

FAHROgram

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS

May / June 2009

President's Message

You Don't Have to Go It Alone!



Gail Sansbury

There is great strength in numbers. I encourage you to reach out to your neighboring agencies and vendors that are not FAHRO members and ask them to join us now. Membership dues are nominal compared to the benefits. Our FAHRO executive staff and volunteers provide outstanding advocacy for our agencies. While every housing authority in Florida benefits from FAHRO's work with the legislative and executive branches of our state's government, association members get a lot more.

FAHRO works to keep members in the loop regarding HUD, funding issues, grant opportunities and job availabilities, and provides general assistance as needed. FAHRO staff and volunteers are able to assist members with just about any housing need. If they aren't able to answer your

questions right away, you can be assured they will work to get the needed information for you. One thing is for sure: You will always have the opportunity to speak with someone live regarding your questions and concerns.

With FAHRO in the picture, there isn't any reason why you need to do your job all alone, but you must do more than join. You must participate to get the full benefits of membership.

One of the most fundamental ways you can get involved in FAHRO is by attending the FAHRO Annual Convention and Trade Show, Aug. 11-14, 2009, at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Destin, Fla. It is FAHRO's flagship event, offering a full gamut of training and networking opportunities geared toward making your job easier. You don't have to be a member to attend, but your membership awards you with steep registration discounts.

See **DON'T GO ALONE** on page 3

State Legislative Affairs

Extended Session Ends With Some Good News for Housing

by Richard Pinsky, FAHRO State Affairs Consultant

The Florida Legislature ended its 60-day session by extending it an extra week, turning it into a 67-day session to pass the budget, to negotiate an Indian gaming compact and to pass a \$1 tobacco tax.

In general, the economy forced some tough choices for lawmakers. Floridians will feel the results of an \$850 million increase in user fees on everything from marriage licenses to driver license renewals. Homeown-

ers' property insurance rates will increase by at least 5 percent, and all state employees will have to face a 2 percent cut in pay.

For the most part, education was held harmless, and thanks to almost \$6 billion in federal stimulus money, state and local road projects will continue.

Along with health care, housing is

See **SESSION** on page 5

Calendar

June 21-24, 2009 • Memphis, Tenn.
SERC Meeting
Memphis Marriott Downtown

July 13 & 14*, 2009 • Lauderdale, Fla.
Regional Education:
Customer Service Training
Broward County Housing Authority
*One-day training repeated to provide a travel option

July 16-18, 2009 • Portland, Ore.
NAHRO Summer Conference
Portland Hilton and Executive Towers

August 11-14, 2009 • Destin, Fla.
FAHRO Annual Convention
& Trade Show
Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort

September 20-22, 2009 • Washington, D.C.
PHADA Legislative Forum
Washington Court Hotel

October 4-6, 2009 • Washington, D.C.
NAHRO National Conference
Marriott Wardman Park

October 28-30, 2009 • Orlando, Fla.
FRA Annual Conference
Orlando Hilton

Visit the FAHRO Website!



www.FAHRO.org

Internal Circulation

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We accept advertising relating to the housing and redevelopment profession. Our advertising rates are: back cover - sold; inside front cover - sold; inside back cover - \$175; full page - \$150; 1/2 page - \$100; 1/4 page - \$70; and business card size - \$50. There is a discount for multiple insertions. The next deadline for camera-ready art is 6/19/09. All articles, RFPs and classified ads must be received by 6/19/09.

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5/2009

Member Feedback

Do you need help with a project or issue and want to see if any of our readers have the answer? Has a colleague done something wonderful that deserves an attaboy or attagirl? Or are you just frustrated and want to vent? Here is your chance to (anonymously if you wish) say thanks, ask for assistance, vent your frustrations, express your opinion or let us know how you feel.

• Congratulations to Lisa Landers, who was recently named director of the Winter Haven Housing Authority after serving as interim director. Lisa was hired to work for the housing authority in 2004 as an assistant and worked her way up to assistant director. She is a graduate of Florida A&M University. She began her career as a reporter at *The Tampa Tribune* in 1987. In 1993, she



became the media and public relations coordinator for the Tampa Housing Authority. Four years after that, she became the director of communications for The Spring of Tampa Bay Inc., a domestic violence center.

