TAHRA held their 76th Annual Meeting at the Omni Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, September 13-15, 2015.

This year's theme "The Rhythm of the Future" was an appropriate title as members learned how changes would affect the course of the industry and how to reset their thinking to get into the rhythm of the housing beat.

Constant changes and new regulations may cause members to lose their footing when trying to understand the future of the housing industry. This annual meeting was definitely a time to look forward.

Outgoing President Joyce Floyd with KCDC welcomed speakers, members and affiliate members to the conference. Tosha LeSure, Director of Knoxville/Nashville Office of Public Housing HUD, gave HUD updates for 2016.

SERC-NAHRO incoming President Dave Baldwin, Executive Director of the Bristol Virginia Housing Authority, presented his agenda and plans for his upcoming 2015-2017 term. "A Place to Call Home" reflects his goal for housing everyone who needs a place to live. He pointed out the needs of the many people still homeless who are forgotten about in our country. Baldwin believes this is the responsibility of every individual involved in the housing industry and that housing the homeless should be our number one goal.

A real treat for this year’s opening session was having MDHA Scholarship recipient Cameron Walls, Tennessee State University student, as our special guest. A non-traditional, graduating senior in his 30’s, Cameron spoke of being raised with 12 siblings by his grandmother in public housing. He believes that "where you live is not as important as how you live". He was truly an inspiration as he spoke of his dreams and goals that are very much attainable at any age. Not only does he have a 3.5 grade average but he also has a 4.0 singing voice. He sang acapella for the group and received a standing ovation.

The session continued with remarks from Ralph Perrey, Executive Director of THDA, noting the strong partnership and common goals of both agencies. This was followed with recognition of past presidents, many of whom were in attendance.

A special tribute to honor Jean Ledford of Ledford Engineering and Planning, who was a major TAHRA supporter, special colleague and good friend, was led by Doug Lockard and Christi Billings presented a memorial plaque to her.

Continued on page 6
Meet Your TAHRA Officers 2015-2017

Jim has served as executive director of Sparta Housing Authority since 2002. He is also the past president of the Sparta Jaycees, past member of the Sparta Rotary Club, served as City of Sparta Alderman for fifteen (15) years, served as vice president at large for TAHRA under the leadership of two (2) past presidents, and has been vice president of housing for the past two years. He serves on the board of trustees for Motlow State Community College. He is married to Judy Parker Payne.

Paul has served as the executive director of the Cleveland Housing Authority since 2005, having previously served as the deputy director of the Allen Metropolitan Housing Authority (Lima, Ohio) for more than 12 years. He received his bachelor’s degree in business administration from Bowling Green State University in 1983 and later earned his M.B.A. from Tiffin University in 2003. Paul and his wife Sheri have two sons: U.S. Army Captain Aaron P. Dellinger currently stationed at Fort Wainwright, Alaska and Cody Dellinger, a surveyor with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Louisville, KY). Paul and Sheri have two grandchildren, Gentry and Lanie Dellinger (both born in Fort Wainwright, Alaska). Paul enjoys family, travel, playing guitar, and endurance mountain bike racing.

Jo is currently serving as the board chair for the Jackson Housing Authority in Jackson, Tennessee. Appointed to the housing board in 1998, she has served for the past 15 years. During this time she has served as co-chair for the commissioners committee for TAHRA and as secretary to the commissioners committee for SERC/NAHRO. She is a trainer for the commissioner certification offered through NAHRO. Before retiring in 1997, Jo had 31 years of service to the state of Tennessee as a teacher and administrator for Dyersburg City Schools, Jackson State Community College and the Tennessee Technology Center at Jackson.

Nancy has moved up the ladder and has worked in many different capacities in her 26 years at Maryville Housing Authority. Bill Judkins who was the executive director at the time, hired Nancy in 1988 as the section 8 housing inspector. Nancy became the section 8 manager in 1991, and leasing manager in 1992. In 1998 she was promoted to deputy director and then in April of 2014 she was appointed executive director by the board of directors following the retirement of Joyce Baker. Nancy, a native of Blount County was recently married to David Burnett, formerly an employee of SACS, Inc. David is now the IT Director of Vision's Smart Systems at Johnson City, TN. Together they have four daughters and three grandchildren and reside in Friendsville, TN.

