYVILLE—**

**Perseverance—**

MANAGING LIFE AFTER TRAGEDY

Resident shares her story

By Naomi Solis, Resident

At one point in my life, it seems like I had everything. It was all perfect. I had my house, I was with the man of my dreams, and we were expecting our second child. Then in a blink of an eye, the impossible happened. He had a wreck barely a week after the baby was born and did not survive. I ended up losing everything. I had no car. I lost our house. I had to move in with family.

After a few months I took a huge step and decided to get a car and move back out on my own. This was a big struggle. I went from job to job. I hated working for staffing agencies. I even wound up losing my car due to mechanical problems that I couldn’t afford to fix. My job was even in jeopardy because I had no transportation, and I had to depend on my family again. They told me they would help so I could keep my job. This was hard on them as well.

I had then reached what felt like my lowest point. I felt like I could do nothing right. When I moved into public housing a little over a year ago, I learned about the Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) Program and the many things I could do to help myself. So I signed up. They helped me learn things like what I could do to build my credit back up and many other things. It’s wonderful and has taught me a lot.

Look at me now. I was able to get another car, and I got offered a permanent position at Amazon. Now I have the perfect job. I have a car. I am able to take care of my family. It has been tough, I do not deny. I have always been told to hold my head high. I have bounced back from a horrible tragedy. I still struggle every once in a while, I will not lie. But I know that I will make it; and if I can do it, anybody can.
The Challenge of Change

the Weathers Group, had the commissioners explore topics such as understanding the roles of commissioners, conflict management and organizational performance. Session participants engaged in an educational experience that included case studies and interactive dialogue for use in their organizations.

Presenter Walt Smith of Professional Experienced Trainers conducted a 2-day workshop that was developed for supervisors, foremen and leadership staff. Over the years housing authorities have requested sessions addressing common management problems. Topics included Objectives of Maintenance, Management, Staffing and Supervi-

Over 300 were in attendance at the Opening Session for the 2015 Spring Workshop.

Sessons presented challenging updates and changes with topics for every aspect of the housing industry.
The Work-Order System was also discussed as well as the importance of performing inspections to ensure that agencies maintenance management meets required standards.

Tuesday sessions continued with RAD updates. We had an excellent panel with RAD experts Jaime Bourdenave, The Communities Group; Holly Knight, The Bennett Group; Rob Hazelton, D3G; and others that presented different opinions and options on a range of RAD related issues. Project Based Vouchers vs Project Based Rental Assistance, as well as Merging RAD and EPCs, were discussed with attention given to the best timing and options to consider.
THANKS TO:

Ledford Engineering and Planning, LLC
for sponsoring Monday morning refreshment break

Arthur J. Gallagher
for sponsoring Monday Lunch

Barge Cauthen & Associates, Inc.
for sponsoring Monday afternoon refreshment break

LaFollette Housing Authority
for sponsoring Tuesday morning refreshment break

Knoxville’s Community Development Corporation
for sponsoring Tuesday afternoon refreshment break

THANK YOU to our participating EXHIBITORS

Absolute Security
Bath Fitter
Brown Stove Works
Dog Inspectors, LLC
Gill Group, Inc.
Marketing Associates Plus, Inc.
Marlin Mfg., Co., Inc.
Nan McKay and Associates
Resolution, Inc.
SACS Software

Schooley Mitchell of Knoxville
Smith Marion & Co.
TCAC
Tennessee Department of Human Services
Tennessee Housing Development Agency
Wilmar
WorldWide Window Fashions
Wolverine Brass
The Free Summer Lunch Program is back for its third year! Healthy lunches are available for any Highlands Residential child through age 18 (must be able to eat a school lunch meal) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays beginning June 1 through July 17 (closed Friday, July 3) from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. in the TNT Center at the Police Substation, 706 Pine Avenue.

In addition to lunch, there will be fun and games provided by area churches. This event is facilitated by University Heights Baptist Church, the Cookeville Police Department, Highlands Residential Services, the Putnam County School System and several area church volunteers. Please support the hard work of these groups and bring your child every day!

CONGRATULATIONS!
JOHNSON CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY!

JCHA recently received an Award of Merit from NAHRO for their Homes for Youth program in the category of Housing and Community Development. The awards will be formally presented on July 30th at the NAHRO summer conference in Austin, Texas. Next issue will feature more information on this exciting program.

Webster receives nationwide USA Today “Make a Difference” award

In 2011 Shaquawana Wester began volunteering with AmeriCorps at Highlands Residential Services in Cookeville, where she was formerly a resident. Late one cool evening, she was with her family at a local park where they observed a homeless man who did not have a coat. She reflected back to the time as a single mom when she had to stand in a clothing giveaway line and answer a lot of questions as to why she needed a coat for her young daughter. She resolved that evening to do something to help others in her community.

Three years ago Shaquawana started what she thought would be a small coat drive to help anyone in the community in need, no questions asked. It was a huge success with over 1,000 coats donated. Shaquawana submitted her project to the Make a Difference Day contest and was one of 10 national winners, receiving a $10,000 award on behalf of HRS’s 501c3 non-profit, Highlands Residential Resources. With the support of the community and volunteers, Shaquawana has continued to grow her volunteer project ‘Quawan’s Coats’ each year.

This year, Shaquawana was selected as the single nationwide All Star Make a Difference Day Award winner from hundreds of submissions. She recently traveled to Washington, D.C. accompanied by Kathy Smith, HRS Resident Services Coordinator, to accept an additional $10,000. Plans are to use the award for Quawan’s Coats this year, which will be held on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2015. She is also establishing Quawan’s Closet to provide clothing and hygiene items to youth in HRS’s ‘Teens Need Training’ after school program, where she is now the full time Youth Programs Coordinator.

