

BHA CONNECTION

Beaumont Housing Authority 1890 Laurel, Beaumont, Texas 77701 www.bmtha.org 409-951-7200



Message From the Executive Director

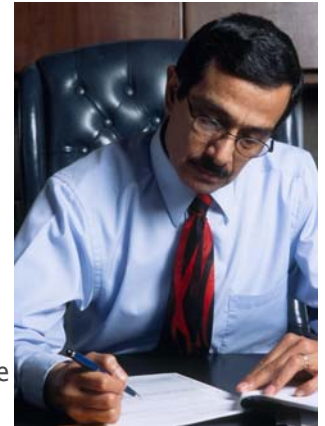
Over the last two years the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been telling housing authorities across the country they should begin implementing a new form of management for all their public housing properties. That new form of management is being commonly referred to as "site based or asset management". The principal behind this management practice is that most, if not all housing management and maintenance functions should be performed at the site level.

HUD is also telling housing authorities that under site based management; each property must become financially self-sustaining. That means each property must be able to pay for all its own operating costs while maintaining an operating reserve to cover emergencies that may arise.

According to HUD, most privately managed modern apartment developments are able to do this very effectively. While we do not disagree, public housing communities are not the same as privately managed modern apartment developments. A majority of the public housing developments in the nation are 40 - 60 years of age. Many of them are in need of major infrastructure repairs, weatherization improvements to improve energy efficiency, utility supply line upgrades, and overall modernization to bring them up to current recommended city building code and nationally recommended energy efficiency standards.

HUD regulations require housing authorities to

perform annual eligibility redeterminations on every family living in public housing, to perform annual Housing Quality Standards inspections on every apartment, to guarantee reasonable accommodations to every family, To provide administrative hearings and the right to a grievance process, and to comply with strict restrictions on when and why a lease may be terminated. These are just a few of the numerous federal regulations and restrictions local housing authorities must follow that private property management companies are not faced with, nor could endure or afford.



In fiscal year 2006, HUD funded all housing authorities at 85.5% of their requested budgets nationally. The 2007 projections are estimated to fall somewhere between 78 - 80% of budget requests. These funding reductions directly affect Administrative services expenses, Modernization activities, and Operating Subsidy to cover rents of very low-income families to housing authorities, Rising Utility Costs, Rising property Insurance Rates, Increased Personnel salaries, and benefits expenses, and as such, cause problems. To compound the problem, HUD is now telling all housing authorities effective January 1, 2007, any public housing development unable to achieve and maintain financial solvency in the future must be closed down and will no longer be eligible for federal funding.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

HUD Awards BHA \$20 Million Dollar HOPE VI Grant

Dollars Will Revitalize Aging Magnolia Gardens, Build Mixed Income Community

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has awarded a \$20 million HOPE VI Revitalization grant to the Beaumont Housing Authority. The funding will be used to revitalize the public housing units at Magnolia Gardens, which suffered storm damage last year when Hurricane Rita devastated the city.

"Beaumont will join other cities across the country that have used this seed funding to give public housing residents more than just a roof over their heads," said HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson. "This funding allows cities to build quality affordable housing and create safe, decent neighborhoods where families can thrive."

Redevelopment will occur on two sites: the existing Magnolia Gardens site and the 28-acre City Fairgrounds site. The first two development phases will take place on the Fairgrounds site, with 222 new units: 139 rental (70 public housing and 69 market-rate) and 83 for-sale (46 affordable and 37 market-rate). A third phase will take place at the Magnolia Gardens site, after existing residents have been relocated into new units and buildings have been demolished. This third and final phase will include 150 new units, all rental (75 public housing and 75 market-rate). Both sites will result in new, mixed-income communities, with a mixture of one- and two-story townhouse, garden, and walk-up homes. New public streets and thoughtful home design will help knit both sites into their surroundings. In total, approximately 370 new units will be built, of which 195 will be public housing replacement units (149 ACC and 46 affordable for-sale).

"This accomplishment would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our residents, our local, state and federal governmental officials and our social and supportive services partners." Robert Reyna, BHA Executive Director said. "The impact of this grant and the affordable rental and

Right:
BHA Board
Chairman Doug
Landry announces
award to the
media and special
guests.



homeownership opportunities it will bring will have a huge positive impact on the City of Beaumont."

BHA was selected from 26 applications HUD received from public housing authorities across the country.