If you would like to contribute to Sounding Off, please send your comments to Susan Trainor, FAHROgram editor, by email, editor@ctf.nu, or by fax, 850/878-7760. ✿

DON'T GO ALONE continued from page 1

But your involvement shouldn't stop there ...

You can also encourage your vendors to join FAHRO and man a booth at the annual convention and trade show. Their participation will increase the amount of expertise available at the show (and throughout the year if they become associates) and will help maintain lower dues and membership fees for everyone. Your vendors will thank you for the lead because it is a great way for them to get more job prospects during this economic downturn.

This year's convention theme will be a nostalgic one: "Housing Through the Decades." It promises to be both informative and fun. Go online to the FAHRO website, www.FAHRO.org, and register yourself, your neighbors and your vendors today, or send in the registration form included in this issue. You will be glad you did! ✿

Send Your News to FAHRO!

Tell us about your accomplishments, milestones and other interesting member news. Your fellow members want to know!

Submit your news to FAHRO via:

Email: editor@ctf.nu (attach in MS Word format)

Fax: 850/878-7760

Mail: FAHROgram, P.O. Box 14629

Tallahassee, FL 32317-4629

(Send disk in MS Word format and include a printed copy.)

Photographs are welcome!



Say Cheese!



Corey Mathews

An ancient Chinese proverb proclaims: “May you live in interesting times.” For most of us, we could do with times that are a little less interesting.

Recent data shows that 1 in 10 Floridians are out of work, the national debt is being doubled, services are being slashed, the Florida Legislature has doubled or tripled almost every state fee there is and the economic turnaround we so desperately need has yet to show itself.

Now, my goal is not to depress you—that is what cable news is for. I just wanted to provide some structure for my next point ...

So what.

The single biggest cause of our economic woes is panic, which leads to a lack of public confidence. People start hoarding their money, avoiding risk and waiting for the worst. If you wait long enough, it will come.

Instead, I say get out there and make something happen. Tell your family, friends, clients and anyone else you care about to seize the day and make bold moves. I am not saying be reckless, but it is critical that we remember that some of the wealthiest families in the history of our nation became so in times like these.

Now is the time to be creative. Adapt the way you run your organization. Look for efficiencies you may have previously overlooked. Try something new you have always wanted to try.

Examine how you can provide other services or serve new clientele that will ensure your growth and success.

Folks by the hundreds of thousands are sitting back and waiting for things to get better. This provides you with an opportunity to go out and *make* them better. If you haven't already read *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D., now is the time. If you wait for it to come to you, you will surely starve!

I have taken the opportunities created by these times to better myself and to think constructively about new possibilities, both personally and professionally. I am reading, learning guitar and studying Spanish—and yes, with our twin boys, Jack and Tom, soon turning two, I am spending money like a sailor on leave! I thought they weren't supposed to eat that much until they were teenagers. Oh well.

Having just turned 31, I realize the opportunities are just as plentiful as they were a year, five years or 10 years ago. The best part is that there are fewer people competing for those opportunities while they wait for someone else to make it all better.

As members of the association, I am challenging you to join me as a “Sniff” and a “Scurry” instead of sitting back with the “Hems” and the “Haws.” There is plenty of cheese waiting to be found! Also, reach out to potential regular and associate members. Tell them about the opportunities that exist and why joining or renewing their memberships in the association is the first thing they should do, not the last. See you in the rat race. 🐭

FAHRO REGIONAL EDUCATION: REGION IV – SOUTH/EAST CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING



BROWARD COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Broward County Housing Authority
4780 North State Road 7
Lauderdale Lakes, FL 33319

July 13 or 14, 2009

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. either day

FEATURING: PATTI ZATARIAN WITH



Thanks to the Broward County Housing Authority, FAHRO is proud to announce two additional one-day trainings aimed at increasing your staff's ability to offer quality customer service. The curriculum is designed to be pertinent to the provision of both public and Section 8 housing services. Sign up now by calling FAHRO or by going to www.FAHRO.org to ensure your staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to make the strong, positive impact necessary to improve your housing authority's overall quality of services. These trainings are specifically designed by FAHRO to be affordable for you. **The cost is \$125.00 per person for FAHRO members!** Call us if you have questions at 850/222-6000.



