SERCulator SERCulator



CHANGING THE HOUSING GAME

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS



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SERC-NAHRO

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 23-26, 2024

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"I am loving the RCRHA website. The immediate added value is astonishingly refreshing! This is a great marketing tool."

Tyrone Lindsey, MS
 CEO, Roanoke-Chowan Regional Housing Authority, NC ECAHRO President 2023-2024

 RCRHA.org

Websites

"I've had the pleasure of working with Brooks Jeffrey since 2016—first at Lafayette Housing Authority in Lafayette, LA and currently at Columbia Housing in Columbia, SC.

They're a tremendous resource and valued partner, creating agency specific products, helping to grow our network, and expanding our digital blueprint!

I'm most impressed with their unique skill to bring a vision to life—sometimes in the form of a website, newsletter, or annual performance report. The talent is unmatched!"

Marketing

 Yvonda Bean, CEO, Columbia Housing, SC NAHRO's Outstanding Professional of the Year 2023 SERC-NAHRO Legislative Committee Chair ColumbiaHousingSC.org



"I can't say enough about how good the LHA website looks! Brooks Jeffrey exceeded my expectations. You and your team are so easy to work with. And, working - since 2017 - with you on the CCHRCO website has been a great experience as we continue to improve CCHRCO's digital presence. Thank you so much!"

Michael Dineen, ED
 ED Lenoir Housing, NC | Past President CCHRCO
 LenoirHousing.org | CarolinasCouncil.org

Websites

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THIS ISSUE



On the Cover

The SERC-NAHRO 2024 Annual Conference was held June 23 - 26 in beautiful Greensboro, NC. Thank you for joining us for another game-changing conference. We look forward to seeing everyone in Montgomery, AL for the Fall Workshop November 10-12!

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The SERCulator is the official quarterly publication of the Southeastern Regional Council of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (SERC-NAHRO).

Comments, suggestions, articles, features and photographs are solicited in interest of the members of SERC-NAHRO. Although all submissions are subject to approval and editing, every effort will be made to publish submissions based on available space. Photos cannot be returned.

Send Submissions Via: SERCulator.com | 800.506.8064

SERCulator Official publication of ERC-NAHRO

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President's Message

Anthony Goodson, Jr. | SERC-NAHRO President

Dear SERC-NAHRO Members and Colleagues,

As we gather our thoughts post our Annual Conference, I am filled with gratitude and enthusiasm for what lies ahead for our organization.

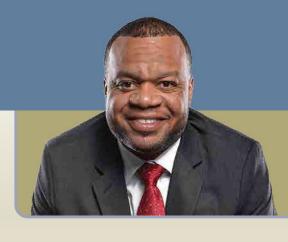
The past year has been truly transformative for SERC-NAHRO. Our Annual Conference, held recently in Greensboro, NC, was a resounding success, bringing together housing professionals, policymakers, and advocates from across our region.

At the conference, we delved deep into critical issues facing our communities today. From innovative housing solutions to policy discussions that will shape our future, we engaged in meaningful dialogue

and forged connections that will strengthen our collective impact.

I am particularly proud of our Annual Conference Committee, Emerging Leaders, and our newest NAHRO fellow, Mr. Dannie Walker. BackPack Beginnings gave us a new partnership to support children and families. These accomplishments underscore our commitment to advancing housing excellence and equity throughout the Southeast Region.

Looking forward, we must build on this momentum. Our work is far from over, and the challenges ahead require our continued dedication and collaboration. Together, we can drive positive change and create more inclusive, resilient communities.



I encourage each of you to carry the spirit of our conference forward in your daily work. Let us continue to learn from each other, advocate passionately for our communities, and innovate fearlessly in pursuit of our shared goals.

Thank you all for your unwavering support and commitment to SERC-NAHRO. Together, we will make a lasting difference.

Warm regards,

Anthony Goodson, Jr., SERC-NAHRO President

Join Us for The 2025 SERC-NAHRO Annual Conference

265 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30303 | Sun-Tues, June 22–24, 2025



2023-2025

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP	
	Shaundra Clark (Chair)

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ASSET REPOSITIONING Jason Spencer (Chair) MS

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Beth Brown (Chair) GA Becky Sue Mercer (Co-Chair) FI

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Submit NEWS for your state's BITS & PIECES section of the next issue of SERCulator

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GA

MS

MS

VA

GA

ΑL

KY

ΤN

GΑ

How to Submit:

Sean Gilbert (Co-Chair)

Visit SERCulator.com and click the link: "Submit STATE Bits & Pieces News".

There, you can upload photos, documents and text for your State's Bits & Pieces News.

October Issue Materials Deadline:



For Full Details, Visit SERCulator.com



SERC-NAHRO Legislative Network



by Yvonda A. Bean, Legislative Committee Chair - CEO, Columbia Housing, SC NAHRO 2024 Advocate of the Year | NAHRO 2023 Outstanding Professional of the Year

Greetings, SERC Nation!

It was fantastic seeing so many of you at the Annual Conference in Greensboro, NC last month! The convening was one of SERC-NAHRO's best conferences yet! The relevant workshop topics, the networking and knowledge exchange opportunities, the Civil Rights Tour, and more.

Kudos to President Anthony Goodson and the Goldsboro Housing Authority Team; CEO James Cox and the Greensboro Housing Authority Team; and any others involved in planning the tremendously successful annual conference. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that we were also joined by NAHRO's President George Guy, Senior Vice President Sean Gilbert, and CEO Mark Thiele. Thank you all for making the SERC-NAHRO Annual Conference memorable!

CAPITOL HILL DAY 2024

On April 10, 2024, Housers from across the country, visited their congressional leaders on Capitol Hill. There were a total of 246 meetings, 372 participants, and 39 states represented. SERC Nation was well represented—from one (1) houser to as many as twenty (20) housers, all ten (10) states within the SERC region participated. A breakdown of our (SERC Nation) participation by state is below:

NAHRO ADVOCACY **ENGAGEMENTS** (formerly Site Visits)

NAHRO is tracking year-round advocacy efforts that help build relationships with decision-makers. Tracking our advocacy engagement efforts will help NAHRO see where members have existing relationships and help NAHRO reach its advocacy goals.

Advocacy Engagements

Includes communications with elected officials (or their staff) at the local, state, and federal levels and with political appointees from HUD. Examples of advocacy engagements include:

- Tours/site visits
- Phone calls
- Meetings
- Written or verbal testimony
- Ribbon-cutting/ground-breaking ceremonies
- Fairs/community events

If you have questions about an advocacy engagement activity, please contact NAHRO's Policy & Legislative Affairs team at pla@nahro.org.

the 90-Day Advocacy Plan in support of NAHRO's 90th Anniversary. This year's campaign is "SERC 10-10-10."

SERC 10-10-10 Campaign

AUGUST ADVOCACY 2024

It's that time of year, August Advocacy,

and we kicked it off strong. At the SERC-

Legislative Network Committee launched

a new advocacy campaign. Last year, it was

NAHRO Annual Conference and

Exhibition in Greensboro, NC, the

The SERC 10-10-10 Campaign will focus on realizing the following:

- Participation from all TEN states;
- An increase in participation by TEN percent; and
- Enlist the support of at least TEN new participants.

Action Alert Center (New)

We asked, and NAHRO listened! The Policy and Legislative Affairs team has deployed a new Action Alert Center that is userfriendly. Letter submissions are easier. You don't have to be a member to submit and residents can now submit brief testimonials. Visit https://nahro.quorum.us/action-alert -center to learn more.

Letter: Tell Congress to Pass Timely, Responsible HUD Funding

Fiscal Year 2025 is upon us, and yet we do not have an approved budget. Please visit the Action Alert Center today and submit your letter encouraging Congress to pass the budget.

