TAHRA Spring Workshop

The location was familiar, but the new regime looked quite different, as we kicked off a new year that includes new rules, more regulations, and other changes. Of course, there is nothing new about that. Sessions addressing the changes included housing updates, HUD financial topics, inspection protocol changes and many more, and were designed to keep our housing authorities on the right track. Over 350 attendees plus 28 vendors were provided with three days chocked-full of training.

At the opening session, the candidates for NAHRO senior vice president had an opportunity to share their goals and plans for the upcoming election. Ailrick Young, executive director from Laurel, MS, and Sunny Shaw, executive director of the City of Pocatello Housing Authority, presented positions and reasons why they should be elected to the position.

Tennessee Housing Authority Risk Management Trust (THARMT) celebrated 20 years of insurance service. THARMT provides a wide-range of coverage for housing authorities in Tennessee including property, general and cyber liability, worker’s compensation and equipment. In the 20 years of dividends and retained earnings, THARMT has issued $14,875,228.00 to participating members of the THARMT self-insured fund.

A special THANK YOU is offered to all of the participating vendors and sponsors. The exhibitors provide the latest-available services and products to each housing authority in Tennessee.

The “Power of the Past, Force of the Future” workshop was a huge success, and we thank everyone who worked to make it so.

Spring workshop continued on pgs. 6-7

2017 COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR

Margaret Milam, commissioner for the Lexington Housing Authority received the honored Commissioner of the Year award for 2017. TAHRA congratulates Margaret for her hard work and dedication to public housing. Commissioners volunteer their time and talents to serve on a public housing board. We are grateful to all of our commissioners.

Upcoming events

2017 Annual Meeting
September 17-20
Muscle Shoals Hotel and Spa
Florence, AL

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
Greetings Everyone!

I hope everyone has enjoyed the first half of the year, and you are ready for a summer filled with fun, friends and family. We had a very busy, productive beginning to the year here at TAHRA.

In February, nine state members joined the TAHRA co-sponsored state legislative meeting on affordable housing. Members met with state senators and representatives to discuss various affordable housing topics and legislation affecting our industry.

Fifteen members represented TAHRA at the NAHRO Legislative Conference in late March. The group met with representatives from Senators Corker’s and Alexander’s offices; then, we distributed our position paper to representatives in both the house and senate. It continues to be crucial for TAHRA to have a strong, active legislative committee on both state and national issues which affect the affordable housing industry.

Our spring workshop “Power of the Past - Force of the Future” held in April in Franklin was very successful, with over 350 attendees, which included TAHRA members and guests from neighboring states. There was also a good turn-out of vendors at the event, with 28 present representing a wide variety of services and supplies. Multiple session topics were offered, including “Commissioners – All you Need to Know!,” “The Latest Updates from HUD,” and “Community Redevelopment through RAD, LIHTC or Other Options with THDA.” There was something for everyone regardless of the agency type - large, medium or small, RAD or no RAD, LIHTC or not!

This year’s ‘What Home Means Me’ poster contest had six agencies submitting 20 posters. We sent winning entries to NAHRO in every category. Good luck to all the authorities represented – we’d love have some national winners from Tennessee.

JCHA—

AROUND THE STATE

THARMT celebrates 20 years with TAHRA

The Tennessee Housing Authority Risk Management Trust (THARMT), TAHRA’s property and casualty self-insurance pool, celebrated its 20th anniversary at the spring workshop in April. THARMT presented its members a check for $14,875,228.00, representing 20 years of dividends and retained earnings. These savings cover the 20-year period from January 1, 1997 through January 1 of this year. These savings would otherwise have become profits for a commercial insurance company.

Housing authorities statewide can participate in THARMT, and virtually all have done so from the very beginning. The THARMT board consists of seven members elected to staggered three-year terms by the participating PHAs; Jim Thiltgen serves as president. A four-member advisory committee has been formed to help bring membership concerns to the THARMT board and to prepare members for future service on the board.

At the spring workshop, attendees were treated in the exhibitors’ room with four large sheet cakes to show appreciation from THARMT for their continued support and participation. Member agencies were also given paperweights commemorating the 20th anniversary.

As a member of THARMT, authorities benefit from an insurance program that is tailored for exposures specifically encountered by PHAs in Tennessee. Arthur J. Gallagher, which manages the pool, and Tenco, which provides claims adjustments, both have long-term familiarity with the operations of the pool members. Members also receive services such as individual risk management analysis, including playground analysis and loss control training, at no cost by professional providers.