Richard Pinsky

probably one of the areas of the state's budget that suffered the most. Lawmakers swept the remaining \$120 million from the Sadowski Trust Fund of new and reserve money and moved it into general revenue to help balance the budget, leaving only \$31 million available for fiscal year 2009-2010. Of the \$31 million allocated to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC), \$30 million will be going into a First Time Homebuyer Loan Program. Loan repayments from this program will be directed to the SHIP program.

The remaining \$1 million will go to a new matching grant program for public housing authorities. The FHFC will be developing rules to administer the distribution of the grants, which are to be used for the rehabilitation of public housing units that are 30 years and older. The program is designed to match dollar for dollar the federal stimulus dollars from HUD for capital improvements to public housing units. Eligible housing authorities will need to demonstrate the use of their HUD allocation for the rehabbing of their older units in order to receive the state's matching dollars. It was generally expressed that the FHFC's program will be giving preference to the small and rural housing authorities that received minimal HUD dollars and therefore will be in greater need of the additional assistance from the state.

Senator Tony Hill was extremely helpful as was Representative David Rivera in helping FAHRO to obtain the \$1 million in a very limited budget year for affordable housing.

Aside from direct funding, the Affordable Housing Bill, which ultimately became known as SB 360, passed with many changes to Chapter 420. Unfortunately, language that was contained in the measure throughout the entire session that authorized the FHFC to create a permanent Public Housing Rehabilitation Grant Program was removed from the bill at the very end of the process. Attempts to amend the language back in were rejected.

If the governor allows SB 360 to become law, provisions affecting next year's FHFC tax credit cycle will be giving prefer-

ence to Florida-based developers and contractors. Also, the limit of three applications for tax credits per developer unless partnering with a public housing authority or a not-for-profit will no longer be in effect.

HB 1533 by Representative Joe Gibbons and Senator Arthenia Joyner did not pass. The bill would have directed an energy audit of low-income households, including public housing authorities and their residents, in order to evaluate and make recommendations for greater efficiency and savings of energy usage.

FAHRO's Self Insurance Fund scored another victory by amending onto the large Property Insurance Bill a premium tax exemption for the fund's purchase of reinsurance. The tax exemption applies only to the FAHRO Self Insurance Fund and will save the fund thousands of dollars every year. Representatives Pat Patterson, Bryan Nelson and Priscilla Taylor deserve a great deal of gratitude for helping to make this happen.

While FAHRO did not host its annual state capital conference this year, some individual members did make the trip to Tallahassee to help walk the halls, including:

- Dorothy Ellington, executive director, Delray Beach HA
- Ellen Ramsey, director of compliance and special projects, Jacksonville HA
- James Robbins, chairman, Fort Walton Beach HA
- Donald Singer, executive director, Hernando County HA
- George Stakley, chairman, Crestview Housing Authority



Tallahassee Housing Authority Executive Director Claudette Cromartie and FAHRO Executive Director Corey Mathews (right) present the NAHRO State Legislator of the Year Award to Representative David Rivera.

- Pat Thornber, commissioner, Fort Walton Beach HA
- Rev. Early Tyler, vice chairman, Fort Walton Beach HA

These members all deserve special recognition and our sincere thanks for putting in the extra effort to support FAHRO and to help put a face on public housing. I cannot stress enough the importance of meeting and getting to know our legislators.

Finally, NAHRO's first State Legislator of the Year Award was presented to Florida Representative David Rivera. He was one of only three nationwide recipients. Since he was unable to travel to Washington, D.C., to receive the award, Tallahassee Housing Authority Executive Director Claudette Cromartie and FAHRO Executive Director Corey Mathews presented the award to Representative Rivera during Florida's legislative session. 🌿

Visit the FAHRO Website for the Latest on ...