SAVE THE DATE

SERC-NAHRO's Fall Conference will be held in Montgomery, AL, on November 10-12, 2024.

#	STATE	# OF PARTICIPANTS
1	Alabama	9
2	Florida	20
3	Georgia	11
4	Kentucky	1
5	Mississippi	4
6	North Carolina	6
7	South Carolina	5
8	Tennessee	4
9	Virginia	4
10	West Virginia	3
	TOTAL PARTICIPATION	67

SERC-NAHRO Committees in Action

SERC-NAHRO committees play a vital role in accomplishing all we do as a regional organization. Prior to each SERC Conference, committees take the opportunity to meet in person to review and refine goals, take part in service projects, or put their hard work into action.

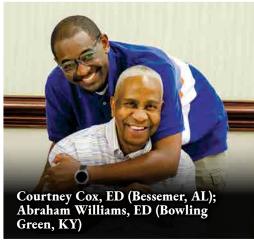
This year, our committees came together to meet before the Annual Conference in Greensboro, NC. On Friday evening, committee members were treated to the President's Welcome Reception, where committee members could enjoy a delicious dinner, bowling, shuffleboard, and pool.

On Saturday evening, Executive Committee members were treated to an impactful evening at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum. Executive Committee members were given the opportunity to participate in a guided tour of the museum and its galleries before coming together to dialogue and enjoy a meal together.

















2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING









Member; Maggie Larkins, Senior

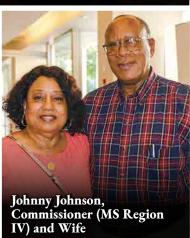
Project Manager (Greensboro, NC)



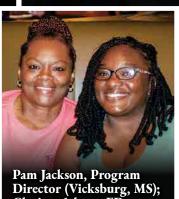












Clarisse Adams, ED

(Okolona, MS)



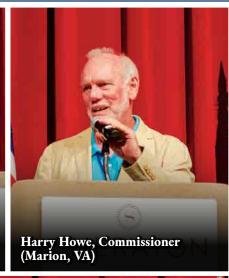


Energizing the Annual Conference

The Annual Conference Opening Session has been a part of SERC history since the organization's inception. This year, the Emerging Leaders Committee gave us a new spin on the opening session!

In addition to enjoying remarks from SERC Leadership, NAHRO Leadership, and HUD Leadership, attendees had the opportunity to get up and get moving through fun interactive games. The games helped the SERC family come together and brought an excited energy to the opening session.



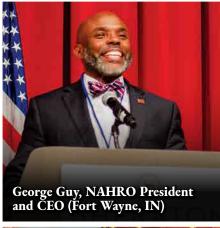
































SERC Cares Makes an Impact

Through a partnership between the SERC Public Affairs/SERCulator Committee and the Emerging Leaders, the SERC Cares Initiative made a return at this year's annual conference.

The SERC Cares Initiative gives conference attendees the opportunity to give back to the community that we are visiting. This year, SERC Cares benefited Backpack Beginnings, a Greensboro non-profit that connects families with the resources they need to be able to thrive. Backpack Beginnings provides a large variety of

services within the Greensboro community, including a family market, food distribution programs, backpack and school supply distribution programs, and more!

The Public Affairs/SER Culator committee came together to raise funds for the agency and raised \$4,208, which was donated back to Backpack Beginnings.

The Emerging Leaders volunteered their time to go and assist in creating 612 school supply kits.

Through this collaborative effort, we were able to leave a lasting positive impact within the Greensboro community.



A Night of Celebration at the Fifth Season Club

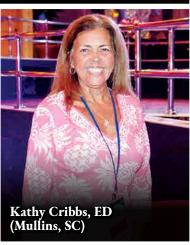
To kick off the conference, the SERC-NAHRO Emerging Leaders hosted the Emerging Leaders Welcome Party at the Fifth Season Club located within the hotel. The fun vintage atmosphere helped the SERC family come together to celebrate the beginning of a fantastic conference.























SERC-NAHRO Awards & Resolutions

SERC-NAHRO Awards, Presented by the Awards Committee:

- Hall of Fame: Douglas Freeman, Deputy Director (Augusta Housing, GA)
- Efficient Service Award: Rock Hill Housing Authority, SC
- Collaboration Award: Burlington Housing Authority, NC
- Community Impact Award: Roxboro Housing Authority, NC
- Resident Service Award (Small Agency): Roxboro Housing Authority, NC
- Resident Service Award (Large Agency): High Point Housing Authority, NC

SERC-NAHRO Website of the Year, Presented by the Public Affairs/SERCulator Committee:

Small Agency: Williamson Housing Authority, WV

• WilliamsonHousing.org

Medium Agency: Robeson County Housing Authority, NC

• RobesonHA.org

Large Agency: Alexander City Housing Authority, AL

• AlexCityHousing.org

Extra Large Agency: Housing Authority of the City of High Point, NC

• HPHA.net

SERC-NAHRO Commissioner of the Year, Presented by the Commissioners Committee:

• Harry Howe (Marion, VA)

SERC-NAHRO Resolutions, Presented by the Resolutions Committee:

Memorials:

Laura Squires – Auburn, AL
Linda Chitwood – Ft Payne, AL
Ruth Bass – Lafayette, GA
Margaret Ayers – Lavonia, GA
Ruth Davis – Lavonia, GA
Lester Peed – Flint Area Consolidated, GA
George Taylor – Tupelo, MS
Ledford Austin – Greensboro, NC
John Prophette – Spartanburg, SC
Althea Gallop – Chesapeake, VA
Linwood Nelms, Jr. – Chesapeake, VA
Harry D. Powell, Jr. – Chesapeake, VA
Howard A Scott, Sr. – Mt Hope, WV
Connie Snuffer – Mt Hope, WV

Retirement:

Sandra Sanders – Auburn, AL
Kathy Knight – Ft Payne, AL
Timothy Dobson – Ft Payne, AL
Brenda Ferguson – Ocilla, GA
Brian Power – Columbus, MS
Gregory Flippins – Greenwood, MS
Carrie Epting – Newberry, SC
Laurie Meadow – Newberry, SC
H.Wilson Bowles – Newberry, SC
Paul Dellinger – Cleveland, TN
Leisa Wimberly – Paris, TN
Karen Wilds – Newport News, VA
Robert Muldoon – Wheeling, WV
George Totka – Wheeling, WV













Insightful Discussions on **Advocacy & Legislation**

So much of the vital work we can be drastically impacted by decisions made in Washington. During our Annual Conference, we take time during the Legislative breakfast to learn more about legislation that may be impacting our work and how we can advocate for the affordable housing industry. This year, we enjoyed remarks from Mark Theile, NAHRO CEO, and Yvonda Bean, SERC-NAHRO Leg Net chair.

















(Benson, NC)



Celebrating Achievements & Supporting Scholarships

At the end of a successful conference, it is important for the SERC Family to come together and celebrate all we have accomplished during this time together. This year, we were treated to a decadesthemed dinner that had SERC pulling some vintage pieces out of the closet. It was an excellent capstone to the conference which culminated in the 50/50 scholarship drawing and state travel basket drawings supporting the Scholarship Committee.

The Scholarship Committee raised \$4,220 throughout the conference through a variety of creative, impactful, and fun competitions and raffles. SERC VP of Commissioners Anthony Sawyer won this year's 50/50 raffle and graciously donated his winnings back to the Scholarship fund.

Thank you for attending the SERC-NAHRO Annual Conference - we look

forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Workshop in Montgomery, AL November 10th–12th.

Of course, not every photo can be included within the SERCulator; for more conference photos or to download images, please visit SERCulator.com and click on the Gallery to view photos from all SERC-NAHRO events.









(Prichard, AL)

















Making Dreams a Reality

- Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer

The Bessemer Housing Authority (BHA) is seeking to develop a 5,000 sq ft. Community Center adjacent to their central office. The proposed property is owned by BHA and is centrally located for BHA residents.