Make a Difference Day is sponsored by the Gannett Co., USA Today, Newman’s Own and Points of Light. Shaquawana wants to encourage all housing authorities to start a Make a Difference Day project in their area. Or if you would like to start your branch of Quawan’s Coats, please contact her at swester@highlandsrs.com to learn how you can make a difference.

CONGRATULATIONS!
JOHNSON CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY!
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

Knoxville’s Community Development Corp. board named Chief Operating Officer Art Cate as head of the city’s public housing authority and redevelopment agency.

Cate will succeed longtime CEO Alvin Nance, who is joining Lawler Wood Housing Partners effective April 1. “I expect the leadership transition to be very smooth. We’ve had 14 good years under Alvin, and I’ve worked very closely with him. I think we’ll be able to continue the strides that KCDC has made,” Cate told the board following a unanimous vote.

The executive director position is charged with overseeing the operation and maintenance of KCDC’s 3,575 public housing units and 4,000 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, as well as advancing the redevelopment initiatives in partnership with the city of Knoxville.

Cate said his immediate focus would be on the development of 90 units at Walter P. Taylor Homes and Dr. Lee Williams Complex, pending tax credits that could be awarded in June, as well as on HUD’s new rental assistance demonstration program, which would allow the agency to mortgage land and buildings to private capital for improvements.

Cate has worked at KCDC for more than 35 years and has served as COO since 2001. He plans to retire within two years, which would give the board time “to make the best choice of a candidate,” according to a leadership transition report prepared for the board.

“By naming the COO to the CEO position, he cannot only manage KCDC effectively but also give the board more time to make the best selection of a long-term executive leader for the agency,” the report said.

It also touted Cate’s housing and redevelopment experience, as well as his connections throughout the housing industry and with local stakeholders, including the city.

Nance announced in February plans to leave the agency after 14 years as its CEO. In his new role, he will serve as CEO of Lawler Wood’s development and property management operating divisions.
2015 SPRING WORKSHOP

“Stay until the end for a chance to win”

It is probably THE most popular part of the Annual Spring Workshop and this year’s door prizes prove to have outdone previous years.

Members stay to very end in hopes of taking home some of the goodies that were donated by housing authorities, exhibitors and The Embassy Suites Hotel.

TAHRA contributed two cash gifts of $100 just to sweeten the pot. The prize drawings add some excitement to a long three-day workshop that has some lucky winners leave with smiles on their faces.

Sparta Housing Authority had donations from TLT, Inc., Compugeeks, Jackson Kayak, all located in Sparta.

Special thanks to Wynette Maynard and Jeri Lyn Holman at the Sparta Housing Authority who worked very hard to get extra door prizes for the workshop.

• Embassy Suites Gift Certificate – 2 day weekend for 2 with Breakfast
• Two cash gifts of $100
• Captain’s Chair and 2 Director’s Chairs’ with TAHRA logo– donated by TLT, Inc. Sparta, TN
• Geekbox donated by Compugeeks, Sparta, TN
• Fishing Box packed with Accessories, Jackson Kayak, Sparta, TN
• And more…

E-mail Etiquette

The modern professional will send and receive many emails - perhaps hundreds per day! This can be a challenge in many ways, but in particular, it can challenge our etiquette skills. Emails are just another tool for business communication, and it is important that we get it right. While this is not strictly a “procurement” issue, it is critical to procurement since so much procurement is now conducted via email. I am sharing a few (hopefully helpful) observations about email usage and etiquette.

• Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality. Business emails require a business tone. Jokes, texting abbreviations, incomplete sentences, pithy sayings, odd fonts, emoticons, long fancy signatures and the like generally are not suitable for business emails.
• Do not be too fancy. Do not use patterned backgrounds or stationary. These make your email harder to read. Refrain from using multiple fonts and colors in one email.
• Type professionally: Do not type in all caps. Do not type in all lower case.
• Spell-check and grammar check your email before sending it. Remember, too, that auto spell check can be wrong!
• Use the “Reply to All” feature sparingly. Only give your opinion to those who may be interested.
• Reply to your emails. If you cannot respond to an email promptly, at the very least email back confirming your receipt and when the sender can expect your response.
• When replying to emails edit out unnecessary information from the post to which you are responding.
• Be sure the “Subject” field accurately reflects the content of your email. Edit the field if necessary to reflect the actual subject.
• Do not use the “Return Receipt” function on routine emails. Doing so is viewed as intrusive, annoying and can be declined by the other party anyway.
• If there is an attachment, add it before you do anything else with the email. Some skilled emailers do not put the “Recipient” in the “To” field until after having proofed the email and attached any attachments.
• If you are sharing several questions or concerns, number your questions. Use paragraphs.
• Clearly state what you want the recipient to do. Include deadlines.
• Never send an angry or contentious email. Think about the tone of the email you are sending.
• Start with a salutation that addresses the recipient(s) by name or perhaps “Dear Team” if it is to a larger group of people.

As always, if I can be of help to you, feel free to contact me at tmckee@kcdc.org
July 12-14, 2015
The Hyatt Place Nashville

TAHRA will hold the 11th annual Executive Director’s Symposium in Nashville. Sessions include: Roundtable Discussion of Hot Topics, HR Essentials and Updates for Risk Management Software. Whether you are a new executive director or an experienced one, do not miss this opportunity to share while learning new ideas and discussing whatever concerns you have for your housing authority. For more detailed information, visit www.tahranet.org.

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