- FAHRO Best Practices Awards – entries due June 8**
- FAHRO Newsletter Competition – entries due June 8**
- FAHRO Outstanding Individual Award (new this year!) – nominations due June 8**
- FAHRO Outstanding Agency Award (new this year!) – nominations due June 8**
- Deborah L. Vincent/FAHRO Education Scholarship – applications due June 15**

All forms are available online at www.FAHRO.org.

Florida Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials 2009 Annual Convention & Trade Show

**Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort
Destin, Florida
August 11 – 14, 2009**



We welcome you to join us in Destin, Florida. Programming includes an additional track dedicated solely to Section 8 Vouchers and extended meeting times. It is all designed to pertinently address issues associated with providing affordable housing in Florida! Join us as we take a nostalgic look back and prepare for 2010! You don't want to miss it!

“HOUSING THROUGH THE DECADES”

Monday – August 10, 2009

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Board of Directors Dinner
(Board Members Only)

Tuesday – August 11, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon Golf Tournament
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. FAHRO Board Meeting
4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Registration Desk Open
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Welcome Reception

Wednesday – August 12, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast in Exhibit Hall
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Opening Session
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Educational Programming
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch in Exhibit Hall
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. State & Federal Affairs
3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Networking Break
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Annual Business Meeting
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Appreciation Reception

Thursday – August 13, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast in Exhibit Hall
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Breakout Sessions*
10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Breakout Sessions*
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch in Exhibit Hall
1:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Breakout Sessions*
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Break in the Exhibit Hall
4:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Breakout Sessions*
6:45 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. Annual Banquet

Friday – August 14, 2009

11:00 a.m. Hotel Checkout

*There are three (3) tracks for breakout sessions:

1. Large / Medium PHA Track
2. Small PHA Track
3. Section 8 Voucher Track



🌀 Hotel Information 🌀

The Convention and Trade Show will be held at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Destin, Fla. Special participant rates begin at \$115 per night. Call (800) 320-8115 and mention you are with FAHRO to receive the reduced rate or visit www.sandestin.com. Reservations will need to be made before **July 27, 2009**. The discount group code is 2274HH for the hotel's online reservations system.



FAHRO 2009 Annual Convention & Trade Show

Simplified Participant Registration

Agency or Company _____

Registration Contact Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please list the name of each registrant and indicate the amount paid:

Names of Registrants	Member Registration	Non-Member Registration	Late Fee (After 7/28)	Amount
1st _____	\$369	\$449	\$50	\$ _____
2nd _____	\$349	\$429	\$50	\$ _____
3rd _____	\$349	\$429	\$50	\$ _____
4th _____	\$349	\$429	\$50	\$ _____
5th _____	\$349	\$429	\$50	\$ _____
6th _____	\$349	\$429	\$50	\$ _____

Housing Participant Grand Total \$ _____

Method of Payment (Participant or Vendor): Check (payable to FAHRO) Visa MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Sec. Code _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Cancellation Policy: A refund of your registration fee will be made minus a \$25 processing fee, if cancellation is received in writing by July 24, 2009. Alternates are encouraged to attend. *For compliance with the ADA, please contact our office if you need any special accommodations. A minimum of seven days' notice is required.*

Four Easy Ways to Register



MAIL: FAHRO
Post Office Box 14629
Tallahassee, FL 32317

WEB: www.FAHRO.org



PHONE: 850/222-6000

FAX: 850/222-6002



Florida Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials

Exhibitor & Sponsorship Registration 2009 Annual Convention & Trade Show

**Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort
Destin, Florida
August 11 – 14, 2009**



Join the key players and decision makers for Florida's Housing Authorities as they meet to discuss the pertinent issues in the provision of affordable housing (past, present and future). They have just received millions in Federal Stimulus funds and are looking to spend it. Don't miss out! Get your company represented in the largest event in Florida for the providers of the state's Public Housing and Section 8 vouchers. You should be there to maintain your existing customer base and to develop new clients!