The BHA Dream Center will help close the 'GAP' between hopelessness and dreaming. This 'One-Stop' center will allow residents to come to one place and receive educational, health, and social services. Eliminating some of the barriers that limit our community will help change the narrative of "Deliver Hope."

BHA plans to include the following in its state-of-the-art Dream Center:

- A commercial kitchen to offer cooking classes for residents featuring area chefs and menus that are affordable and nutritious. BHA houses a population that struggles with cooking nutritious meals and sometimes relies on fast food to provide an affordable and easy option. Providing these classes will help curb both unnecessary spending and unhealthy eating habits.
- An auditorium will be used as an activity space for entertainment, exercise, and community outreach events. The auditorium will also double as a basketball gym with 6 retractable goals.
 BHA is one of the few agencies of its size to not have an athletic facility located within its properties. Creating this option will help provide a safe space for activities for our youth and a healthy outlet for their energy.
- Office space to house on-site service providers such as community service organizations and health and wellness professionals. The BHA community may visit doctors, dentists, and mental health providers for emergency situations only.

The Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer Since 1960

By providing a safe space and making these services more accessible, their residents may become physically and mentally prepared to become more self-sufficient.

- A computer lab that can be used to teach coding and provide tutoring for all ages. Their community is falling behind in technology and education. By creating a computer lab, residents will have access to the tools to help close that gap. Additionally, they will allow educators to use this space as a classroom to reach students within the community.
- A game room for gaming via board games, card games, and other interactive games. The room will create an atmosphere that encourages social involvement, which helps build better communication, interpersonal skills, and confidence.
- A music room to teach children of any age music. Learning music helps develop cognitive skills, and playing an instrument is shown to help develop motor skills. Students of all ages will be able to practice following directions and working in a group to make beautiful music.
- A K4 program space to hold a K4 class, which will include students 3–4 years old as they prepare for elementary school. K4 programs are becoming more available within the state, and BHA will work with a licensed provider to lease the space, creating revenue and educating this underserved population.

In early June, BHA broke ground on the Dream Center, and construction is expected to take around 15 months. For more information on the BHA Dream Center, please visit their website at BESHA.org.

A Legacy of Servant Leadership Remembered

- Gordo Housing Authority



It is with deep sadness that the Board of Commissioners and Staff of the Gordo Housing Authority share that James V. "Bud" Blakney, age 83, passed away on April 7.

Bud served as the Executive Director of the Gordo Housing Authority for 20 years. A lifelong resident of Pickens County, Bud was passionate about the community he served.

Bud founded the Park Cameron Resource Center for the residents of Aliceville's Housing Authority, where his wife serves as Executive Director.

During the school year, Park Cameron offers an after-school program, where children can receive homework tutoring and participate in arts and crafts. Park Cameron also offers summer programs for children and hosts many other classes and programs, such as parenting classes, resident meetings, and other activities throughout the year.

Bud will long be remembered for his service to the people of Pickens, Lamar, and Fayette counties, and his memory will live on through those he impacted through his selfless service.

2024 AAHRA Annual Conference

Join us for the AAHRA 2024 Annual Conference in sunny Panama City Beach, FL. The conference will take place from Monday, September 16th, to Wednesday, September 18th, at the Edgewater Beach Resort. More information will be provided on the AAHRA website, along with registration information. We look forward to coming together for excellent training opportunities, collaborative conversations, and fun!





Park It Market

- Decatur Housing Authority

The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA), in partnership with The Food Bank of North Alabama and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, hosted the Park It Market in their East Acres Community.

The market was free to attend and open to the public. Attendees were able to visit with the sponsoring organization and receive free fresh produce!

The market is an excellent way to bring members of the community together while making fresh produce accessible. For more information, please visit the DHA website at www.Decatur-Housing.org.



A Familiar Face Takes the Lead

- Prichard Housing Authority



Kimberly Levingston has been selected to serve as the Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Prichard Housing Authority (PHA).

Joining PHA in 2019 as the HR Specialist and Manager, Kimberly was then promoted to the role of Chief Administrative Officer before being appointed as Interim CEO. Kimberly holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Faulkner University, as well as an MBA and an MHRM from Walden University.

Kimberly is committed to providing high-quality service and effective programs to uplift and inspire residents and program participants to greater heights, accompanied by zeal and enthusiasm from the PHA team.

"It is an honor to serve our residents in this expanded capacity. It is a privilege to lead our team of gifted housing professionals as we go above and beyond to support our residents on their path to self-sufficiency."

To keep up with PHA, please visit their website at PrichardHousing.com.



New Leadership Brings Renewed Vision

- Russellville Housing Authority

Omar Tompkins has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Russellville Housing Authority (RHA).

A graduate of UNA, Mr. Tompkins received his BBA and MBA from the university.

Previously working with the State of Alabama, Mr. Tompkins brings with him a wealth of knowledge and lived government experience.

To keep up with Russellville Housing Authority, please visit their website at RussellvilleHA.com.



Changing of the Guard

- Leeds Housing Authority



After a career of dedicated service, Angela Miclette has retired as Executive Director of Leeds Housing Authority.

In addition to her service at LHA, many Alabama housers may know Angela from her work with AAHRA. Angela served on the Scholarship and Fundraising Committee, helping to award, plan, and fundraise for AAHRA's Youth Scholarships.

A familiar face will be taking over as Executive Director: Tammy Harvell. Most recently, Tammy served the agency as deputy director, and she looks forward to serving the Leeds community in this new role.

Please join us in congratulating Angela on her retirement and Tammy on her new role!

SERC-CONNECTS **FLORIDA**







Partnership Brings New **Opportunities for Residents**

Highlighting Community Engagement & Innovative Learning

Suncoast Remake Learning Days is a 10-day free learning festival produced by the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading with support from the Patterson Foundation.

Since first established in 2016, Remake Learning Days has taken root in 16 regions across the United States, Uruguay, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

The Suncoast region produced its first Suncoast Remake Learning Days Festival in 2022. The 2023 festival included 200 events put forth by more than 270 organizations with more than 25,000 attendees, making the 2023 festival one of the largest in the world.

Each event included in Suncoast Remake Learning Days was free and open to the public and featured opportunities for children and families to learn together.

Arcadia Housing Authority, under the leadership of Becky-Sue Mercer, Executive Director, hosted four events that truly embodied the wonder, creativity, and joy of the festival.

These four events featured different learning themes and gave families enjoyable opportunities to learn and grow together. "Totally Turtles and Wild Watersheds" incorporated an outdoor learning theme; "Artsy Animal Facts" was centered on the arts; "Build Your Own: Planter, Paint, Plant!" was a "maker" event; and "Learn Aviation Hands-On" focused on science. These varied approaches allowed the 354 individuals attending the various events to

engage in the wonder, curiosity, and joy of many kinds of learning.

Totally Turtles and Wild Watersheds

At this event, children and their caregivers were able to explore and learn about native species in Florida found throughout our fourcounty region. In a partnership with Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, families further learned what is harming local species and what they can do to protect them. One attendee said, "This is great collaboration; there's multiple activities/stations available, and everything is fun and educational," while another said, "Kids were excited to 'touch' real animal shells and skins." Totally Turtles was totally full of wonder, curiosity, and joy!

Artsy Animal Facts

At this event, families were to learn about the lifespan of different animals, partake in rock painting and face painting, and even learn directly from a veterinarian. Parents were encouraged to use the ultrasound machine first to show the kids how to do it and truly learn together.

Build Your Own: Planter, Paint, Plant!