Hershel has been with the Shelbyville Housing Authority (SHA) for twenty years (23) years and was named executive director in 1993. SHA consists of 422 units of public housing with a staff of 17, including force-account labor. Hershel has served Tennessee Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities as board member at large and is currently serving as vice-president of housing. Locally, Hershel is past president of the Shelbyville Breakfast Rotary Club, served as chairman of the Bedford County Housing Committee for the Governor’s 3 Star Community Program, has served as vice-chair of the Shelbyville Regional Planning Commission, and currently serves as deacon at First Baptist Church in Shelbyville. Hershel and his wife, Karen, have two (2) grown children (Lee & Leslie) and nine grandchildren.

Ben joined HUD’s Nashville Office of Public Housing in 2010 as a presidential management fellow, later transitioning to the position of portfolio management specialist in that same office. In 2014, he accepted the position of division director in HUD’s Denver Regional Office of Public Housing, responsible for financial and regulatory oversight of public housing agencies across a six state region. Ben moved back to Nashville in April of 2015 to serve as chief operating officer at Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA), where he lives with his wife Kate and one year old Charlie (who he is pretty sure, is the cutest and smartest child in the world).

Joyce is the vice president of strategic planning and development for KCDC, the housing and redevelopment agency for Knoxville, TN. Her responsibilities include the development of KCDC’s long range and annual organizational strategies, executive oversight of their implementation with focus on financial impact, and KCDC development and acquisition activities. She has over 30 years of experience in the affordable housing market. She also serves as chairperson for the Sparta Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. She has a strategic planning certification from the Performance Institute as a certified government performance manager and is chairwoman of the strategic planning committee for both SERC/NAHRO and TAHRA. Joyce received her bachelor’s degree from Tennessee Technological University.

John is the executive director of LaFollette Housing Authority located in LaFollette, Tennessee. He is a member of The LaFollette United Methodist Church where he is chairman of the leadership council and a member of the finance committee. He also serves as a member of the board and is treasurer for Tennessee’s Community Assistance Corporation. He is married to Raewyn Snodderly and they have two children, Zeke and Nora.
Committee chairs/co-chairs and members

Under TAHRA President Jim Payne are:

Secretary – Thomas Rowe
- Site Selection for Board Approval and hotel contact
- Agency Membership Dues
- Accounts Payable (checks writing)

Treasurer and Finance Committee –
Leigh Shepard Treasure, Marilyn Medley, Chair
- Monthly Financials
- CD Monitoring and Reporting
- Bank Records
- Budget preparation with Board

Legislative Susan Minor, Chair
- Housing Day on Hill activities
- NAHRO Legislative Conference activities
- Lobbyist related activity
- Membership apprised of related information
- Position papers

Under Senior Vice-President – Paul Dellinger (proposed to vote) are:

Annual Meeting Committee Marilyn Medley Chair
- Exhibitors Chair
- Program – ‘Sessions’
- Registration
- Hotel
- Opening Ceremony
- Program Info-Promo & Printed Ads
- Golf Tournament
- Prizes/Give-a-way

Exhibitors Committee John Cauthen, Jeff Green Co-Chairs
- Prepares and disseminates info to potential exhibitors
- Liaison between exhibitors and hotel

Resolutions (individual) Gena Burden

Historian (Individual) Patricia Basham

Under Vice President of Professional Development
Ben Bentley (proposed to vote)

Spring Workshop Committee Christi Billings – Lori Everett Co-Chairs
- Theme
- Program – ‘Sessions’ works with Housing Chairs and others
- Exhibitors Committee
- Hotel
- Registration
- Program Promo and Printed
- Prize/Give-a-way
- Opening Session
- Entertainment

Executive Director of Symposium Board in Charge
- Program
- Sessions
- Hotel

Education and Training Committee
Lisa Bonadio - Kris Lord Co-Chairs
- Stand-alone Training workshops
- Program selection and training provider selection or suggestion

Under Vice President Member Services – Nancy Burnette are:

Scholarship Committee Christi Billings – Jane Norsworthy Co-Chairs
- Applications/Selection
- Recipient contact for grades and payment request
- Golf Tournament
- Fundraising – includes filling forms
- Prizes/Sponsors

Tales of TAHRA (TOT) Paula Roberson Editor Doug Lockard –
Rhonda Casey Co-Chairs
- Gather articles and review
- Gather Ads from affiliates etc.