“HOUSING THROUGH THE DECADES”

Thanks to the hard work of Maria Burger and the Associate Member Committee, the theme in the exhibit hall will be a fun-filled “Housing Through the Decades.” Please be prepared to have your company booth decorated to represent a specific time period and bring an item for raffling to help promote traffic to your booth. Booth packets include an 8' draped table, two chairs, a wastebasket, a company ID sign, a name badge and access to all convention events for one representative. Additional representatives may sign up for a small fee.



Hotel Information

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Four Easy Ways to Register Your Company



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Post Office Box 14629
Tallahassee, FL 32317

WEB: www.FAHRO.org



PHONE: 850/222-6000

FAX: 850/222-6002



FAHRO 2009 Annual Convention & Trade Show

Exhibitor and Sponsorship Registration

Agency or Company _____

Registration Contact Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Level of Participation

Check all exhibiting, advertising and sponsorship opportunities you would like to participate in and provide a total at the bottom. Call Jan Hendricks at 850/222-6000, or write to jan@FAHRO.org if you have questions.

Sponsorship Opportunities	Advertising Opportunities	Golf Tournament Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Item Sponsor* \$1,249 <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Reception \$749 <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative Reception \$745 <input type="checkbox"/> Continental Breakfast \$549 <input type="checkbox"/> Networking Luncheon \$849 <input type="checkbox"/> Continental Breakfast \$549 <input type="checkbox"/> Cocktail Party & Banquet \$1,249	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside Back Cover (8.5"x 5.5") \$ 425 <input type="checkbox"/> Inside Front Cover (8.5"x 5.5") \$ 350 <input type="checkbox"/> Inside Back Cover (8.5"x 5.5") \$ 350 <input type="checkbox"/> Full Page (8.5"x 5.5") \$ 250 <input type="checkbox"/> Half Page (4.25" x 5.5") \$ 175 <input type="checkbox"/> Special Deluxe Package* \$ 325	<input type="checkbox"/> Prime Sponsor \$750 <input type="checkbox"/> Hole-In-One Sponsor \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> Closest to the Pin Sponsor \$300 <input type="checkbox"/> Longest Drive Sponsor \$300 <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Gift Sponsor \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> Hole Sponsor \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Contribution \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to contribute the following to the silent auction for the FAHRO Scholarship Fund: _____
<p>*Call us to discuss possible Promotional Sponsorship ideas you would be interested in. Talk with Jan or Corey at 850/222-6000.</p>	<p>* Includes a Full Page ad in Convention Program and a Half Page ad in the <i>FAHROgram</i> preceding the convention. Please email digital (jpg) artwork to Jan@FAHRO.org.</p>	

Booth Fees: (Check all that apply)	<u>Member Booth</u> <input type="checkbox"/> \$624	<u>Non-Member Booth</u> <input type="checkbox"/> \$749	<u>Additional Booths</u> <input type="checkbox"/> \$499 ea.	<u>Professional Fee (No Booth)</u> <input type="checkbox"/> \$499
<p>On-Site Vendor Representatives: Booth fees include full registration and all food functions for one representative. Additional vendor representatives may register for \$249. FAHRO must be notified by July 29, 2009, of all names to ensure availability of badges. List names of on-site representatives:</p>				
1) _____	(FREE)	2) _____		
3) _____		4) _____		

Chosen Time Period for Booth: _____ **Total Amount of Payment:** _____
(1950's, Roaring 20's, etc.)

Method of Payment: Check (payable to FAHRO) Visa MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Sec. Code _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

FAHRO Technology Survey

The newly formed FAHRO Technology Committee is seeking to identify multiple technological advances that its members can leverage toward lower operating costs, less travel, higher educational capacity and greater access to other members.