The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing created the program in 1992 after it reported that approximately 86,000 public housing units in the U.S. needed revitalization. To date, nearly 150,000 aged public housing units have been demolished using HOPE VI and other HUD programs. PHAs are competitively selected for these grants with an emphasis on the effectiveness and project readiness of their revitalization plans. HUD gives local housing authorities the flexibility to develop revitalization plans that meet their local needs.

As part of the grant award, BHA will pay relocation costs for residents as needed. Affected residents can relocate to other public housing or get a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) to subsidize their rent in privately owned housing. Relocated residents, who meet program requirements, are given the opportunity to move back to the newly constructed units. Alternatively, if residents choose not to return to public housing, they may keep their voucher. In addition, relocated residents will be provided with the same job training and other supportive services offered to families living in the revitalized development.

Design Concepts for the Revitalization of Magnolia Gardens



Proposed Unit Mix

Unit Mix	Phase I Fairgrounds (Off-Site)	Phase II Fairgrounds (Off-Site)	Phase III Magnolia (On-Site)	Total HOPE VI Development
HOPE VI Public Housing	70		75	145
Market Rental (FHA)	69		75	144
<i>Rental Total</i>	<i>139</i>		<i>150</i>	<i>289</i>
HOPE VI Affordable Homeownership		46		46
Market Homeownership		37		37
<i>Homeownership Total</i>		<i>83</i>		<i>83</i>
Total	139	83	150	372

BHA Seeks Private Property Owners to Enroll in Section 8 Program

Southeast Texas is in danger of losing thousands of dollars in rental subsidy due to diminishing landlord participation in the Section 8 program.

In September, BHA utilized only 80% of its monthly-allocated subsidy from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, despite a waiting list of over 1,600 families.

“We have the dollars, and we have the families ready to move, said Robert Reyna, Executive Director of the Beaumont Housing Authority. “However, unless we have affordable, safe and sanitary units to move them to, we are at a standstill.”

“The perception in Washington, DC is ‘they must not need the dollars’ when this couldn’t be further from the truth,” said Reyna. “There is just a lack of acceptable rental units. Unfortunately, much of the rental property available prior to Hurricane Rita has suffered major damage and do not meet Housing Quality Standards.”

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers are available to help offset rental costs for eligible families. Eligible property includes houses, apartments, mobile homes, town homes and condos that meet federally mandated Housing Quality Standards.

If you have a vacant unit and are interested in putting it in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, please contact Jettis White, Section 8 Director at BHA, at 409-951-7200. Vouchers are not geographically limited -- landlords from throughout the greater Southeast Texas area are encouraged to participate.



FAIR MARKET RENTS Effective October 25, 2006

<u>OBR</u>	<u>1BR</u>	<u>2BR</u>	<u>3BR</u>	<u>4BR</u>
442	496	593	735	762

FMR - INITIALS AND NEW MOVES 110%

<u>OBR</u>	<u>1BR</u>	<u>2BR</u>	<u>3BR</u>	<u>4BR</u>
486	546	652	808	838

EXCEPTION FAIR MARKET RENTS AND PAYMENT STANDARDS (Class Members ONLY 142 %)

<u>OBR</u>	<u>1BR</u>	<u>2BR</u>	<u>3BR</u>	<u>4BR</u>
628	704	842	1044	1082

Rev. Gary Cantue Sworn in as Commissioner

Rev. Gary Cantue was selected by Mayor Guy Goodson to fill the Board of Commissioner seat vacated by Connie Redeaux. Cantue was sworn in during the February 28th Board Meeting. At the Annual Meeting held in September, Cantue was elected as Vice Chairman of the Board.

Cantue attended schools in the Beaumont Independent School District, graduating from Charlton Pollard High School in 1973. He attended Lamar University in Beaumont, majoring in Electrical Engineering. He was employed by the Chevron Refinery in Port Arthur, Texas where he worked for 17 years. He was blessed to retire in June 1992 to continue his full time Pastoral calling.

In 1991 he was appointed Superintendent of the Beaumont Northern District, Texas Southeast First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. He has served as Co-Coordinator of the C. H. Mason Bible College Beaumont campus for seven years. In 2004 he was appointed by the Honorable Bishop Rufus Kyles, Jr., as the Administrative Assistant of Education in Texas Southeast First Jurisdiction.

Cantue's community commitments includes: Chaplain of Citizens United of Academic Excellence Committee, Co-Chair of Southeast Texas Organizing Committee, Secretary of One Church One Child of Southeast Texas, Community Liaison of Ministerial Brotherhood Alliance, member of the North Beaumont Community Committee and President of Parkwood Townhomes Association.



Rev. Gary Cantue (right) was sworn into office by BHA Board Chairman Doug Landry.