Website – Jeri Lynn Holman

Insurance Committee Jim Thiltgen Chair and Art Cate Vice Chair
- Insurance Board Representation for TN
- Evaluate and preset needed insurance policies to board

Procurement Committee Terry McKee - Rita James Co-Chairs

Hospitality Committee Brian Harris, Sandy Newton and Karen Tullock

Under Vice President of Housing – Hershel Thrasher (proposed for vote)

Commission of the Year selection
- Public Housing Committee Don Alexander –
- Robert Vernon Co-Chairs
- Section 8 Committee Sherrie Samples - Debbie Allen Co-Chairs
- Maintenance Committee Lanny Daniels – Ken Rye Co-Chairs

Community Revitalization and Development Committee
Winston Henning - Richard McClain Co-Chairs
- Tax Credit Information
- Sessons for Annual Meeting, Spring Workshop and others
- Response to THDA on QAP and related Housing Authority issues
- Multi-family RAD
- Sessions for Annual Meeting, Spring Workshop and others
- How to keep TAHRA relevant and needed on multi-family side

Under Vice-President of Commissioners – Proposed for vote – Joe Alred

Commissioners Committee Margaret Milan Chair
- Sessions for Annual Meeting and Spring Workshop
- Commission of the Year selection
- SERC Award Submittal

Under 1st Past President – Joyce Floyd

Affiliate Membership Committee – Stan McCall, Chair
- Solicitation and recruitment
- Invoicing, etc
- Info for Website

Under 2nd Past President – John Snodderly

Nominating Committee (selected by board)

Outgoing 2013-2015 Board—JOB WELL DONE!

Two friends of TAHRA stay involved
By: Patricia Basham, TAHRA Historian

Pictured are two of TAHRA’s special people, John Acuff, Jr. and John Rochelle. John Acuff, (pictured left) was a TAHRA Secretary-Treasurer and Life Member. John Rochelle (pictured right) was formerly the KCDC Maintenance Administrator and long-time TAHRA Exhibit Chairman. The two are playing golf to raise money for the scholarship fund. The golf tournament was later named the John Acuff Golf Tournament. These two have worked tirelessly for TAHRA, thanks guys!
Cleveland Housing Authority Awarded THDA Grant

The Cleveland Housing Authority (CHA) received a Housing Trust Fund (HTF) grant from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) that will help enhance accessibility for public housing residents. The $87,545 grant was approved by the THDA board of directors and will be used with $114,946 in matching funds from the housing authority.

CHA will use the grant funds to renovate a public housing duplex apartment in Cleveland with features that meet full accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Other upgrades will include efficiency improvements to the apartment’s heating, insulation and lighting.

THDA Executive Director Ralph M. Perrey said the new apartments will provide safe, decent, affordable housing to individuals in need of it most. “The Housing Trust Fund is open to creative solutions, designed locally,” he said. “This is a great example of addressing a specific need.”

CHA officials said the HTF funding will allow it to leverage limited capital fund dollars to meet the growing need for accessible housing in Cleveland.

“We are blessed to have been selected for this grant project and are excited about the opportunity to create more accessible and affordable housing for families who need it,” CHA Executive Director Paul A. Dellinger said. “This project includes not only improved accessibility features but also the use of high efficiency heating and lighting to reduce energy consumption and operational costs for the building.”

The 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 $67 million in HTF grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations across the state.

Highland Residential Services (HRS)—Youth Programs

Our Teens Need Training (TNT) completed an Adopt-a-Road trash pickup along Pine Avenue during Fall break. They collected four large bags of trash. After the work was done, the teens enjoyed a picnic lunch at Burgess Falls then went hiking to the falls.

Highland Residential Services’ Fall Fun Days were a success with approximately 40 children attending events at six locations for a day of arts & crafts, games and lunch. A similar seasonal event is planned during Spring Break, and will feature the annual poster contest.