To that end, the FAHRO Technology Committee is seeking your input to determine areas in which the committee may provide the greatest benefit for members. Please complete the following survey and fax or email it to the FAHRO administrative office, 850/222-6002 or jan@FAHRO.org. Use a separate sheet if necessary to answer the following questions:

1.) How do you currently manage your technology purchase issues?

2.) How do you currently define your technology procurement specifications?

3.) Are you operating with a file server or with independent microcomputers (i.e., is there a central "hard drive" where files get saved)?

4.) How many computers do you use to conduct agency business (not counting any computers that might be available just for residents to use)? If you do have computers for residents, specify the number separate from the "business" computers.

5.) What is the size of the largest computer monitor at your agency?

6.) If FAHRO were to create a sample Technology RFP Specification Library Resource Center that you could access on the FAHRO website, would you use it? YES or NO

7.) Please indicate your interest below in the areas that you may have interest in obtaining general product specifications for possible RFP development. If you are interested in more than one area, please enter a number to indicate your priority of interest, with "1" being the highest priority:

Wireless Security Camera Systems	Select/Ranking _____	Inventory Control & Tracking Systems	Select/Ranking _____
Automated Door Lock Key Access Systems	Select/Ranking _____	Record Archives Data Capture & Storage Systems	Select/Ranking _____
Wireless Internet Access Systems	Select/Ranking _____	Web-based Training Capability	Select/Ranking _____
Office Telephone System Upgrades	Select/Ranking _____		
Automated Property Control & Tracking Systems	Select/Ranking _____		

8.) The following questions are designed to get a general idea of your capacity to hold web-based or web-chat training.

	Yes	No	I Don't Know
Do you have Internet access in your office?			
Do you have high speed Internet access?			
If yes, do you have Internet access in all individual management staff or property site offices?			
Do you have a web camera in your office?			
Are you using Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)?			
Are you interested in web-based training (fully interactive computer sight and sound on the computer)?			
Are you interested in web-chat training (using the computer and telephone together so the telephone provides interaction for visuals displayed on the computer)?			

9.) How many of your staff members might participate in web-based or web-chat training?

10.) What percentage of your training funds would you be willing to dedicate to web-based training if you had a wide selection of online options and the capacity to do it?

11.) Please use this space to elaborate on possible ways you believe a collaborative effort provided through the Technology Committee may help you with maintaining efficient technology for your agency and other FAHRO members:

FHFC Offers Free Listing Service

Florida Housing Finance Corporation has expanded its FREE, web-based rental housing locator service, www.FloridaHousingSearch.org. All private and publicly funded landlords throughout the state can list rental units that are within 120 percent of HUD's Fair Market Rent for the county.

FloridaHousingSearch.org has particular advantages for public housing authorities/agencies:

- Valuable staff time is saved because vacancy listings are managed daily by experienced, bilingual Florida-HousingSearch.org support staff.
- List management services and cutting edge rent reasonableness tools are free to public housing authorities/agencies.
- Rent reasonableness tools are tailored to HUD's guidelines.
- Free listing tools for the Housing Choice Voucher Program and project-based Section 8.
- No tenant search information is sold or shared.

When PHA's move Section 8 listing management to FloridaHousingSearch.org, customer service representatives conduct follow-up calls to each landlord to ensure they are aware of the service and to offer any assistance needed with listing. These customer service representatives are bilingual.

The FHFC invites PHA's to list HCVP and public housing units for FREE on www.FloridaHousingSearch.org. Listings can include pictures as well as detailed information about each unit, from location, rent and bed/bath number to appliances and utilities, neighborhood amenities and much more.

Go to www.FloridaHousingSearch.org or call toll-free 877/428-8844 for assistance. A call center staff person may conduct a related follow-up call on behalf of Florida Housing.






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Punta Gorda Housing Authority Thanks Home Depot

In the current economy, it would be logical for businesses to eliminate all extra services and concentrate only on their basic operations. Many companies have had to focus primarily on maintaining their core business and waiting until the markets improve. So it is especially gratifying when a company understands the plight of the community and its nonprofits and agencies that serve those most in need and continues to assist them in their efforts.