Mixing DIY crafts and green thumbs brought out creative learning for families who attended this event. In a cross-sector partnership with Home Depot and Peace River Elementary School, Arcadia Housing Authority was able to create a joyous handson learning environment for all. One attendee noted, "I'm surprised how many kids had never used a hammer, but boy did they quickly learn." Another attendee noted, "It was a joy seeing the kids and parents working together to build."

Learn Aviation Hands-On

One of the biggest collaborations that took place was between Arcadia Housing Authority, a local pilot, and the city to bring a helicopter to DeSoto County for children and their families to actually climb in to learn about aviation! Attendees watched the magnificent helicopter land in Arcadia and then gathered around to learn from the pilot and climb inside to get a closer look. Excitement flowed throughout this event as the adults were in the helicopter just as much as the kids were. One attendee noted the magic as "the opportunity for kids to see a helicopter for the first time in their backyard is truly special!" The sheer dedication that went into making this event is admirable, and based on the looks on the attendees' faces, it was worth it.

Creating Suncoast Remake Learning Days provided opportunities for connections between nonprofits, agencies, businesses, and arts organizations, strengthening the region's learning ecosystem. The Arcadia Housing Authority connected, collaborated with community partners, and created memorable events for families, reinforcing the notion that "learning happens everywhere." To learn more about Arcadia Housing Authority, please visit their website at HousingArcadia.com.



Arcadia Housing Authority Arcadia, FL PH: 130 Becky-Sue Mercer, ED HousingArcadia.com

Congratulations to NAHRO Newly Certified

NAHRO offers a wide variety of certifications for specialized skill sets for Housers. Help us congratulate:

Certified Specialist of Family Self-Sufficiency (CSFSS)

• Jeannie Hayes (Jacksonville Housing Authority, FL)

Certified Specialist of Fair Housing (CSFH)

• Greg Garner (Orlando Housing Authority, FL)

CSI-NSPIRE

• Amanda Hammonds (Jacksonville Housing Authority, FL)

2024 FAHRO Annual Conference

Join us for the FAHRO Annual Conference and Trade Show on August 20–22 at the brand-new Sunseeker Resort. This year's Annual Conference will include professional development sessions, a general session, legal updates for PHAs, and more! You can find more information about how to register at FAHRO.org.

Spring Family Picnic Brings Community Together

- St. Petersburg Housing Authority (SPHA)

SPHA hosted a Spring Family Picnic event at Jordan Park on March 26th. SPHA residents of all ages enjoyed fun activities and the festive atmosphere.

Watch Discovery Center provided engaging hands-on marine life educational experiences!

SPHA extends our gratitude to all of our incredible community partners:

- American Heart Association -Florida: heart.org/florida
- Bay Area Legal Services: bals.org
- Cutting Edge Landscape & Nursery: cuttingedgelandscapeandnursery.com
- Dedicated Senior Medical Center: dedicated.care
- DJ Dondy: djdondy.com
- Domino's Pizza Team Florida: pizza.dominos.com/florida
- Face Painting Brittni: facebook.com/ FacePaintingBrittni
- Healthy St. Pete: healthystpetefl.com
- Help Me Grow Florida: helpmegrowfl.org
- HOPE Villages of America: hopevillagesofamerica.org
- Kidzonomics: kidzonomics.com
- Pathfinder Outdoor Education: pathfinderoutdooreducation.org
- Sing Out and READ (SOAR): singoutandread.org



- St. Petersburg Police Department: police.stpete.org
- Tampa Bay Watch Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center: tbwdiscoverycenter.org
- United Way Suncoast: unitedwaysuncoast.org
- Uniquely Original Art Studio: facebook.com/originalartbycatherine
- The Well A Healing Space: thewellfl.org

The event was well attended by residents and gave everyone the opportunity to come together and celebrate the spring season. To keep up with SPHA, visit their website at StPeteHA.org.





ED Honored by 25 Women You Need to Know

- Tallahassee Housing Authority



Brenda Williams, Executive Director of Tallahassee Housing Authority (THA), was named one of the Tallahassee Democrats 25 Women You Need to Know 2024.

In her 35-year career in affordable housing, Williams makes it her business to ensure that affordable housing is within reach of everyone she can. "Housing is a life necessity," she says, "and anything I can do to help people obtain it inspires me."

Williams chose Tallahassee. After working her way to the role of executive director of the St. Louis, MO, Housing Authority, serving as Transitional Administrator for the Camden New Jersey Housing Authority, and finally serving as the Chief of Staff for the New Orleans Housing Authority, she spent another 14 years in consulting work, providing strategic management services to housing agencies throughout the southwest.

"My day often begins with text messages from people looking for a home," she says. "When I can help someone find housing, it's a good day. I just wish I was able to help everyone." To that end, she is a volunteer for Tallahassee Crime Solvers as a board member. "I want to be part of the solution in the neighborhoods that are often served by my work," she said.

Much of her time is spent working on the \$82 million redevelopment of the former Orange Avenue Apartments. "Moving someone into an apartment and off of the street is the most rewarding part of my work," she says. "I like what I do because it's an opportunity to change lives for the better and helps to make communities thrive."

Congratulations on this fantastic achievement, Brenda! To stay up-to-date with the Tallahassee Housing Authority, please visit their website at TallHA.org.



Tax Credit Brings New Housing Opportunities

- LaGrange Housing Authority

The LaGrange Housing Authority (LHA) held a ribbon cutting at the new community building for the newest tax credit development for the Phoenix Way II property.

Surrounded by colorful buildings, LHA staff cut the ribbon on the new community space and their fourth tax credit property.

"This is what affordable housing looks like. This is what affordable housing is, and this is what we do. It's called affordable housing. We decided a long time ago you got to put people over profit," LHA CEO Zsa Zsa Heard said.

Heard said they want to build more affordable houses, but they need the community's help to do it.

"We want to make it diverse, and we want to bring things that everybody can have and really clean up the community. We're feeding the needs of everybody that needs housing. That means that there's got to be some for a teacher or a fireman, a lawyer, or a doctor. It has to be all types of houses. So we're in that business to do that," Heard said.

Corinne Thornton of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, one of the state's housing and community development agencies, said that the new LHA housing is a prime example of the work that they can help communities achieve through housing tax credits.

"Housing Tax Credits are probably the nation's greatest tool for building affordable housing. The beauty of this program is it lets communities determine what that housing looks like," Thornton said.



"What these tax credits allow communities to do is build the housing that's appropriate for them. So you can look around the state and see the thousands of units that we built with tax credits, and none of them will look the same. They will look like what the community demands and what the community needs," she said. "This is a great example of a local community using these tools to build the housing. It's just one of the tools that we have at DCA for community housing needs. We're just so proud that the LaGrange Housing Authority and the LaGrange community in general for doing projects like this."

About 58 new units are available within the development, but they are currently taking applications and filling them up.

Heard explained that they were able to develop the new housing through a tax credit investment through US Bank.

"They've invested \$13 million into the deal. So they get a tax write-off every year, dollar for dollar, to fill that gap, to do it. We manage it, and we get asset management fees to be able to maintain the properties, but they get the tax writeoff. The units have to be fully occupied for at least 90% of the time so that they don't lose their tax credit," Heard explained.

She said they have two more developments in the works, including one using \$1.8 million in federal funds to construct four quadruplexes, for a total of 16 new homes on Revis St.

Congratulations to LaGrange Housing Authority on their ribbon-cutting; we look forward to hearing more about your continued development. To keep up with their development progress, please visit their website at PHALaGrange.net.

A Life of Service Remembered

It is with a heavy heart that we share the passing of David Leon Smotherman of Atlanta, Georgia, on March 31, 2024.

David was born and raised in Shelbyville, TN, where he met his beloved wife, Shirley. They were married on August 11, 1963, and moved to Atlanta shortly thereafter.