Over the past 20 years, this program has proven to be very economical compared to the commercial market—even for those members who may have experienced unusually high losses.
AROUND THE STATE

Gallatin Housing Authority: changing the face of public housing

The Gallatin Housing Authority (GHA) is keeping its promise to current and future low-income families residing within a development operated by the housing authority. Senior management and the board of commissioners made a commitment not only to change the public perception of public housing, but also to expand its own philosophy of affordable housing. GHA took a bold step forward when it procured an experienced affordable housing developer, in order to submit a competitive QAP application for 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in January, 2015. GHA believes it must transition from simply a public housing authority to a redevelopment housing authority in order to expand its portfolio of affordable housing and preserve its existing housing stock for the most needy families.

Sumner Gardens Apartments:
GHA’s limited partner Sumner Garden, L.P. was awarded a $1,019,995.00 allocation of 9% LIHTC from THDA in 2015. Sumner Garden, L.P. is now constructing 100 new affordable housing apartments known as Sumner Garden Apartments located at 146 Coles Ferry Road in Gallatin, Tenn. Sumner Gardens’ amenities include a club house, laundry room, playground, washer & dryer connections, dishwashers and a maintenance facility. The bedroom breakdown includes 58 three bedroom apartments and 42 two bedroom apartments. The project is being constructed on an 8.5 acres and is over halfway completed.

Woodall Murray Homes
Woodall Murray Homes was constructed in 1956. The development includes 31 brick exterior buildings - mostly single story duplexes - with a total of 56 public housing units. All 56 units of Woodall Murray Homes received extensive, comprehensive interior renovation in 2014. The next phase of the renovation was the exterior. Keeping with its strategic plan GHA divided the exterior renovation into three phases. Phase I consisted of eight buildings along 401 North Boyers, the same street on which the main office is located. GHA collaborated with the architect to redesign the front and rear elevations with new color schemes accented with stone and brick patterns.

HRS— Highland Residential Services opens summer lunch program

The Summer Lunch Program at HRS is back again this year! The first day was Tuesday, May 30, and the program will serve lunch to kids Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. through July 28 (closed July 4). Any Putnam County child age 4-17 is welcomed into the TNT Center for lunch and to enjoy planned, age-appropriate activities.

C.J. Gerndt, an AmeriCorps volunteer, will be there daily, and numerous area churches and community organizations will provide fun activities for the kids. Lunch will be served each day at noon.

TNT youth beautify grounds
The young people participating in Highland Residential Services’ popular Teens Need Training (TNT) program had a great time at the spring semester afterschool program. With the help of Ellen from Sun, Seed & Soil, they recently planted flowers, fruit bushes and vegetables in front of the TNT building. The youth plan to eat what they grow during the summer programs.

TNT, designed for youth in grades 5-12 who live in or around HRS in Cookeville, provides something for all teens. Computers, tutors, games, outdoor equipment, musical instruments, science fun and much more are provided at the center. TNT also prepares youth for future employment or higher education. To be part of TNT, young people complete an application and an interview and are required to follow program guidelines.
Striving to improve the image of public housing

Associations are often drawn linking assisted housing developments to increased crime rates, aging and dilapidated properties, and a lack of support and opportunities needed for tenants to become financially self-sufficient. Johnson City Housing Authority (JCHA) is taking steps to change the perception of public housing by providing exceptional housing and tenant care. In a partnership with Hillhouse Graphic Design, a series of short videos are being produced which highlight the exemplary programs and services provided by JCHA. These high quality video segments provide information in an interactive and easily accessible manner to both tenants and the community. Through this project, JCHA is able to inform tenants about the many programs and services available to them, advertise to prospective tenants, recruit community volunteers, celebrate the impact of partnering agencies, and generate positive press about the activities and services at the housing authority.

JCHA Executive Director Richard McClain reached out to Hillhouse Graphic Design in 2015 to discuss the possibility of creating several short video clips featuring JCHA tenants, employees, volunteers, programs and local partnerships with the goal of creating greater public awareness, stimulating fundraising, and recruiting volunteers. Producers from Hillhouse Graphic Design worked with JCHA Department of Resident Services to learn more about the housing authority, schedule on-site shooting times, and coordinate interviews with designated tenants, employees, and partnering agencies.

To emphasize JCHA’s more than half a century of opening doors to affordable housing and impacting the lives of so many people, “Many lives. Many stories.” was chosen as the title for the compilation of clips. The videos are shot as an upbeat, positive documentary—portraying a sense of JCHA’s history, while highlighting many services through the personal stories of the diverse individuals who benefit from, and the JCHA employees and volunteers who serve in, its various programs. Each video ends with a strong call to action to participate, volunteer, or donate and provides the relevant JCHA web site address.