Imagination Library comes to the Franklin Housing Authority

Reading is so important to a child’s development. Access to books should not be a barrier for children to learn. The Franklin Housing Authority and the Imagination Library recently partnered to hold a sign-up event for children. The event included snacks, guest readers and free books for the children. Any child, birth to 5 years old is eligible to have a free book delivered to their home each month. For more information visit the Imagination Library site at: https://imaginationlibrary.com/.

Not sure of the importance of reading? See the benefits listed below taken from the Best Books for Kids site.

1. Kids who read often and widely get better at it.
2. Reading exercises and strengthens our brains and builds new connections.
3. Reading improves concentration.
4. Reading teaches children about the world around them.
5. Reading improves a child’s vocabulary and leads to more highly-developed language skills.
6. Reading develops a child’s imagination.
7. Reading helps kids develop empathy.
8. Children who read do better in school.
9. Reading is a great form of entertainment.
10. Reading relaxes the body and calms the mind.
Blight Elimination Program in Memphis

Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) is launching a new $6 million program to combat blight by transforming eligible homes into green spaces.

At a media conference THDA Executive Director Ralph M. Perrey and Memphis Mayor A. C. Wharton jointly announced the Blight Elimination Program (BEP). Under the program, qualified nonprofit organizations with a history of successful construction and housing development activities can apply for BEP loans up to $25,000 starting November 1, 2015. Applications must demonstrate a clear, specific plan for the acquisition, demolition, and transformation of an eligible property, including all expenses and a list of licensed, bonded, and insured contractors and subcontractors.

To ensure the program serves those areas hardest hit with blight and will in turn help to stabilize home values, homes must meet specific criteria. Following U.S. Treasury guidelines, the funds will be invested in targeted areas that are identified by high vacancy, a minimum percentage of owner-occupied single family homes, and other factors.

"On the rare opportunities we get to initiate new programs, we make sure every dollar is being used for a specific purpose that will benefit not only individual families and neighborhoods but also the Tennessee economy as a whole," said Perrey. "We anticipate much of the funding to be put to work in Memphis.

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husband Kevin. Jean, who lost the battle to cancer this spring, was one of a kind. Sweet, giving and fun, she loved and prayed for her family and friends. We will miss her with all of our hearts.

Keynote speaker Jean Steel reminded everyone that laughter is good, and she encouraged us all to enjoy every moment by focusing on the good things. She engaged the audience with her positive attitude and shared tips on how to stop mourning Mondays. She also presided over the session called “Happy People Win.” She stressed that teamwork among employees improves the morale and helps everyone get the job done much more efficiently.

Monday sessions also included public housing and section 8 updates from Terry Provance, Senior Associate with Nan McKay and Don Clem of the Schiff Group.

Commissioners explored the practices of high performing boards with topics that covered proper board orientation and the roles, responsibilities and expectations of commissioners.

Sessions continued on Tuesday with “hot” roundtable discussions. Members were encouraged to bring their most important issues to get ideas and suggestions from their peers.

In closing, Joyce pointed out, “Learning a new rhythm and embracing change can always cause a few feet to get stepped on as we learn new moves. Thanks to TAHRA partners and members and especially the outgoing board of directors who helped move us forward during a time of many changes. In keeping with the theme “The Rhythm of the Future, it is time to welcome in a new president and many new board members.”

The conference was a success thanks to the participation and hard work from everyone involved.
THE RHYTHM OF THE FUTURE!

Reception

Drawings
Exhibitors

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to those companies who contributed to the success of our 76th Annual Meeting with their sponsorships—

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“An Alternative Approach to Agency Services”
PROCUREMENT Corner
by Terry McKee, Co-Chair, TAHRA Procurement Committee

“Sole Source”

One procurement area fraught with concerns is “Sole Source” items or services. Sole source means that there is only one company in the world that can supply the needed goods or services. This does not mean one source in my town. Nor does it mean the same source that “has always done it” because “they are experienced with us.” What it does mean is that only one vendor, in the world, can supply the goods or services needed because of specific and justifiable functional reasons.

The federal Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is concerned about these types of procurements and will audit them. They will require thorough and reasonable documentation. So will the State of Tennessee Comptroller. Newspapers from time to time like to examine “sole sources” and will submit an open records request. Thus it is important that PHAs limit sole source procurement and thoroughly document those that do occur.