While in Atlanta, David worked as Executive Director for the Decatur/Dekalb Housing Authority for the majority of his career. He later went on to work as Executive Director for the Housing Agency Retirement Trust (HART) and Georgia Housing Authority Risk Retention Pool (GHARRP). David enjoyed spending time with his family and was looking forward to the arrival of his first great-grandchild, Palmer James.

David was preceded in death by his parents, Grady T. and Louise W. Smotherman. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Shirley Ervin Smotherman; his children Charles Smotherman, wife Sharon, and Tim Smotherman, wife Gena; grandchildren, Eric Smotherman, wife Paige, Katie Smotherman, Holden Smotherman, and Madeleine Smotherman.

He was famous for his "one-liner" jokes and comments, which were delivered with impeccable timing. He loved sports and was an avid supporter of the Atlanta Braves and the Atlanta Falcons.

David will long be remembered by Housers in the state of Georgia and across the southeast region for his steadfast dedication to improving the lives of Housers and the residents we serve.





Tenant Engagement Excellence Recognized

- Decatur Housing

The Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) is proud to announce they received the 2024 Statewide Award for Tenant Engagement Excellence from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs on March 8.

According to a press release, the five members of the resident services division of DHA administer over 75 programs and activities for seniors, youth, and adult residents that positively impact communities. The programs promote self-sufficiency, educational excellence, drug awareness, and social interaction between all assisted families.

DHA provides positive and sustaining programs to enable families and students to change their lives through education and quality of life support.

DHA is innovative in achieving positive partnerships with community institutions, including the Decatur Education Foundation, Decatur Active Living (recreation), City Schools of Decatur, DeKalb Workforce Development, and others. The programs promote self-sufficiency, educational excellence, drug awareness, and social interaction between all assisted families.

DHA's academic success can be measured by the 100% high school graduation rate in 14 of the last 15 years. For 31 years, DHA has operated an after school program for pre-K through 5th grade students called Successfully Teaching Academic Readiness (STAR) that helps 75 to 90 students five days a week in our communities.



DHA also awards college scholarships for every high school student and adult learner attending college, funding 577 scholarships totaling more than \$709,950 over the past 30 years. Doug Faust, CEO, stated, "DHA is very proud of our commitment to our residents and our community through our resident services programs as well as our quality housing. We seek to provide opportunities for success for residents and their families."

DHA's impactful initiatives have garnered national recognition, with the NAHRO Awards of Excellence acknowledging the success of the STAR after-school and Connecting Families programs. DHA is also a Certified Organization for Resident Engagement & Services (CORES) certification, recognizing owners who have developed a robust commitment, capacity, and competency in providing resident services coordination in affordable rental homes.

Congratulations, Decatur Housing Authority, on this stellar achievement. To keep up with Decatur Housing, please visit their website at DecaturHousing.org.



2024 GAHRA Annual Conference

Please join us for GAHRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition in beautiful Savannah, GA! The conference will be held at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront Hotel on September 15th–17th. Registration will be available online, and payment will be accepted by credit card or by check. We cannot wait for you and your agency to join over 400 local housing

industry leaders and staff in a three-day event you won't want to miss! For more information and online registration, please visit the GAHRA website at GAHRA.org.



Congratulations to NAHRO Newly Certified

NAHRO offers a wide variety of certifications for specialized skill sets for Housers. Help us congratulate:

Certified Public Housing Manager (C-PHM)

- Angel Royle (Flint Area Consolidated Housing Authority, GA)
- Maria Staley (Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, GA)

CS-HOTMA

• Angel Royle (Flint Area Consolidated Housing Authority, GA)

Certified Specialist of Occupancy – Public Housing (CSO-PH)

- Maria Staley (Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, GA)
- Angel Royle (Flint Area Consolidated Housing Authority, GA)
- Frances Cutter (Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, GA)

Certified Specialist of Eligibility and Calculation – Public Housing (CSEC-PH)

- Maria Staley (Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, GA)
- Victoria Jackson (Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, GA)
- Frances Cutter (Housing Authority of the City of Augusta, GA)
- Tiffany Bowden (Housing Authority of the City of Barnesville, GA)

CSI-NSPIRE

• Elizabeth Bilodeau (East Georgia Housing Authority)





New Housing Option Provides New Opportunities

- Lexington Housing Authority

The Lexington Housing Authority (LHA) continues to seek development opportunities for affordable housing in its community and was delighted to celebrate with HUD Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard Monocchio another such successful development made possible through a partnership with the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government.

In his remarks, Mr. Simms shared his excitement about what can be accomplished with such partnerships and stated that the visit by PDAS Monocchio highlights the significance of what we do in Lexington, Kentucky.

On May 6, 2024, at an open house and ribboncutting ceremony, Pemberton Townhomes were presented to the community. In addition to PDAS Monocchio, LHA Executive Director, Austin Simms was pleased to recognize guests and speakers, including LHA Commissioners, Mayor Linda Gorton, HUD Officials from the Louisville Field Office, Councilmembers, and other local dignitaries, along with several individuals involved in the "behind-the-scenes" efforts to bring this development to completion. Additionally, families who were moving into the new units later that day shared comments.

Pemberton Townhomes consists of five (5) townhomes, each with 2 bedrooms, 1 ½ bathrooms, and 1,200 square feet. They feature front and rear-covered porches, off-street parking, granite countertops, dishwashers, ceiling fans, walk-in closets, and laminate wood flooring throughout. The construction of the townhomes, which began in February 2023, was managed by local contractor The Way Maker Group and designed by local firm Albert & Associates Architecture.

From left to right: HUD Principal, Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard Monocchio, & Lexington HA CEO

This \$1.4 million development was paid for with the city's investment of \$900,000 in HOME ARPA dollars and \$516,452 from state and local fiscal recovery dollars through ARPA legislation. The LHA owns and manages the property and will receive participant referrals through the city's Coordinated Entry program for homeless families. In addition, the LHA will provide case management for participants, and all utility services will be paid.

This new development promises to make a lasting impact within the community, and we look forward to hearing more about the success of this new development. Please visit the LHA website, LexHA.org, to learn more.



Join Us for The 2024 KHA Annual Conference

10 W Rivercenter Blvd, Covington, KY 41011 | Sun-Wed, September 15-18, 2024





A New Website Brings New Opportunity

- Mississippi Regional Housing Authority V

Mississippi Regional Housing Authority V (MRHAV) has officially launched their new responsive website!

Their new site allows visitors to easily navigate the content on any device: desktop, laptop, tablet, & smartphone. It also addresses ADA accessibility,

allowing all users to access agency information easily.

Their new website empowers residents, applicants, and community members to easily access information without needing to visit their physical offices or call in for assistance.

As the agency's first website, they are able to provide board members with important analytic information to show them the positive impact they are making within the community! Additionally, valuable information is more accessible to residents, applicants, and community members.

To learn more about MRHAV, visit their website at MRHAV.org.



A Changing of the Guard

- Oxford Housing Authority



After 14 years of service at the Oxford Housing Authority, Teasha Sanders will soon be at the organization's helm as Executive Director.

The promotion was announced at the Oxford Board of Aldermen meeting on Tuesday by OHA board member Stephen Bramlett. Current executive director Jonathan Hill will be retiring at the end of June after serving as executive director since 2018.

"We are turning a page," Bramlett told the board Tuesday. "Teasha has a profound understanding of the mission of the Housing Authority. She consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty. She's a walking encyclopedia of all HUD regulations."

Sanders will take the reins of the OHSs and the MS Regional Housing Authority II on July 1. The OHA oversees four housing developments in Oxford: C.B.

Webb, Laurel Grove, Willow Knoll, and Wayne Johnson. The MRHA oversees the voucher program.

Sanders has worked for the OHA for 14 years and is currently the deputy director.

"This is not merely a job for me but a profound responsibility that I'm fully committed to fulfilling with dedication and diligence," Sanders said at the meeting. "My dedicated staff and I are committed to ensuring the continued success of both programs. Thank you for putting your trust in me."