BHA Resident Awarded College Scholarships

Franziska Bloodsworth, a 2006 graduate of Beaumont Westbrook High School, and a resident in the Section 8 program, was awarded with two scholarships from state and regional housing councils.

Bloodsworth was awarded scholarships from the Texas Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) as well as from the Southwest Regional Chapter of NAHRO.

Bloodsworth was active in the Drama Club, German Club, NJROTC, Student Council and the "I Have a Dream" Program while attending Westbrook HS. An exemplary student who regularly made the A/B Honor Roll, Bloodsworth will be attending Lamar University to pursue a degree in Business with emphasis in forensic science and archeology.

Congratulations Franziska!!



BHA Seeks Residents Interested in Serving on Advisory Board

The Beaumont Housing Authority is seeking Section 8, Public Housing and Homeownership clients interested in serving as members of the BHA Resident Advisory Board.

The purpose of the RAB is to advise BHA on ways make programs more effective for all participating families. The RAB gives families an active voice in the administration and will give you an opportunity to express your opinions regarding assisted housing.

This group will meet at the BHA Central Office six times yearly (every other month) to discuss issues involving the administration of a variety of BHA programs.

Discussions will include:

- ▶ BHA Five Year and Annual Plan Submitted to HUD that includes Operating Procedures, Administrative Plans and Budgets
- ▶ Family Self Sufficiency Program and Other Resident Empowerment Programs
- ▶ HOPE VI Revitalization Project at Magnolia Gardens
- ▶ New Housing Development Initiatives at BHA
- ▶ Other important issues where resident feedback is warranted

The RAB is comprised of 10 people, each representing a specific program or development serviced by BHA. If you would like to be considered for this committee, please fill out this form and return it to BHA no later than Friday, December 15, 2006. Clients selected to participate on the RAB will be notified in December and our first meeting will be held in January 2007.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Allison Landrum at 409-951-7208 or at landrumal@bmtha.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Resident Advisory Board Application

Please Return Completed Application to:
 Beaumont Housing Authority
 c/o Allison Landrum
 P.O. Box 1312
 Beaumont, Texas 77704

Or if You Live at a Public Housing Site,
 You Can Turn In to Management Office

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Which program are you currently participating in at BHA (Please check one):

_____ Section 8 _____ Public Housing
 _____ Homeownership

Please answer each of the questions below (circle your answers):

Are you elderly? Yes/No
 Are you disabled? Yes/No

Are you currently a participant in the Family Self Sufficiency Program? Yes/No

Will you require transportation to and from meetings? Yes/No

When is the best time to meet?
Morning/Afternoon/Evening

I am interested in serving on the 2007 Resident Advisory Board, and promise to play an active role in meetings and activities.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Attention Landlords and Section 8 Clients!!!

- ▶ To better assist the clients and landlords we ask that you please make an appointment.
- ▶ If you are having trouble contacting a case worker by telephone you can e-mail the Section 8 Director by accessing the BHA website at www.bmtha.org
- ▶ Landlords, please notify us when there is a change of address or bank account number! All changes must be done in writing by mail or fax.
- ▶ Landlords should also notify BHA when a unit becomes vacant so that an annual inspection is not scheduled and payments are not paid in error. If BHA is notified by another party that the unit is vacant and has been vacant, overpayments will be retrieved.

Section 8 Staff Attend Retreat at Chain O' Lakes Resort

Section 8 staff members attended a three day leadership retreat at the Chain O' Lakes Resort and Training Center. The retreat gave staff the tools to more effectively motivate and manage their employees, to work with each other and to realize their own strengths and weaknesses. The group tackled a one-day physical challenge course that taught about trust, effective communication and motivation. They also spent time developing a team charter for their department and were able to develop creative and innovative ideas on moving BHA into a more successful future.



SECTION 8 FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Hi, my name is Michelle Chessher and I am the newest Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Section 8 Caseworker. Some of you may know me by my previous position, Section 8 Caseworker. I was recently given the chance to work with the FSS program and I jumped at this opportunity to learn more about what BHA has to offer and what I can do to help.

This program was designed to assist families in becoming independent of public assistance by receiving guidance in steps to achieve goals in becoming self-sufficient. We currently have approximately 40 participants on this program and non-participants will be notified when more positions are available to be filled. If you are currently enrolled and have any questions regarding your account, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Effective December 1, 2006, all current FSS participants will report any and all changes, along with



Michelle Chessher,
Section 8 FSS
Caseworker

recertifications, to me. You will no longer report to the Section 8 Department, as I will be your caseworker.