Generally a sole source declaration should be:

• Written
• Signed by the requestor
• Approved by the signature of a very high level employee such as the CEO or CFO.
• Meaningful in presenting a documented rationale for the declaration
• Able to withstand auditors and public scrutiny
• Rare

Recently some entities have started two new steps to validate sole source procurements. The first step is to perform (and document) a simple “Google Search.” Go to the internet and search for the commodity or service. If you can find it on Google, there is a great chance that it is not a sole source. The second step is to post a notice to your website notifying interested vendors that you intend to declare the commodity or service as a sole source and give interested parties a week to respond. If vendors respond, it is likely not a sole source.

As always, if I can be of help to you, feel free to contact me at tmckee@kcdc.org.

~Terry McKee

HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY

Many families will enjoy feasting on a turkey with all the trimmings at some point during the holiday season. Here are some tips on how to safely prepare the big bird for your family feast:

1. Clean - wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops before and after preparing each food item.
2. Separate - keep raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from foods that won't be cooked. Use separate cutting board for raw meats than the one you use for chopping vegetables and fruits.
3. Cook - use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and fish are fully cooked. Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness. Cook turkey to an internal temperature of 165°F, and be sure to insert the thermometer deeply into the thickest part of the bird.
4. Chill - divide leftovers into shallow containers and refrigerate them within two hours. Use leftovers within 3 to 4 days.

Whether gathering with family for holiday dinners, or spending time with friends at office parties and other celebrations, be cautious when eating certain foods.

Foods such as raw oysters, soft-boiled eggs, steak, rare or medium hamburger, and egg nog, mousse or bread pudding (unless made with pasteurized eggs or an egg substitute), can harbor bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Apple cider that has not been pasteurized or otherwise treated to kill bacteria can also make you sick.

A good rule of thumb is, make sure hot foods are hot (above 140°F) and cold foods are cold (below 40°F). Don’t eat food that has been sitting out for more than two hours if the food is not being kept hot or cold.

Enjoy holiday meals with your family this season, stay safe and be well!
The Johnson City Housing Authority in partnership with the Johnson City Police Department hosted a summer day camp for children living in the Johnson City Housing Authority. The camp was held at the Johnson City Police Department Training Facility July 13-17, 2015. Children ranging from 9 to 16 who live in the city’s identified targeted crime zone were given the opportunity to spend a week with police officers, housing authority staff, and other positive role models. Mentors emphasized to each child how to strive to be the best that they can be. Each day, the participants were able to engage in a variety of new experiences and learning opportunities. A daily lunch was also provided.

The week kicked off with presentations from the Johnson City Police Department’s Criminal Investigations Division, School Resource Officers, SWAT Team and Bomb Squad, and a K-9 unit. The following day focused on healthy living and included spending time with a professional boxer, fitness instructor, and a representative from Earthfare Foods. Career Day gave the children the chance to interview a variety of professionals including a teacher, doctor, fire fighter, emergency responder, district attorney, and news reporter. Towards the end of the week, the camp focused on anti-bullying awareness and team building. The camp concluded with a rafting trip on the Nolichucky River and graduation ceremony with award presentation.

Nineteen children completed the summer camp program. The facilitators of the camp were able to touch the lives of these youth in a positive way and build a bond that will last for many years. One resident was so proud of his achievement that he displayed his graduation and award certificates in his bedroom window, letting everyone in his neighborhood know about his accomplishment.

Countless hours were spent in planning and organizing this event. Special thanks to Officer Michael Whiteaker and Officer Brittany Killebrew for all of their efforts in making this a memorable week for all involved. Community volunteers and individuals invested in the week by giving donations of time and food. Terry Etter, JCHA Community Policy Coordinator, also assisted in planning the events and connecting residents to the camp.

The Police and Teens Reaching Opportunities for Life (PATROL) program continues to meet monthly at the Johnson City Housing Authority to positively impact the lives of youth and deter them from criminal behavior.

Fall 2015 Health Fair at Johnson City Housing Authority

Johnson City Housing Authority (JCHA) Department of Resident Services in conjunction with East Tennessee State University (ETSU) held its semi-annual Health Fair on October 29, 2015. Thirty residents attended this event to learn more about a healthy lifestyle. Displays and health representatives focused on the needs of aging and disabled residents living in JCHA who are served through the Resident Opportunity and Self Sufficiency Grant.

