

Housing News

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Housing News is a publication of the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle - King County
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“The Voice for Low Income Housing in King County”

Housing Advocates Need Rage

Cushing Dolbeare, founder of the National Low Income Housing Congress and long time housing activist, once gave a speech listing the four attributes needed to be a good advocate. The first three might not surprise you (faith, hope, and love) but the fourth one probably will - rage. Dolbeare noted that a healthy sense of rage is what sustains people who work against injustice year after year, people who do not “move on” to more lucrative or comfortable endeavors. A finely tuned sense of rage may be what Dolbeare needed to support her 50 years of work in affordable housing. In recognition of her commitment to the principle that decent housing is basic to our social fabric, and for her effective advocacy on behalf of poor Americans with housing problems, Dolbeare will receive a Heinz Award for the Human Condition. Award recipients receive a medallion and an unrestricted cash prize of \$250,000. HDC hopes that its members find a way to convert their rage into good work with affordable housing.

Seattle City Light Retrofitting Success

Last winter HDC worked with Seattle City Light's Built Smart Program to help low-income tenants and non-profits reduce their utility bills in the face of steep rate increases. In addition to special rates for low-income ratepayers the City Council designated \$800,000 for retrofitting low-income housing. To date, nearly all the funding has been committed - \$560,000 for lighting retrofits and \$180,000 for thermostat retrofits in 136 buildings. HDC members who have used the program say they are already seeing large savings in their operating costs. The program plans to conduct a survey of the savings resulting from the retrofits.

Bush's Proposed 2003 HUD Budget

The Bush Administration has released its proposed budget for HUD for FY03. The good news is also the bad news - the budget remains essentially flat in comparison to FY02. The President's budget proposes a 7% increase over FY02; however, Section 8 renewals account for most of the increase. Despite a commitment to end chronic homelessness in the next ten years, the Administration has made it clear that homeownership is paramount. This point was driven home during HUD Secretary Mel Martinez's February 13th visit to Capitol Hill, where he testified before both the Senate Banking Committee and the House Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee. While many members of the House subcommittee praised HUD's homeownership focus, Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) said that “it is a grave error for HUD to focus on homeownership; the majority of poor people need rental housing.” Secretary Martinez claims that despite a flat budget allocation HUD will have more money to spend on housing due to savings through agency efficiency, accountability and performance assessment. Here are some specifics of the proposed budget:

- \$200 million for the Down Payment Assistance Initiative.
- \$65 million for the Self-Help Housing opportunity Program (a tripling of last year's allocation).
- \$204 million for vouchers, with \$15 million for down-payment assistance, \$6 million for people with disabilities, \$40 million for certain non-elderly disabled families, and the remainder (\$143 million) for fair share vouchers.
- The Public Housing Capital Fund cut by \$441 million. HUD suggested that public housing agencies address some of their capital needs through private financing.
- \$1.3 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants. This is approximately \$93 million short of the funds necessary to house chronically homeless

people who have already made the transition to permanent housing.

- A 47% cut to the USDA Rural Housing Services Section 512 low-income rental programs, reducing the program budget from \$114 million to \$60 million. In 1994 the program had a \$540 million appropriation.
- An 11% cut to Section 502 direct low-income home ownership loan program and an 12% cut to guaranteed single-family loans. These cuts seem in direct contradiction of the Administration's commitment to homeownership.

For more information on the President's FY03 budget proposal visit www.nlihc.org.

What America Thinks Of Welfare Reform

86% of Americans believe the federal government has a responsibility to try and do away with poverty. That was one finding of a poll commissioned by the Ms. Foundation for Women. The poll also reports that most Americans (around 80% on several different questions) favor the government doing more, not less, to help people move from welfare to work. This includes providing temporary jobs for those who cannot find jobs in the private sector, expanding education and training programs, and continuing healthcare and childcare benefits for those moving into the workforce. In contrast the poll found that less than 3% of respondents believe that the principal goal of welfare should be to promote marriage and discourage out of wedlock birth. Marie Wilson, President of the Ms. Foundation for Women, points out that "the Administration's proposed budget does the opposite of what Americans want. It boosts spending on marriage promotion and shortchanges programs that are effective in promoting self-sufficiency." For more results from the poll visit www.ms.foundation.org.