Team Home Depot volunteers work on the playground at the PGHA's Oak Tree Village in Punta Gorda.

Team Home Depot, a dedicated group of Home Depot employees, assisted the Punta Gorda Housing Authority prepare a site for a playground at the PGHA's Oak Tree Village in Punta Gorda. With limited funds available for the project, the PGHA approached The Home Depot to provide volunteer labor to excavate the soil in advance of the mulch delivery. The Home Depot did not hesitate. The team spent many hours over two days to complete the work.

The playground project will be completed this spring, and the PGHA cannot thank The Home Depot enough. The Home Depot's dedication to the community is heartwarming. 🌿

Fort Myers YouthBuild Changes Lives

Last year, the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers (HACFM) partnered with Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board to introduce the YouthBuild program to the East Fort Myers community and surrounding areas. YouthBuild is a highly successful alternative education program that assists youth who are often significantly behind in basic skills with obtaining a high school diploma or GED. The primary target for this past year's YouthBuild program was youth aged 18 to 24. Out of 50-plus applicants, 30 were selected to participate in the curriculum. After undergoing the rigorous selection and training process, every student was equipped with a broad range of tools, supports and opportunities available to become self-sufficient, responsible and productive citizens in their communities.

Our goal is to open doors to opportunity and to extend the scope of possibilities for young adults. A proud moment for the HACFM was when some of our own residents participating in the program had the opportunity to receive on-site training in the construction industry in their own community. Fort Myers YouthBuild brought together residents of this community and various minority subcontractors during the building of the new Renaissance Preserve Senior building.

The HACFM would like to congratulate the Fort Myers YouthBuild Class of 2008 for its successful completion. We are

especially proud of two of our very own residents, Desairia Broomfield and Terrence Duncan, for their accomplishment. Mrs. Broomfield is continuing her education by attending college, and Mr. Duncan has joined the United States Army. These young adults are living examples that the Fort Myers YouthBuild not only rebuilds communities, it rebuilds lives.

Staying Connected

Programs such as these highlight the importance of residents staying connected to the HOPE VI Community Supportive Services and Resident Services staff. New opportunities arise every day, and communicating with the case manager is key. As the economic situation changes nationally and locally, things are undoubtedly going to change in our individual lives. That is why the HACFM's staff is committed now more than ever to ensuring that all of our residents are aware of the available services, resources and programs. Whether it is daycare, transportation or tuition assistance, the only way for residents to take advantage of these opportunities is to contact their case managers. We encourage our residents to maintain contact with us either by calling or stopping by one of our Neighborhood Network Centers. Every resident should take advantage of the chance for a fresh start because, like Mrs. Broomfield and Mr. Duncan, we never know what the future has in store for us. 🌿

Attention Members! Keep FAHRO Up-to-Date!

Help us serve you better by keeping our record of your mailing address, telephone, fax, email address and website address up-to-date.

Whenever you make a change, please send your new information via email to Jan Hendricks, Jan@FAHRO.org, call 850/222-6000 or fax 850/222-6002. Thank you!



Tips to Surviving the FAHRO 2009 Annual Convention: A Time Travel Guide

The FAHRO Convention and Trade Show is a rewarding opportunity to network with peers, to engage in pertinent seminars and to discover new trends and products. This year, FAHRO has increased the event's resources: there will be not just two break-out sessions, but three.

The sessions will be dedicated to 1) Large to Medium Sized Housing Authorities; 2) Small Housing Authorities; and 3) Administration of Section 8 Vouchers. In addition, the trade show floor with all the various vendors (some regulars and some new) will be there to help you get started on your new federally funded stimulus projects.

Since the theme for this year's convention is "Housing Through the Decades," we figured you could use a "time travel guide" developed by trade show experts to help you maximize your time at the event.

Put first things first.

Your time is limited at the event, and you will need to divide your time between three main activities. These are 1) seeing new products and services; 2) networking with peers; and 3) attending seminars. Assign a percentage point for each activity and translate those percentages into actual hours. If you do not apportion your time, you may find that you spend so much on one activity that you run short on time for other vital tasks. The event will have new and unexpected things, and if you don't take care of your primary business efficiently, you won't have time to discover what's new.

