

# NE NAHRO NEWSLETTER

Winter 2008

Nebraska Chapter of National Association of Housing and  
Redevelopment Officials

## Special points of interest:

- Optimism in 2008
- NE NAHRO Conference 2008  
"Housing... the Cornerstone to Strong Communities"
- 2008 Training Opportunities
- 2008 Directories coming soon!!

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## Presidents Report

If I were to title this report, I would call it "Optimism in 2008". That's because as I thought about all the things that are happening in the state and across our country, I am very optimistic that things are looking brighter all the time.

Let's start with what is happening nationally. Last year NAHRO began a campaign called Housing America 2007. NAHRO's new President, Renee Rooker, has reviewed this campaign and felt it was so successful that we should continue it into 2008. For those of you unfamiliar with Housing America 2007, this movement is dedicated to making housing a national issue once again. Can anyone remember the last time housing was discussed as a political issue? We hear about medical insurance or lack thereof, the war against terror, immigration, taxes, the deficit, etc. Yet, despite the fact that our

nation will have approximately 3.5 million homeless people this year (1.35 million of them children), housing has continued to be vir-



tually ignored. The Housing America campaign is designed to change that. The very fact that our organization is trying to tackle this public relations problem is reason for optimism.

In addition, on the national radar, positive changes such as modification to the asset management rules, the Section Eight Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA), and expansion of moving to work are real reasons to be optimistic about the future. Congress also made an attempt this year to pro-

vide more money for operation of our agencies and assistance of our residents. Though they were not successful, our law makers fought for the good of our industry. Thus, things appear to be moving in our direction. With these positive developments, now is a great time to consider coming with our Nebraska delegation to Washington D.C. this year and let your voice be heard. The Legislative Conference will be held March 31 - April 2 and we hope that Nebraska has strong representation.

Our state chapter is also very busy with many positive things going on. The Professional Development Committee has a very aggressive and extremely beneficial series of trainings lined up including Combating Fraud, HQS Inspections, Commissioner Training, our Spring Workshop and Rent Calculation. And that



If you have not  
Contacted  
Heather or  
Charlotte about  
directory  
changes now is  
the time!!



## Presidents Report Cont.

is just the first six months of the year. The Member Services Committee is working hard to put out a new directory and award our second annual resident scholarship, among other activities. Our Commissioner Chair continues to strive to keep our Commissioners involved. The new Commissioners training that some members of NE NAHRO have received should go a long way in fulfilling this goal. The Legislative & Housing Committee is already working on our message

for the Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. and has been working closely with our Nebraska NAHRO Lobbyists on state legislation that will be beneficial to our agencies. The Maintenance Committee continues to work on specific training and support for our maintenance employees across the state. The Community Development Committee has been working very hard to keep housing authorities involved and informed about changes and opportunities that affect our communities.

In addition, our 2008 Fall Conference Committee is putting together a great agenda for what looks like a fantastic Conference in Omaha. After consideration of all these very positive factors, how can we be anything but optimistic in 2008.

Rick Ruzicka  
NE NAHRO President

## Member Services Report

I hope each of you and yours had a blessed holiday. Now it is back to work meeting all the deadlines from 2007 and new deadlines and regulations for 2008.

The Membership Committee consists of Sally Wilson, Starla Anderson, Peggy Christofferson and myself. At present we are up-dating the NE NAHRO directory. If you have not been contacted by Heather or myself, please give one of us a

call. We want to make sure all your information is current for the 2008 directory.

We will also be re-evaluating membership dues and of course will be waiting to receive your nominations for awards given at the fall conference. Watch for award categories in the spring newsletter.

Don't forget to pay your NE NAHRO dues and of course, your National NAHRO dues for 2008.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at trainings/meetings this year.

Charlotte Erickson, Chair  
Membership Committee



# Omaha to Host 2008 Nebraska NAHRO Conference

The Omaha Housing Authority is pleased to host the upcoming 2008 Nebraska NAHRO Conference.

This year's theme is:

**“Housing...the Cornerstone to Strong Communities”**

The Conference will be held September 16th - 18th, 2008 at the Downtown Omaha Embassy Suites.