State Legislative Update

H.B. 2060 – Things are moving quickly in Olympia. On February 18th, HB 2060 passed out of the House with a vote of 68-29. This was a great victory as advocates had been worried about getting the 50 votes needed to pass. HDC thanks all the legislators who voted for the bill. The bill did feature several amendments. The most worrisome prohibits use of the local funding for new construction if the vacancy rate for low income housing within the county rises above ten percent. The Washington State University Center for Real Estate Research will establish this rate. The bill will now move to the Senate. Last year SB 5936 passed the Senate, this

year the bill has been held up in the Ways and Means Committee. Advocates will need to work hard in the Senate to ensure that bill gets passed by March 8, the cut off date for bills to return to their house of origin.

H.B. 2697 – This bill passed out of the House with a 98-0 vote. The bill relates to the State's Growth Management Act and ensures that communities plan for the number of housing units necessary to accommodate growth. It is now in the Senate's State & Local Government Committee.

HTF - Although advocates has received many reassurances that the HTF will remain fully funded this year there are concerns as the budget forecast seems to get dimmer and dimmer. On Tuesday February 19th, the Office of the Forecast Council announced a \$246.8 million downturn in the state's revenue forecast. This puts a \$1.3 billion hole in the 2001-2003 budget. The Governor has announced a freeze on state hiring. He plans to ask the Legislature to eliminate cost-of-living increases for state workers. He will also be asking state agencies to cut their budgets even further.

Federal Legislative Update

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition Memo to Members, 2/8/02, 2/15/02.

H.R. 3682 – Introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) this bill would establish a living wage and jobs-for-all policy in the U.S. and U.S. territories. The bill was referred to the House Education and the Workforce Committee, the House Budget Committee, the House Armed Services Committee, and the House Rules Committee.

H.R. 3752 – This bill would provide housing assistance to domestic violence victims. Introduced by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). It was referred to the House Financial Services Committee.

H.R. 3774 – Introduced by Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA) the bill would provide a tax credit to promote low-income homeownership. The bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

H.R. 3730 - This bill, introduced by Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ), would provide project-based assisted housing contract renewals at reimbursement levels sufficient to sustain operations. The bill was referred to the House Financial Services Committee.

Housing Advocacy Day



Carla Okigwe presents Speaker Frank Chopp with a Friend of Housing Award.



Fred Kiga, Gov. Locke's Chief of Staff and Housing Hero, chats with WLIHC Chair Lynn Davison and WLIHC Lobbyist Nick Federici at the Housing Advocacy Day Luncheon.



Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Wells receives a Housing Hero Award. From left to right: Megan Farley, WLIHN; Nick Federici, WLIHC; Carla Okigwe, HDC; Sen. Kohl-Wells; Sarah Morgan, HDC; Jota Borgmann, WLIHN; Kate Spletz, LIHI.

Housing Advocacy Day 2002 was a huge success! Over 200 housing advocates (the largest number ever) were in Olympia to meet with their legislators. And they did a great job, breaking a record for Housing Advocacy Day meetings with lawmakers. Advocates were able to meet with Speaker of the House **Frank Chopp**. Rep. Chopp voiced his support of HB2060 and stated his commitment to fully funding the Housing Trust

Fund. He did warn advocates to prepare for a tougher fight for housing money in the next biennium.

At a luncheon reception advocates presented **Fred Kiga**, Gov. Locke's Chief of Staff, with a Housing Hero Award. Kiga received the award for his work on low-income property tax exemption during his tenure as Director of the Department of Revenue. Later **Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Wells** was also presented with a Housing Hero Award for her work in support of the bill.

GAO Voucher Report

The United States General Accounting Office has released a report entitled "Federal Housing Assistance: Comparing the Characteristics and Costs of Housing Programs." The report found that for units with the same number of bedrooms in the same general location, the production programs cost more than housing vouchers. However the report recognizes that production programs and vouchers have different goals. Production programs, as well as providing housing, work to increase the supply of affordable housing, accommodate special needs and revitalize distressed communities, while voucher programs focus on promoting mobility and neighborhood choice. The report notes that the benefits of these goals must be weighed against the cost. Housing advocates might also note that production programs provide jobs and support the economy in ways that voucher programs do not. To view the full report visit www.gao.gov and look for GAO-02-76.

Master Builders Help Low-Income Homeowners

From: The Seattle Times, 2/6/02.