A loose time frame was constructed, and production began in November of 2015. Eight videos have been produced which provide information about JCHA’s food distributions, the Head Start Preschool Learning Program, Senior Option Services Program, the Partners for Health Medical Clinic, the Coalition for Kids After school Program, the JCHA Kids Summer Program, Veteran housing opportunities, and the Homes for Youth Program. These clips range in length from thirty seconds to three minutes and are currently available on the JCHA website and Facebook page. They are also used by JCHA staff and community partners for presentations. In the future, JCHA hopes to air these video segments via local stations as a way to broaden its targeted audience.

The goal of this video project was to increase awareness about the successful programs and services available through the Johnson City Housing Authority thus helping to eliminate negative stigma associated with public housing. Tenants are able to learn more about the many services available to them; individuals desiring to volunteer are made aware of opportunities through the housing authority; and partnerships with community agencies are also celebrated.

This innovative approach to sharing information about JCHA is an attempt to reach a broader range of people in comparison to those reached through communication methods already in use such as website news articles, traditional paper flyers, or quarterly newsletters. By viewing real footage from a program, the public is able to better grasp and remember the positive impact that JCHA is making in the community. More information can be conveyed through the visual and audio aspects of a short video clip than in a text document. JCHA hopes that this innovative method will inspire tenants to use the services available to assist them in accomplishing their goals whether it be improving quality of life, obtaining financial independence, or growing in community involvement.

Utilizing video advertisement has proven to be a productive method to showcase the success stories of residents and the positive impact of the housing authority in Johnson City. JCHA will continue to look for new and innovative ways of communication in order to best engage with tenants and the community as a whole.
Bills impact the state public housing

The 110th Tennessee General Assembly adjorned May 10, the latest adjournment since 2011. This was due primarily to the long process of passing Governor Haslam’s Improve Act which raises the state tax on gasoline and diesel over a three year period. The act also cuts the state sales tax on groceries from 5% to 4%, gives manufacturers a break on franchise and excise taxes and cuts the Hall Income Tax from 5% to 4%.

Other bills that passed that may impact public housing authorities are:

* Trespassing in Common Areas of Apartment Complexes, Public Chapter 135
* Inclusionary Zoning (passed the House, Senate delayed until 2018), HB 1143/SB 363
* Broadband Internet, Public Chapter 288
* Eminent Domain, Public Chapter 422
* Prohibition of Firearms in Local Government Buildings, Public Chapter 467 goes into effect on July 1, 2017.
* Open Records Requests, Public Chapter 233
* Housing Authorities and Transit Projects, Public Chapter 254

More information about the bills can be found on the TAHRA website. At the TAHRA Annual Meeting in September, we will begin to discuss any needed legislation for the general assembly.

On the national level, HUD has asked for comments regarding regulatory reforms. PHADA distributed a document that was used as a starting point for HAS to submit comments. Several housing authorities have already submitted their comments. Budget hearings were set to begin around the middle of June for the HUD budget. We will keep a watch on the hearings as deep cuts were submitted for programs including HOME, CDBG and others.

If you have questions or comments, please email sminor@franklinhousingauthority.com.
Sean Gilbert will take over the reigns as SERC-NAHRO President after the SERC Annual Conference in June, with his term beginning in October. Sean was previously the Executive Director of the Pike Housing Authority in Kentucky and moved to Tennessee in 2014 to take the position of Sr. Vice President of Housing with Knoxville’s Community Development Corporation (KCDC). He has 20 years of SERC-NAHRO service in various states within the region.

Sean participated in the first SERC “Emerging Leader” class (then it was 40 under 40…”ish”) and will be the first graduate to be elected SERC President. He has served in leadership roles beginning with CR&D Committee Chair; moving on to Vice President of CR&D, SERC Treasurer and SERC Secretary.

Sean also has served on various NAHRO/PHADA committees and boards including NAHRO CR&D committee and is currently the NAHRO Board of Governors, Leg Net, Nominating Committee and the Housing America Task Force. He is the Past president of the Kentucky Housing Association.

Sean’s goal is to ensure SERC-NAHRO remains a successful organization that provides benefits and training for “ALL” agencies in the SERC family. He has already been preparing for the many duties and responsibilities for his upcoming two year term working on committee organization and chair appointees. Upcoming State Presidents in the process of making the various SERC committee appointments to support Sean during his term.

Congratulations Sean!

**RECOGNITIONS**

**KCDC—**

**SERC-NAHRO president for 2017-2019 term**

**FRANKLIN—** Cecil Johnson

Cecil Johnson, the first FSS coordinator for the Franklin Housing Authority, retired on April 28. He served FHA since 2012, and along with Executive Director Derwin Jackson, started the FSS program.