Congratulations, Teasha. We look forward to seeing you grow in your new role as Executive Director. For more information, please visit their website at OxfordHousing.org.



New Leader, New Horizons

- Columbus Housing Authority

A familiar face has been appointed as Executive Director of Columbus Housing Authority (CHA).

Robert Greathree joined CHA in April 2011 as an accountant and was soon promoted to controller. Most recently, Robert

Most recently, Robert served the agency as Deputy Director.

Members of SERC-NAHRO may have spotted Robert working with the Emerging Leaders Committee, where he serves as chairman.

In addition to his work within affordable housing, Robert also works with Paroled2Pride, a local nonprofit organization that assists formerly incarcerated people in securing employment through purposeful, hands-on training.

Congratulations, Robert, on this outstanding achievement. We look forward to keeping up with you and Columbus Housing Authority.

For more information on Columbus Housing Authority and the communities they serve, please visit their website at CHAuthority.org.

2024 MAHRO Annual Conference

Join us for the 2024 MAHRO Annual Conference in beautiful Biloxi, Mississippi. The Annual Conference will take place August 21–23 at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino. Exhibitors are welcome, and registration materials are available for download online. The 2024 Conference will be MAHRO's 80th Annual Conference, and we are so looking forward to coming together to celebrate. For more registration information, please visit the MAHRO website at MAHRO.org.





Honoring Graduate Accomplishments

- Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority

Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority (FMHA) celebrated the graduates of their Empowerment Institute, LLC, by hosting a graduation ceremony.

The 2024 Job Skills Training/Pre-Apprenticeship graduates completed the 11.5-week "Construction Skills" class at Fayetteville Technical Community College on Thursday, April 25, 2024.

The keynote speaker was Kathleen Lowe-Jacobs, a former Public Housing resident who was able to share her story of how public housing and the resources made available to her changed her life.

Housing Authority

Upon their graduation, these residents began working as apprentices at FMHA, where they are reconditioning vacant public housing units for new move-ins.

This program not only provides an opportunity for residents to receive a specialized education but also to gain valuable work experience upon their graduation! To learn more about this program, please visit the FMHA website at FMHANC.org.

2024 CCHRCO Annual Conference



Join us for the 2024 CCHRCO Annual Conference: Housing Heroes.

The conference will be held from Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024, to Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2024, at the Marriott Myrtle Beach Resort & Spa at Grande Dunes.

Session topics will include:

- LIHTCs and Tax-Exempt Bonds
- Commissioners!! Board Governance
- Landlord Tenant Litigation Update

- PHA Hiring Pitfalls and Employment Law Update
- Collaborative Efforts to Help Tenants Remain Stably Housed
- Navigating the AI Frontier: Preparing for Tomorrow's Threats
- Fostering Inclusive Communities: A Comprehensive Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training for Housing Authority Professionals
- Understanding Section 8 Contract Renewals
- Conducting Business with Applicants and Residents Online
- Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health Awareness: Yours and Theirs
- Compliance Best Practices for Housing Authority Managers, Supervisors, and Executive Directors
- Microbial Growth Remediation

For more information, please visit the CCHRCO website at CarolinasCouncil.org.

Honoring the Past to Build the Future

 Housing Authority of the City of High Point



Housing Authority of the City of High Point

The Housing Authority of the City of High Point (HPHA) acknowledges that within our communities, our matriarchs are the carriers of our stories. During Black History Month, HPHA took the time to interview two of its community matriarchs, Ida Covington and Nellie Davis. Ms. Covington and Ms. Davis took the time to sit down with HPHA and share their stories of how Public Housing has made a major impact on them and their families.

Through this video history project, you can clearly see that every family HPHA serves has their own unique history. One size doesn't fit all. Therefore, it's important to rethink how we address Public Housing.

Both families highlighted have demonstrated the successful utilization of the Public Housing programs to build foundations for their success and for the next generation. These casual interviews take place within these women's homes, where they have built a life and raised their families. These video essays share the powerful stories of how public housing can drastically impact the lives of our residents and set them on a path for success for generations to come.

HPHA would like to invite you to take a moment out of your day and let these women's stories inspire you and your agency. You can view their stories on YouTube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5iodaEKOV8U.

For more information on HPHA, please visit their website at HPHA.net.





NC CCHRCO BEYOND Scholarship Winner

A graduate of Graham High School in Burlington, NC, Kenya Summers was selected as a 2024 Carolinas Council of Housing Redevelopment and Codes Officials (CCHRCO) BEYOND scholarship recipient.

Summers plans to attend North Carolina Wesleyan University in the fall to pursue a degree in criminal justice. It is her goal to become a mentor and foster lasting change within her community. When asked about what motivates her, Summers responded, "I am driven by a genuine desire to contribute positively to the world. Through personal growth, professional endeavors, and social engagement, I am committed to leveraging my skills, passions, and opportunities to effect positive change on a global scale."

Through letters of recommendation, her college advisor stated, "What sets Kenya





apart is not only her academic prowess but also her remarkable character. She is not only diligent but also incredibly reliable and trustworthy. Kenya possesses excellent communication skills and works well independently as well as in team settings. Her positive attitude and willingness to assist others make her a valuable asset to any group or project."

Two \$500 BEYOND Scholarships are awarded annually to two residents of CCHRCO affordable housing. One NC resident and one SC resident each are selected to receive the \$500 BEYOND Scholarship. Brooks Jeffrey Marketing, Inc. sponsors the BEYOND scholarship for CCHRCO. For more information on the BEYOND Scholarship, visit BJMweb.com/beyond.



NC Housing Leaders Share Their Expertise

Housing leaders from North Carolina were asked to participate in a panel question and answer session at the South East Network (SEN) meeting in Nashville, TN, for the HUD Region 4 Reducing Housing Insecurity in PIH.

Anthony Goodson, Chief Executive Officer, Goldsboro Housing Authority, and Michael Dineen, Executive Director, Lenoir Housing Authority, both sat on the panel along side Kevin Gallagher, Director, Financial Management Division.

The session focused on the maximization of operating funds, and both leaders were able to answer audience questions with hands-on experience from their careers within the affordable housing industry.

Congratulations to NAHRO Newly Certified

NAHRO offers a wide variety of certifications for specialized skill sets for Housers. Help us congratulate:

Certified Specialist of Occupancy – Housing Choice Vouchers (CSO-HCV)

• Brianna Martindale (Pender County Housing Department, NC)

Certified Specialist of Eligibility and Calculation – Housing Choice Vouchers (CSEC-HCV)

• Brianna Martindale (Pender County Housing Department, NC)

New Leadership Brings Renewed Vision

- Washington Housing Authority



The Washington Authority has appointed Frank R. Scott as their new Chief Executive Officer.

Frank brings with him a wealth of knowledge and years of proven hands-on experience. With years of experience in affordable housing development, Scott is well-prepared to serve the Washington community.

To stay up-to-date with Washington Housing Authority, please visit their website at WashingtonHousingAuthority.org.





Welcoming New Leadership

- Beaufort Housing Authority



The Beaufort Housing Authority (BHA) Board of Commissioners is pleased to announce the appointment of Julie Davis as its new Executive Director. Davis will lead the agency, which serves the needs of more than 2,000 individuals residing in approximately 980 quality, affordable homes throughout Beaufort County.

"We are extremely excited to welcome Julie as our new Executive Director," said Ethan James, Chairman of the BHA Board of Commissioners. "She is a seasoned leader who understands the critical role BHA plays in our community. Her remarkable track record in real estate and commitment to community service are precisely what we need to lead the Beaufort Housing Authority into a new era of growth and effectiveness."