The Master Builders Care Foundation is celebrating 10 years of helping low-income homeowners install ramps with a ramp-a-thon on May 4th. In the past decade the Foundation, the charitable arm of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties, has provided the labor and materials to build over 60 wheelchair ramps for low-income families. The application deadline is March 15. For more information about the project call the MBA at 425/ 451-7920.

"Nickel & Dimed" Author Coming to Seattle

On Friday, March 1st, at 7:30pm at Seattle University's Pigott Auditorium, Barbara Ehrenreich, author of "Nickel and Dimed", will speak about welfare reform and the struggles of low-income working families. The event is free and open to the public for more information call 206/ 694-6794.

Emergency Procedure Plan Workshop

HDC is pleased to be a co-sponsor of **Developing an Emergency Procedures Plan and Working with the Media, March 14, Radisson Seattle Airport Hotel, SeaTac.** This one-day course is designed to enable owners, property managers, and maintenance personnel to plan and prepare for emergencies that are likely to involve their properties. Cost: \$200. To register contact Joe Diehl at 425/ 454-6836.

Workshops, Seminars & Conferences

Financial Management for Nonprofits, February 28, 2002, Location TBA. This session focuses on the information nonprofits need from their accounting and financial reporting systems and how to structure these to retrieve this information. This class examines the challenges of budgeting, reporting, and evaluating the financial health of your non-profit. Trainer: Kay Sohl. Cost: \$110. To register visit www.impactcapital.org.

Building Alliances to Reduce Poverty: Shaping the Impending Welfare Debate, March 1-2, Seattle University. Sponsored by the Statewide Poverty Action Network. This conference will be a primary means of raising the visibility of impending federal decisions and relating them to the level and type of assistance Washington's low-income families will be able to receive in years to come. To register contact Andrea Cohen at 206/ 694-6794.

National Green Building Conference, March 24-26, Westin Hotel, Seattle. To learn more or to register for this event visit www.nahbrc.org.

EnvironDesign6 Conference, April 3-5, Convention Center, Seattle. The conference showcases all that is truly revolutionary about what's happening to place environmental stewardship front and center into mainstream corporate America. It combines keynote speakers, concurrent workshop sessions, a Product Learning Center and networking opportunities. For more info visit www.isdesignet.com/ED/.

Pacific Northwest Regional Council of NAHRO Annual Conference, April 22-24, 2002, Portland, OR. Save the Date! For more information visit www.pnrcnahro.org.

Energy Out West, May 20-24, 2002, Spokane. Join the Western Regional Weatherization Network and learn the most current tips, tricks and practices for doing energy retrofits on the housing stock in your area. Find out what is

going on in the energy efficiency world from beginner to advanced, in the classroom, and with hands-on tutorials. For more information call 253/ 445-4575.

National Alliance to End Homelessness Annual Conference and Training Institutes, July 17-20, 2002. Save the Date!

National NAHRO Conference, October 27-30, 2002, Seattle. Save the Date!

Housing Washington, October 30-November 1, 2002, SeaTac. Annual State Housing Conference. Save the Date!

*****Employment Opportunities*****

See www.HDC-KingCounty.org for up-to-date job announcements!

Executive Director, White Center Community Development Association. Executive Director with broad leadership, management and community development skills is sought by a startup community development corporation in urban King County, Washington. The organization's primary focus is on redevelopment of the downtown core via a Main Street Initiative, and repair, preservation and development of affordable housing. Secondary goals include workforce development and community advocacy. WCCDA offers a competitive salary and benefits package. To apply send resume and cover letter to: WCCDA, c/o Tim Healy, 9832 15th Avenue SW, Seattle, WA 98106 or wccda@seattlejustice.com. **CLOSES: 3/15/02**

Finance Manager, Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association. The Finance Manager is responsible for overseeing all aspects of day-to-day financial matter of this growing community development corporation. Qualifications include B.S. in Accounting and a minimum of 3 years bookkeeping or accounting experience, knowledge of non-profit accounting practices, and knowledge of application software. This position is three-quarter to full-time. Salary: \$35,000-\$45,000 DOE, + benefits. To apply send cover letter, resume and three professional references to DNDA, 5411 Delridge Way SW, Seattle, WA 98106, attention Paul Fischburg. Screening begins 2/27/02. **OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

DEADLINE FOR NEWS ITEMS IS THE 12th OF EVERY MONTH.