ETSU student nurses were present with several informational booths covering topics ranging from mental health to diabetes. Stations were set up throughout the facility where nurses were available to administer blood pressure checks, glucose checks, nutrition screenings, exercise demonstrations, and to answer basic health questions. All residents who attended the health fair received a gift bag, a healthy lunch, and the chance to win a door prize. Agencies represented at the event included the Johnson City Senior Center, the Area Agency on Aging and Disability, Milligan College School of Occupational Therapy, JCCHC/JCHA Family Medical Clinic, JCHA Women’s Health, JCHA Smoking Cessation, JCCHC Pharmacy, JCHA Mental Health, the Washington County Health Department, Keystone Dental, Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union, the Health Fair Resource Center and JCHA Department of Pest Control. This health fair not only brings awareness to health and wellness issues but also informs residents of the free services that are available to them in the community.
AROUND THE STATE

HRS—
Holds Tobacco Cessation Classes

The Great American Smoke-out was November 19, 2015. The event challenges people to stop smoking cigarettes for 24 hours, hoping their decision not to smoke will last forever. Highland Residential Services can help! Their free tobacco cessation classes are held on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays each month from 2:00 – 3:00 pm at the HRS Main office community room, and are open to the public. Each class stands alone so you can come anytime. Anyone can attend – you do not have to be a tobacco user. You may simply want to help someone else to quit or to never start. There is no obligation, no expectation and no commitment required to attend the classes. The instructor, Randy Todd with Quit 4 Life, was once a smoker struggling to quit, has been where you are. This month’s classes will have a focus on how young people are targeted with the temptation to start smoking. It only takes three cigarettes a day for three weeks to become addicted.

For Great American Smoke-out in November, HRS held a drawing at the Nov. 24th class for the winner’s choice of either a $50 prize paid directly toward your next month’s rent, a Tobacco Free gift basket valued at $50, or one box of Nicotine stop smoking patches valued at $50. Participants could enter by registering at each class in November. What an excellent and fun way to promote being tobacco free to their residents!

TRENTON—
Trenton Housing gets busy with Healthy West Award

East Tennessee State University provides funding to help energize and strengthen Tennessee. The goals of the award are to identify the strengths/weaknesses and clear connections for health and economic goals for selected counties. Trenton Housing is fortunate to have been selected to receive The Healthy West Award. Through this funding the housing authority will work to build community capacity by identifying key stakeholders, and to address health challenges especially as they relate to economic impacts.

Program-specific, community based action plans will be developed to promote nutrition education, and increase physical activity among residents where the challenge of preventing or eliminating the incidence of chronic disease is evident. Programs that support the elimination or reduction of drug, tobacco and alcohol will be supported through parent activities and community events. Initiatives to change lifestyles and encourage healthy eating, healthy thinking, and healthy exercise, along with prevention programs, will be provided at Trenton Housing Authority. Using this funding will help Trenton Housing to be a forerunner for the Healthy Tennessee Initiative.

HUD UPDATE—Washington

Proposed Rule Open for Public Comment for 60 Days

Recently, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Julián Castro joined Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy in Alexandria, VA to announce a proposed rule to make the nation’s public housing properties entirely smoke-free. HUD’s proposed rule would require more than 3,100 public housing agencies (PHAs) across the country to implement smoke-free policies in their developments within 18 months of the final rule.

Under HUD’s proposed rule, PHAs must implement a policy prohibiting the sale of tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars or pipes) in all living units, indoor common areas, administrative offices and all outdoor areas within 25 feet of housing and administrative office buildings. HUD is seeking public comment on this proposed rule for the next 60 days.

“We have a responsibility to protect public housing residents from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, especially the elderly and children who suffer from asthma and other respiratory diseases,” said HUD Secretary Julián Castro. “This proposed rule will help improve the health of more than 760,000 children and help public housing agencies save $1.5 billion every year in health care, repairs and preventable fires.”

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cigarette smoking kills 480,000 Americans each year, making it the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. By reducing the public health risks associated with tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke, the proposed smoke-free rule will enhance the effectiveness of HUD’s efforts to provide increased public health protection for residents of public housing. The rule will impact the more than 940,000 units that are currently not smoke-free, including more than 500,000 units inhabited by elderly households.