Davis joins Beaufort Housing Authority from the South Carolina State Housing Finance & Development Authority, where



she led efforts as Development Director to improve housing conditions, enhance community engagement, and streamline finance processes. Previously, as Chief Operating Officer for Humanities Foundation & James Doran Company, a real estate investment and development firm specializing in affordable and workforce housing and community and resident services, she managed a wide range of responsibilities, notably supervising more than 2,500 apartment homes throughout the Southeast.

"Joining the Beaufort Housing Authority as its Executive Director is a profound opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Beaufort families," said Davis. "I am eager to contribute to our mission and excited to engage with and learn from our partners as we work together to create communities that make Beaufort proud."

Davis holds an MBA from Southern Wesleyan University and a bachelor's from Limestone College, along with certifications in paralegal studies and real estate.

To learn more about the Beaufort Housing Authority and its programs, visit BeaufortHA.com.

New Website & Branding Reaches Community

- Newberry Housing Authority

Newberry Housing Authority (NHA) ED Jessica Holcomb is proud to announce the launch of their new responsive website, which addresses ADA accessibility. Their new website allows site visitors to easily navigate the website across all their devices.

The launch of their new website coincided with the release of their new logo and branding.

Their new website features useful content curated for residents, applicants, community stakeholders, and community members. Through



integrated analytics, they are able to determine popular content areas and analyze critical visitor data.

Visit the new responsive website yourself at NewberryHousing.org.



Congratulations to NAHRO Newly Certified

NAHRO offers a wide variety of certifications for specialized skill sets for Housers. Help us congratulate:

Certified Public Housing Manager (C-PHM)

• Kathy Cribbs (Mullins Housing Authority, SC)



A Life of Service Remembered



It is with profound sadness that we share the news of the passing of Stephanie Nicole Grant Gladden.

Members of CCHRCO may know Stephanie from her

position within the Charleston County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, where she served for 25 years, or from her service through the CCHRCO Resident Services Committee.

Church served as a major inspiration in Stephanie's life, and she committed her life to the service of others. Through her career and volunteer endeavors, she strived to set a Christlike example for others of servant leadership.

In addition to her service, Stephanie enjoyed riding motorcycles and was a member of the Distinctive Jewelz Motorcycle Club, the Charleston Fallen Riderz Motorcycle Organization, 4LifeLovers Social Group, as well as Black Girls Run. She hosted the Annual Bikers Thanksgiving Feast for her beloved residents at Brighton Place.

Stephanie's memory will be held close by those who love and remember her from Charleston County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and CCHRCO.

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90 Years of Service Celebrated

- Columbia Housing

On Tuesday, April 30th, Columbia Housing celebrated its 90th anniversary and its rich history as one of the country's first established Public Housing Authorities.



The anniversary event featured a performance by the Allen University Concert Choir, a Presentation of Colors from the CA Johnson ARJROTC, and special presentations from the City of Columbia, Richland County, Richland School District One, and the State of SC.

Chairman of the CH Board, Ernest Cromartie, III, said, "Affordable housing isn't just about providing shelter; it's about building communities, fostering

2024 CCHRCO Annual Conference



The conference will be held from Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024, to Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2024, at the Marriott Myrtle Beach Resort & Spa at Grande Dunes. (See page 22 for full details.)

stability, and ensuring everyone has a chance to thrive."

To learn more about Columbia Housing and to see more photos from this event, please visit their website at ColumbiaHousingSC.org.

> Pictured Top Left: Yvonda Bean, CEO with the Columbia Housing Team at the 90th Anniversary Celebration

SC CCHRCO BEYOND Scholarship Winner

A graduate of Gaffney High School in Gaffney, SC, Diamynd Buckson was selected as a 2024 Carolinas Council of Housing Redevelopment and Codes Officials (CCHRCO) BEYOND scholarship recipient.

Buckson plans to attend Bob Jones University in the fall to pursue a degree in social work. Buckson had faced challenges throughout her school-aged career, including losing her mother to complications from Sickle-Cell Anemia when she was 7 and the incarceration of her father for the majority of her life. However, she has persevered and used these events to fuel her strive for excellence.





When asked why she was pursuing a career in social work, Buckson responded, "I remember this girl in my class who lost her mom. I was able to be there for her because I've been through something similar. I believe I can relate to anyone who's gone through tough times, especially kids, because I've been there myself."

Through letters of recommendation, a teacher close to her stated, "Her journey has been marked by significant challenges, including a profoundly traumatic event. However, Diamynd has demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination, taking steps to overcome adversity and

initiating a transformation that has been truly inspiring. Diamynd has flourished in various areas during the past three years. She has actively participated in community service projects, reflecting her commitment to contributing positively to her community. Her involvement didn't stop there; she also dedicated herself to her church's audiovisual team, demonstrating a passion for technology and teamwork. Additionally, Diamynd has excelled in sports, becoming a standout basketball player and a key member of the swim team. These activities highlight her discipline, leadership, and ability to excel in both individual and team endeavors."

Two \$500 BEYOND Scholarship are awarded annually to two residents of CCHRCO affordable housing. One NC resident and one SC resident each are selected to receive the \$500 BEYOND Scholarship. Brooks Jeffrey Marketing, Inc. sponsors the BEYOND scholarship for CCHRCO. For more information on the BEYOND Scholarship, visit BJMweb.com/beyond.









New Affordable Housing Provides New Opportunities

- Murfreesboro Housing Authority

The Murfreesboro Housing Authority (MHA) recently opened their newly revitalized Oakland Park Community. Oakland Court was a 76-unit public housing neighborhood on approximately 20 acres in Murfreesboro. The New Urbanist masterplan called for 150 new MHA rental homes, which will be a mixture of single-family, duplex, and triplex homes.

76 homes were replaced in Phase 1, and another 74 homes were added in Phase 2. Overall improvements to the neighborhood include new streets, street trees and lighting, rear parking courts, open/green space park extending into the neighborhood, which provides a new entry to Oaklands Park, walking trails, a pergola structure as well as a new community building for resident events, and an MHA onsite office.

A new street structure for the development has been developed, which is in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood and allows all homes to face the street. Homes have also been designed in architectural historic styles found within the neighborhood to blend with the current neighborhood. All homes are visitable and have a front or side porch, a small front yard, and rear yard/patio which provide room for a small garden plot if desired.

The goal was to transform the neighborhood to respect the historic neighboring homes and to engage the beautiful adjacent Oaklands Mansion and Park in a way that would highlight both the residents of Oakland Court as well as surrounding neighborhoods and visitors alike.

The masterplan was developed over a 3-month series of public input sessions and charettes with MHA staff and board, residents, stakeholder groups, Oaklands Mansion staff and board, city officials, and the public at large. Through listening and documenting these 17 meetings with over 700 recorded comments, the design team developed the master plan to respond to the desires of the Murfreesboro community. It is the goal of this new development to knit seamlessly into the historic neighborhood fabric and bring a new connectedness to this area of Murfreesboro.

Congratulations to MHA on this beautiful new development. To keep up with their other development projects, please visit their website at MHA-TN.org.

Join Us for The 2024 TAHRA Annual Conference

10 W Rivercenter Blvd, Covington, KY 41011 Sun-Wed, September 15-18, 2024





TAHRA Members Visit Tennessee General Assembly Members

On March 24–25, 2024, members of TAHRA met in Nashville for the annual Legislative Day on the Hill, where members planned and met with their district General Assembly members. The purpose of the event is for TAHRA members to personally meet their district representatives and advocate for issues surrounding public housing.

On the first day, TAHRA members met at the Cordell Hull Legislative Building, where State Representative Dale Carr of Sevierville, Tennessee (12th district) spoke to the group about various housing-related bills being discussed within the legislature. After the meeting, attendees went to dinner as a group in downtown Nashville.