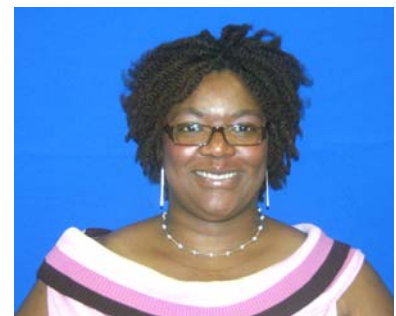
Also, be looking for a letter in the mail from me soon. I plan to meet with all current participants one-on-one so that we can become acquainted with one another and that I may also see where you are in meeting your goals and any progress you have made. I look forward to meeting all of you and helping each of you meet all of your goals in becoming more self-sufficient!

PUBLIC HOUSING FAMILY SELF SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is a voluntary Public Housing Program designed to assist families in becoming independent of public assistance. FSS Participants achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency through education, job training, supportive services and employment. With the support of local programs and agencies, FSS combines case management and advocacy with the FSS Participant's individual plan for education, job training and employment.

Each FSS Participant develops a step-by-step action plan to help bring them to the completion of their goals. It is anticipated that through full-time employment, FSS families can become independent of government assistance.

If you want more information on the Public Housing Family Self Sufficiency program please contact Nicole Byerly at 409-951-7200 or at byerlyni@bmtha.org.



Nicole Byerly,
Public Housing FSS
Caseworker

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IF YOU ARE:

- ▶ **Head of Household** Public Housing participant
- ▶ **Motivated** to change your present life circumstances
- ▶ **Interested** in obtaining more education, job training, or starting your own business
- ▶ **Determined** to free yourself from having to depend upon public assistance

ELDERLY & DISABLED SERVICES PROGRAM

In October, I attended the National Service Coordinators Conference in Nashville, Tennessee hosted by the American Association of Service Coordinators. I attended workshops on a wide range of topics that will enable me to better service the elderly and disabled living in public housing.

One of the key topics addresses at the conference was the issue of transportation. Due to HUD rules and regulations, I will no longer be able to provide direct transportation for residents effective **January 1, 2007**. I will however be able to assist you with securing alternative methods of transportation.

I am also available to direct you to other resources such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, Social Security Office, Social Activities and Health Information.

BHA is currently in the process of procuring software to better track and monitor client activities and progress towards meeting their goals.



Helen Johnson,
Elderly & Disabled
Services Coordinator

I will be meeting with each elderly and disabled resident individually to set up case management and individual service plans that will allow me to better service your needs.

In the meantime, if you have a question or if you need assistance, please contact me at 951-7200, or by email at johnsonhe@bmtha.org!

IMPORTANT MEDICARE DATES!!

If you were eligible in 2006 to enroll in the Prescription Drug Medicare D program but were undecided about participation or if you have now become eligible to participate in the program, please mark your calendar with these important dates!!

October – Compare and Prepare

Watch your mail for the Medicare & You handbook and for information from plans in your area. Complete the Rx Enrollment Check-up. In mid-October, review and compare plans on cost and coverage at www.medicare.gov on the web. Decide what plan you want for 2007. If you're satisfied with your current plan, there is no need to re-enroll.

November 15 – Open Enrollment Begins

First day you can change your Medicare health or prescription drug coverage for 2007. Open Enrollment is the one chance this year most people with Medicare have to make a change in their health and prescription drug plans.

December 8 – Don't Be Late

If you are going to make a change to your current coverage, enrolling by December 8 helps to ensure that you can get the prescriptions you need on January 1.

December 31 – Open Enrollment Ends

Medicare's Open Enrollment ends on December 31. The next Open Enrollment period will begin on November 15, 2007.

January 1 – Coverage Begins

www.medicare.gov 1-800-MEDICARE

ATTENTION SPECIAL NEEDS RESIDENTS!!!

Register with 2-1-1 to Ensure Emergency Evacuation Assistance in Case of Emergency

(Excerpts Reprinted from The Beaumont Enterprise, August 24, 2006, by Sarah Moore)

Learning from the chaos of last year's Hurricane Rita evacuation, local authorities are building a database to help emergency responders find and plan for the evacuation of about 6,000 Southeast Texans with special needs.

But it will take the cooperation of the people it's designed to help the most.

Last year, cities scrambled up until the final hours to pick up these residents and hustle them out of town by plane, bus and even ambulance.

Next time, emergency workers hope to have a better plan in place, Chester Jourdan, executive director of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission, said.