Write down your questions in advance.

First, ask yourself what operational problems or issues you intend to solve by attending the convention, and then list the questions you need to answer to solve your problems/issues. This will make it easier for you to stay focused and collect the information you need. Having prepared questions will also help you avoid asking open-ended questions that will waste your time hearing about products or services you have no interest in.

Plan a route.

Some people get so overwhelmed by a trade show that they end up wandering aimlessly. They get distracted and do not achieve the goals they set for themselves. Get a list of the exhibitors and plan how you are going to visit them in advance. You will be able to make better product comparisons if you schedule yourself to see vendors of similar items during adjacent time periods.

Take the road less traveled.

Don't always start at the front of the hall. Work through the booths according to your planned route, and go first to those in the back that are less crowded.

Take control.

Don't get lost in time. You will be much more productive if you approach vendors in a manner that is goal specific and focused. Tell vendors who you are and what you are looking for. Don't waste your time or theirs by letting them tell you details you aren't interested in;

See TIPS on page 14

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TIPS continued from page 13

but remember, staying alert to new products can be a true benefit of the show. Keep your eyes open and bring your curiosity.

Network wisely.


The real value of attending a convention and trade show is the face-to-face time. Unfortunately, most trade show attendees don't have developed networking skills, which can make it difficult. The experts say you may gain confidence by rehearsing your approach in three areas: 1) how you approach people; 2) what you say during conversation; and 3) how you disengage. Rule of thumb is to keep longwinded business discussions for later. Hospitality suites are particularly good places to network in a more relaxed setting.

Make appointments selectively.

Making the right appointments can ensure you see the people you need to see. Making too many appointments, though, can lock you in and keep you from pursuing important leads. Keep in mind: If there is a product you are vitally interested in, then it's good to make an appointment. If you are still in the in-between stage of decision, then it's best to put off the appointments until you get more information.

Enjoy yourself.

Relax and enjoy. The FAHRO Convention and Trade Show is designed to be as much fun as it is educational and advantageous. It may be the only time of year when you get to befriend that peer or associate with whom you always talk over the phone. It is a time to get to know the human faces of our industry.

Also, if you love your vendors, be sure to tell them they need to be at the show! They will love you back for the suggestion. Look forward to seeing you! 

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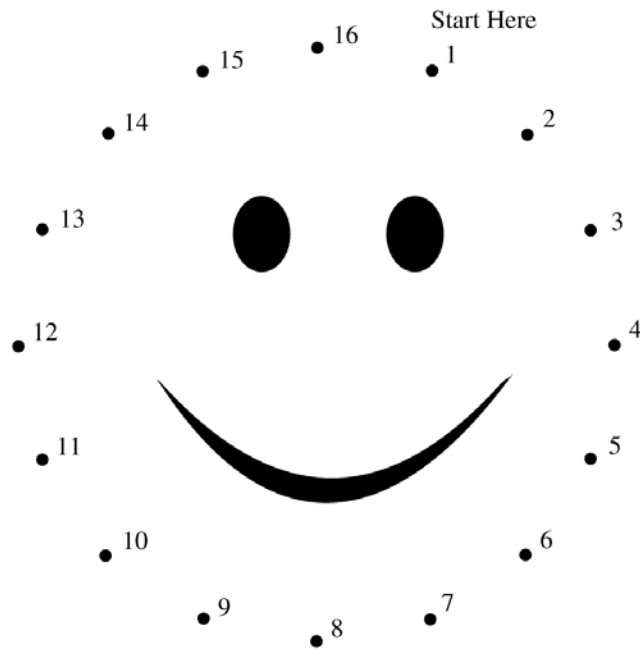
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Mission Statement

FAHRO is committed to the professional development of the people who provide public and assisted housing in Florida by offering a network for increased communication and education. We will continue to support legislation for the improvement and development of affordable housing and economic opportunities.



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