During his time at FHA, the FSS program enrolled a total of 64 participants with 11 participant families (17%) completing the program. Eight of these families achieved their goal of home-ownership, and three families rented unsubsidized apartments. These 11 families have a total of 20 children ranging in ages from eight to 18 years. The total FHA investment (escrow funds) provided to these families was $25,087.

Not only did Mr. Johnson impact these families, but he also impacted countless others through his counseling, mentoring and generosity. The FHA community will miss him and wishes him the best in all his future endeavors.

**CLARKSVILLE—** Wanda Mills Burnett

The Middle Tennessee Executive Directors honored Wanda Mills Burnett in Murfreesboro at the December meeting. Wanda is retiring after 37 years at the Clarksville Housing Authority. She was presented with a gift and a cake honoring her service to the housing authority. Wanda served on the TAHRA board as member at large and on several TAHRA committees. We will miss you Wanda.

**CROSSVILLE—** Don Alexander

Don Alexander started working for the Crossville Housing Authority in February, 1990. He served six years on the board, and as TAHRA president from 2002 to 2003. Don also served on several TAHRA committees and on numerous other affordable housing boards. The Crossville Housing Authority has greatly expanded under his leadership. In parting, Don shared, “There are a few things of which I am proud:

- Growth and variety of programs—We went from serving under 300 families to over 1,200 and have programs from childcare to hospice care.
- The staff at the CHA—I believe each one is as knowledgeable as anyone in the business.
- Because we administer good programs and have good people, we never run into NIMBYism anymore. There is never any public resistance to our building. Actually, I often have people directing us to land near them for us to consider for development.”

Don will be replaced by Kathy Vandlandingham, who has been his administrative assistant, for the past ten years. “I will miss my TAHRA friends,” Don said.
PROCUREMENT Corner
by Terry McKee, co-chairperson, TAHRA procurement committee

Formal Bid Evaluation & Alternatives

Chapter six in HUD’s Procurement Handbook details how PHAs are to handle formal sealed bid evaluations. Often, PHAs have alternates or “deducts” listed, and they consider these during the evaluation because the PHA wants to get as much as possible in the project. Including deducts is acceptable—provided they are properly handled and applied.

How are deducts to be handled? The handbook provides clear guidance:

• PHAs are not to request alternate bids (i.e. two different products, systems or services)
• PHAs may specify the most expensive system as the base bid, and then list deductive alternatives in inverse priority order
• Deductive alternates may be taken in numerical order as listed until the award can be made within available funds. For example, if the full-scope base bid included complete repainting and cleaning of 75 apartments, Deduct Alternate #1 might delete cleaning of 25 apartments and Deduct Alternate #2 might delete all cleaning
• If the apparent low bid exceeds the project budget, any deduct alternates should be applied to the bid prices, one at a time, to identify the bidder whose resulting price falls within the budget
• If the first deduct alternate does not produce an acceptable bid, then the second deduct alternate should be applied, and so on, until an acceptable price and bidder is identified
• If deduct alternates are employed, and the apparent low bid falls below the available budget, a similar process of applying the alternates one at a time may be employed to identify the low bidder who includes the greatest number of alternates within the available funding
• The PHA may not use alternate prices as a way to select a preferred bidder.

The PHA will still conduct the other evaluation steps including determining responsiveness (does the actual bid conform to the terms of the solicitation), responsibility (can the bidder perform) and debarment status.

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

Terry McKee
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.
Strategic Management Team, Inc. presents “Love in a Big World”

Strategic Management Team, the “new kids on the block” so to speak, were one of many exhibitors at this year’s TAHRA Spring Workshop. Uniquely, their booth did not focus on the services and solutions they provide to the public housing industry. Instead, SMT utilized their space to introduce “Love in a Big World”, the newest member of SMT’s community investment strategy. Love in a Big World is a character education movement focused on empowering children and strengthening communities. Stan McCall, president of Strategic Management Team, was intrigued by “Love in a Big World” when first introduced to the program and immediately sought to make a viable connection with the public housing communities.

“It is our goal to help eliminate generational poverty and, in our view, the best strategy to achieve this goal is one that starts with the kids. All we ask is for you to consider allowing us to help you help your kids.”—Stan McCall, President.

Tamara Fyke, creator of “Love in a Big World”, designed the curriculum and resources to provide social and emotional learning in a fun way. The program • is a tool for building conversations, relationships, and, ultimately character, • helps kids handle tough challenges in life and show the best way to face those challenges, • is a character movement to help build not only stronger communities, but also a much kinder and loving world.

For more information on how this curriculum can be customized to suit your needs and to introduce “Love in a Big World” into your community, you may contact Tamara Fyke tamara@loveinabigworld.com or Stan McCall stan@smteaminc.com.
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