“Everyone – no matter where they live – deserves a chance to grow up in a healthy, smoke-free home,” said U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy. “There is no safe level of secondhand smoke. So, when 58 million Americans – including 15 million children – are exposed to secondhand smoke, we have an obligation to act. That is what Secretary Castro is doing with this proposal.”

Since 2009, HUD strongly encouraged Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to adopt smoke-free policies in their buildings and common areas. During this time, more than 600 PHAs and tribally designated housing entities adopted smoke-free policies. Currently, there are nearly 1.2 million public housing units across the country. Through HUD’s voluntary policy and local initiatives, more than 228,000 public housing units are already smoke-free. If finalized, the proposed smoke-free rule would expand the impact to more 940,000 public housing units.

HUD’s proposed smoke-free rule will also help reduce damage and maintenance costs associated with smoking. It is estimated that smoking causes over 100,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths and close to half a billion dollars in direct property damage; additionally, smoking is the lead cause of fire related deaths in multifamily buildings. A 2014 CDC study estimates that prohibiting smoking in public housing would yield an annual cost savings of $153 million, including $94 million in second hand smoke-related health care, $43 million in renovation of smoking-permitted units, and $16 million in smoking-related fire losses.

This proposed rule will be open for public comment for 60 days. Interested persons may submit comments electronically at www.regulations.gov. Comments may also be submitted by mail to the Regulations Division, Office of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW, Room 10276, Washington, DC 20410.
Strategic Planning Meeting—The Best Ever

The strategic planning sessions in Murfreesboro were extremely motivating—generating creative thinking, visions of the future and volunteer efforts that accomplished effective planning for the year to come. Committees were changed or revamped and new ones added to launch the TAHRA organization into the future with more emphasis on what TAHRA is about. Organizing these committees and visually seeing the dedication from the housing authorities has shown the impact a volunteer organization can make. We are Tennessee! We control the housing of thousands of people in Tennessee so we, as a group, should be organized and ready for whatever we may encounter. We are getting teamed up so that networking will pay off and bring new ideas, solutions and revitalization of our communities. The TAHRA organization is pumped and ready to become the best state-wide housing operation in Tennessee.

President Jim Payne opened the meetings with his projections for the future of TAHRA. He, as other TAHRA members, is ready to make a positive change for the future where all members take a part in the ownership of this great organization. Joyce Floyd reviewed the organizational structure and presented opportunities for committees to modify their existing roles and responsibilities. Chair-people were given the responsibility to ensure the work outlined in the responsibilities was completed. They were also encouraged to add others to the committee who would help get the job done.

The first day of the strategic planning targeted the chair-people of each committee. Joyce Floyd and Jim Payne stressed the importance of making TAHRA strong with volunteer workers. They shared how each committee was structured and how it contributed to the overall operation. During day two the committee chairpersons and committee members worked to fine-tune the roles and responsibilities. They designed future plans to be carried out this year. The organizational structure is compatible with other committees so as not to overlap, but rather support, each other. Committees that have been ongoing and those newly added are anxious to be the driving force that moves TAHRA into the future. The final day committee chair-people reported the outcome of their meeting and the plans for the upcoming year. TAHRA requires the input of its members to secure the information that will help each housing authority run more efficiently and be more informed of changes and upcoming regulations. Members need to contact the committee chair and let them know that you want to help.

TAHRA is a large organization that has many benefits. It takes all members to make it grow and produce better outcomes as we move into the future. Outcomes where vendors work with us to bring prices down, where trainings are provided to improve efficiency in housing and where benefits are offered on a larger basis because of the numbers enrolled. Technology is changing everything. We have more outlets to use for our residents and more access to information that will help our housing authorities improve, save money and provide better benefits for our residents. Members not already actively engaged in TAHRA are strongly urged to get involved now!

The list on page three illustrates all the areas where members are encouraged to get involved.

NATURAL GAS
COMPLIANCE FOR MASTER METERS

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15 YEARS NATURAL GAS EXPERIENCE & 7 YEARS WORKING WITH MASTER METERS

SCOTT SCHRIVER; OWNER