Downtown Omaha offers many attractions, including the *Old Market*, Omaha's premier arts and entertainment district featuring fine dining, shopping, and the arts.

Some of the featured tracks for this year's conference include:

- **New Board of Commissioner Training**
- **New Executive Director Sessions**
- **Hands On Maintenance Sessions**

The 2008 Nebraska NAHRO Conference promises to be eventful with nationally-recognized speakers and information packed sessions.

What is a conference with all work and no play. Plan to be entertained and have a good time with the many activities scheduled while in Omaha.

Don't forget to mark your calendars. This will be a conference you do not want to miss! For more information on the conference feel free to contact, Rachelle Tucker, 402-44-6900 ext. 260

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

January 2008



Combating  
Housing Fraud  
January 28th

Housing Quality  
Standards Feb 12  
& 13

Commissioner  
Training April 9  
& 10

Recently you should have received an email from our State Service Officer, Heather Looper, about “Combating Housing Fraud”. The Omaha Housing Agency has graciously consented to have Reginald Johnson, Program Integrity Manager, put together a comprehensive training on what you can do to reduce fraud at your housing agency. He works closely with the following professionals to reduce fraud at OHA and has enlisted their help in providing this training to all of Nebraska Housing Agencies. The training includes a close look at application procedures, document review, the verification process related to fraud and an afternoon filled with question and answer periods with Special Agent Jason Albers of the Social Security Administration (document review and fraud prosecution); Chris Conn – Special Agent for the HUD Office of Investigative General (Fraud reporting and prosecution); and Special Agent David Sullivan of ICE – formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) on alien document review, reporting and prosecution. The cost of this training has been kept to a minimum to provide each agency a chance to send housing staff. The registration and block of rooms deadline is January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Email Heather for a copy if you overlooked it the first time.

Other trainings/registrations to watch for this winter and spring are:

February 12 & 13, 2008 – **HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS** for Section 8 Housing Inspectors. Alloy Specialties (Darwin & Larry – the goofy guys from Nebraska NAHRO conferences, will conduct the training), so look forward to a fun time as well as a “quality” training.

April 9 & 10, 2008 – **COMMISSIONER FUNDAMENTALS – A REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS TRAINING** at the McCook Housing

Agency. E.D. Rebecca Dutcher has volunteered her community room to host the first Commissioners Training led by National NAHRO commissioned Nebraska trainers.

Evelyn Labode, Commissioner of the Douglas County Housing Agency and Pat Hosick of the Cozad Housing Agency will co-train. Please pass this information on to your Board of Commissioners and watch for the registration form and agenda in mid February. This should give each housing agency time to talk with their commissioners about attending.

***NOTE:** Commissioners Fundamentals Training will come to you – please contact Sue Kleider, or any member on the Professional Development Committee, if your agency would be willing to sponsor this training. You provide the site, we make the arrangements.*

April 17, 2008 – **Spring Workshop at the Holiday Inn in Kearney.** HUD staff will present a variety of topics on the Operating Subsidy Calculation, 50058 form, Over Income families, Project Management Budgets – tentative). There will be a session on Credit Management regarding collections of accounts and how to avoid bad debt, debt collection laws, and the statute of limitations. One of our own talented directors will conduct a lighthearted session on “office management hints”. The rest of the agenda is to be determined.

June 25, 26 & 27, 2008 – **SECTION 8 ELIGIBILITY / followed by S8 and PUBLIC HOUSING RENT CALCULATION / with a Proficiency Test** is being coordinated with National NAHRO. National NAHRO is in the process of fine tuning their professional development training staff. At this time Lisa Coleman will be training, she trained the last NE NAHRO Rent Calc session we sponsored and everyone was



**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONT.**

very happy with her style and the training provided. We will be working with National NAHRO to combined this course into a 3 day class with Section 8 Eligibility the first day, the Rent Calculation class for both Section 8 and Public Housing the second and third days, and the follow-up proficiency testing to be taken at the end of the training, on line or through your agency's program manager or director. More details will follow.

public housing inspection process. Please watch for this information to be available before March 2008.