On day two, members again met at the Cordell Hull Legislative Building, where we organized and planned meetings with our individual general assembly members and coordinated how the group would pass out the souvenir mints to all General Assembly members.

TAHRA's government partners, Harris Frazier Government Relations, arranged for TAHRA members to attend and be recognized at the House Local Government Committee meeting. Later in the day, the group was invited to

attend the House and Senate business session where some of the TAHRA members were personally recognized by their elected representative.

All in all, the 2024 TAHRA Day on the Hill was positive and successful. We were seen, we were heard, and we were recognized. That is what advocacy is all about.

The TAHRA Legislative Committee would like to thank all members who attended the 2024 Legislative Day on the Hill, but some need special recognition for their help to organize the event. Christi Billings (Covington Housing Authority), Alex Gillespie (Lawrenceburg Housing Authority), Mac Podlesney and Meagan Frazier with Harris Frazier Government Relations, and Gena Burden (Union City Housing Authority).



A box of mints branded with TAHRA logo presented to Tennessee Legislators

Congratulations to NAHRO Newly Certified

NAHRO offers a wide variety of certifications for specialized skill sets for Housers. Help us congratulate: Certified Public Housing Manager (C-PHM)

• Angela Williams (Milan Housing Authority, TN)

New Affordable Housing Opens to Residents

- Gallatin Housing Authority





A much-needed new affordable housing option has been completed in Gallatin! Gallatin Housing Authority has completed their new Sumner Gardens Court development.

Sumner Gardens Court was projected to cost \$9.6 million, which was funded by mixed financing from private equity and 9% LIHTC. These newly developed units will provide much-needed affordable housing options within the community.

These newly developed 48 units will help demonstrate that affordable housing can not only meet the standards of market-rate housing but, in this case, set the standard for housing excellence.

To learn more about Gallatin Housing Authority or their nonprofit affiliate, Sumner Development Corporation, please visit their website at Gallatin HA.com.









Celebrating A Career of Service

- Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority



The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NNRHA) Board of Commissioners have announced the retirement of their long-term Executive Director, Karen R. Wilds.

Ms. Wilds has led the organization since December 1999, after being promoted from the position of Community Development Director.

Ms. Wilds came to serve her hometown from the Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority in 1985. As Community Development Director at NNRHA, she led the department in an array of property acquisitions, community improvements, and revamping housing rehabilitation programs. All of which laid the groundwork for much of the current redevelopment efforts in the downtown and the southeast community including Brooks Crossing and the Choice Neighborhood Initiative.

She has profoundly impacted the trajectory of housing and redevelopment in Newport New and has developed longlasting partnerships with many local and state organizations.

In recent years, she has been an integral part of the planning and implementation of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative and the NNRHA's active participation in the Rental

Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program.

Dr. Lisa Wallace-Davis, the NNRHA Board Chair, said, "Karen Wilds exemplifies excellence as an Executive Director and will leave behind a remarkable legacy. She can look around the City of Newport News every day, see the fruits of her labor, and revel in her accomplishments. We are so proud of all the work she has done, and we wish her a heartfelt congratulations on her retirement! She will be greatly missed!"

Thaddeus Holloman, the NNRHA Board Vice Chair, said, "During Ms. Wilds' tenure, the NNRHA has consistently been one of the leading Authorities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She played a critical role in creating affordable housing and, along with the City of Newport News, helped transform the lower Jefferson Avenue corridor. We wish her only the best in a well-deserved retirement."

The mission of NNRHA is: Creating affordable housing, viable neighborhoods, and opportunities for self-sufficiency that enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Newport News. Ms. Wilds has dedicated over 39 years to furthering this mission and has contributed immensely to the development of scores of affordable housing units and numerous community development improvements in the city. She plans to retire on June 30, 2024.

Congratulations to Ms. Wilds on her retirement, and thank you for your years of dedicated service. To learn more about Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority, please visit their website at NNRHA.net.

2025 VAHCDO Annual Conference

The Virginia Association of Housing and Community Development Officials (VAHCDO) has begun planning for the 2025 VAHCDO Spring Conference, hoME & YOU!

The conference will again be held at the Marriott Virginia Beach, Cavalier Resort, from March 30th to April 3rd.

More information about conference registration, hotel block information, and exhibitor opportunities will be posted on the VAHCDO website as they become available. Please check frequently for updates, and we look forward to seeing you in 2025!



New Leadership Brings Renewed Vision



Virginia Housing is proud to announce that Tammy Neale has been named Chief Executive Officer, effective April 1, 2024. Neale is a longtime executive at Virginia Housing, with 39 years of service. For the past three years, she has served as Chief of Programs.

Neale has led efforts including enterprisewide planning, organizational development, and diversity and inclusion initiatives to support Virginia Housing's mission of increasing Virginians' access to affordable, quality housing opportunities. Since beginning her career with the agency as a post-closing paralegal in 1985, Neale has played a key role in shaping Virginia Housing's strategic direction and implementing its vision and priorities. She's served as Strategic Planning Leader, Managing Director of Human Resources, Managing Director and Chief Learning Officer, and Chief of Staff.

"I am honored to be chosen to continue the exemplary work of Virginia Housing," said Neale. "I believe that a home gives you a sense of purpose and place. Since I have a strong sense of servant leadership, working in affordable housing grants me the ability to make a difference and give back."

"Tammy Neale brings a wealth of knowledge and experiences, which have influenced her views on the importance of equitable, sustainable housing, strategic planning, and inclusivity and diversity in the workplace," said Board Chair Thomas A. Gibson.

To learn more about Virginia Housing, please visit their website at VirginiaHousing.com.





2024 Conference Recap

Thank you for joining us for the 2024 WV Association of Housing Agencies Conference at Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, from May 14th through the 16th. We had an outstanding time coming together as Housers and participating in education opportunities, professional development, and fellowship!

More information on the 2025 Annual Conference will be posted to the WV Association of Housing Agencies once it is available.

To learn more, please visit WVAHA.com.













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REACH OUT TO US: YOUR SERC OFFICERS



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VP COMMISSIONERS Anthony Sawyer (FL)

Fort Walton Beach Housing Authority - Vice Chairman FWBHA.com 850.243.3224



Dates to Remember

NOV 07-09 2024 SERC-NAHRO
Executive Committee Meeting

NOV 10-12 2024 SERC-NAHRO Fall Workshop

JUN 20-21

2025 SERC-NAHRO
Executive Committee Meeting

JUN 22-24 **2025 SERC-NAHRO Annual Conference**

SERC-NAHRO Member Services Update

Hello SERC Family!

Thank you for your continued support of SERC. We recently closed out a great "game-changing" annual conference in Greensboro, NC. Congratulations to all the winners of the regional awards and the Website of the Year competition.

Celebrating Success in Scholarships

SERC takes pride in providing annual scholarships to deserving students. We rely on the membership to assist us in our fundraising efforts. Thank you for participating in the various fundraising activities. We collected \$4,220 during the annual conference.

Thank you to each person who volunteered and/or donated funds for our SERC Cares Initiative. This year, we supported BackPack Beginnings, a nonprofit organization located in Greensboro, NC. Through collective efforts, a team of volunteers packed 612 bags of school supplies, and \$4,208 was collected to benefit the organization. We are appreciative of the Public Affairs/SERCulator Committee and the Emerging Leaders for co-leading this effort.

Changes to Dues

Effective October 1, 2024, there will be an increase in dues. There has not been an increase since 2013.

Community Development Agencies

Current Dues Structure Range: \$25 - \$300 New Dues Structure Range: \$50 - \$400

Public Housing Agencies

Current Dues Structure Range: \$100 - \$400 New Dues Structure Range: \$150 - \$600

Please do not hesitate to contact me

or a member of Member Services Committee, if you have any questions about your member benefits or want to offer suggestions to enhance SERC-NAHRO.