And one of the most crucial parts of that plan is the 2-1-1 system administered by the Area Agency on Aging, set up to register everyone who needs special consideration in emergencies. The only ones in the group who do not need to register are nursing home and hospital patients.

"The idea here is to try to get a database of information on individuals who think they might need or will need help evacuating," Jourdan said.

Brit Featherston says the 2-1-1 special evacuation needs registry is designed for use by residents of Jefferson, Orange and Hardin counties, and is available to just about anyone who needs help evacuating.

He urged people with no other way out of the hurricane danger zone to register soon to avoid clogging the system with calls on the eve of a mandatory evacuation.

"The registry determines what (the person's) needs are - whether they're old and just need transportation, or have medical needs as well," Featherston said. He added that people probably are better off making their own evacuation plans if possible, resorting to government assistance only if all else fails.



Jourdan explained that people can dial 2-1-1, where they will be asked a series of questions on an automated system, then be transferred to an operator for registration.

"We can't say enough how important it is," Featherston said. "If they wait till the last minute, I don't think the system will be able to handle all the calls."

Additionally, Jourdan pointed out, if people don't register in advance, cities won't be able to plan for their most vulnerable residents.

The 2-1-1 system was put in place in 2003 using state and federal funding and is used to disseminate emergency and other information.

Featherston said registering for the assistance could be a life-or-death decision for some.

"There are a lot of very sick people who need to be moved in a situation like that," he said. "If they are not moved properly, they can suffer or even die from the stress of evacuation."

Executive Director's Letter (cont. from pg 1)

We do not disagree that all public housing properties should be operated in a manner comparable to the public sector. Taxpayers have a right to demand positive results on their investments. However, it is unreasonable for HUD to expect all public housing developments to become financially solvent and fully self-sustaining when HUD has been reducing funding for Administrative, Operating Subsidy and Modernization activities over the past 6 years, while HUD is increasing reporting requirements with little or no funding to cover the additional workload and expense to comply with these new federal mandates.

BHA has no choice but to comply with all of these new regulations coming out of Washington. These changes will definitely affect the way we do business. **Residents will see and feel the difference.** Over the next six months, we will be implementing the site based management practices that HUD is requiring. Each property will be expected to operate efficiently and effectively. In order to do so will mean that residents will be expected and required to pay all of their rents and charges on time each and every month. Residents claiming to have no income will continue to be required to enroll in a community service program and verify each month that they are in compliance. Residents failing to pay their rent or charges on time or misrepresenting the income upon which their rent is based could have their lease terminated. We know that the majority of our residents are hard working honest folks. Unfortunately, there are some who still do not wish to comply with the rules and regulations. Those families will be asked to leave.

The need for affordable housing in Beaumont, Texas, especially after the devastating effects of Hurricane Rita, is at an all time high! There are currently over 3,000 families on BHA's waiting lists needing housing. This is not the time to be closing down any public housing developments. Unfortunately, unless each and every public housing development owned and managed by BHA becomes financially solvent and self-sufficient, we may not have the luxury of choice. HUD will make that choice for us.

BHA Residents and citizens of Beaumont should contact their National Legislators and let them know the dire need for affordable housing in our region. Ask them to reinstate 100% of the funding needed for Modernization Activities and fund each agency at 100% of their Operating Budget Requests. It is impossible to expect any agency to fully succeed in all the areas HUD is requiring, especially when they are simultaneously reducing funding and increasing the performance requirements. If residents and citizens do not help us save these much needed programs, many people could end up with no affordable housing programs at their disposal and cities, social service agencies and homeless shelters will see dramatic increases of homeless individuals and families.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Reyna
Executive Director

LUCAS GARDENS ELECTS NEW RESIDENT COUNCIL

The newly elected Lucas Gardens Resident Council was formally recognized by the BHA Board of Commissioners at the October Board Meeting.

Congratulations to all of the Officers elected to the Council by the residents of Lucas Gardens!!!

Resident Councils serve as a voice for people living in a specific housing development. This voice helps to make policy and rules for better living in public housing. Every person living in public housing within BHA is automatically a member of the Resident Council in his or her particular housing development.

President: Ovide Jones

Vice President: George Minter

Secretary: Alice Lennett

Treasurer: Sharon Steen

If you are interested in seeing a resident council formed at your public housing development, please contact your housing manager.

Chaplain: Marva Edwards

Sergeant at Arms: Sharon Daeke

Beaumont Housing Authority
P.O. Box 1312
Beaumont, Texas 77704



Customer Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code