**Mark your calendars.....and get ready for a great year of training opportunities to help you and your housing / maintenance staff develop professionally.**



Professional Development is also looking into a **UPCS (Uniform Physical Conditions Standards)** class for the

**SUMMER MAINTENANCE CONFERENCE**

Mark your calendars for the Summer Maintenance Conference July 16 & 17 in Lexington, NE at the Holiday Inn Express. The cost for the two day session is \$95.00 and includes a tee shirt. The rooms are \$70 for a single and \$75 for a double. Vendor registration is \$250 plus providing a door prize.

Sessions will include: Drywall, Forced Air & Boilers, Appliance Repair, Plumbing, Electrical, Roofing, Janitorial, & Sprinkler Systems

The registration for this conference will be sent out soon. Watch your mail!

**SUMMER  
MAINTENANCE  
CONFERENCE!!  
July 16 & 17  
Lexington,  
NE**

Do you have a question that you've been too embarrassed to ask anyone about housing? Do you have a unique solution to situations that we may all encounter in our jobs, and you'd like to share?

I'm presenting a light-hearted session on our unique jobs, situations, solutions, etc. at the Spring Workshop. I would like to incorporate

some useful information as well to help us all during our daily work. If you have a question to ask, such as: What are those little locks the REAC inspector talks about for the electrical panels, and where can I get them if the City doesn't provide them? Or a situation, such as: How do I prove that my tenant is harboring a fugitive?

Or a solution, such as: What I did to prove my tenant was harboring a fugitive. Please share. HUD will not know where these questions, situations or solutions have come from.

You can email me @ [camb-hous@swnebr.net](mailto:camb-hous@swnebr.net) or [ara-phous@atcjet.net](mailto:ara-phous@atcjet.net). Thanks for your help with this presentation.

Cindy S. Haussler



## Housing and Legislative News

The Nebraska Legislative session has begun. It is a “short” session, 60 days. Nebraska NAHRO continues to employ the lobbying firm of O’Hara, Lindsey and Associates to represent and protect our interests.

We have asked our lobbyists to push for two amendments to the Nebraska Housing Agency Act. One would exempt from real estate taxes federal Public Housing that is owned by an affiliate of a housing agency, but not directly by the housing agency. This has come up in Omaha where OHA has redeveloped or replaced some of its public housing stock and used tax credits under a partnership with a private investor. It is still federal public housing with all the income limitations, but has lost its real estate tax exemption. This could become an issue in other communities also as time marches on, housing stock deteriorates, and we look for creative ways to revitalize it.

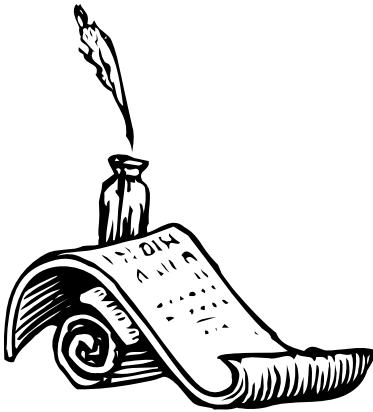
We have also asked our lobbyist to explore an amendment that would allow us to accept rent during eviction actions. This would allow us to accept partial payments during terminations for rent, for example, but still proceed with eviction if the whole amount is not paid. This might actually help some agencies prevent some evictions by allowing clients to pay a little at a time over the course of a month or so, while still going through the 14 day notice period and court filings.

Just before the session began, the Governor announced an initiative to limit or ban illegal immigrants from getting state benefits. Public Housing was listed as one of these benefits. Since we already have extensive federal requirements regarding immigrants in Public Housing, we should be a little concerned about an attempt by the state to impose additional, contradictory or more onerous requirements. So we will watch for that, although it is doubtful that such a bill will go anywhere in the legislature this year.

As most of you know by now, Congress passed a budget and the President signed it, which means we will find out our new funding increments in the near future. We might see slight increases in funding, if any.

The NAHRO Legislative Conference is March 31, 2008 to April 2, 2008 in Washington, D.C. Each year several Nebraska agencies go and discuss housing issues with our Congressional representatives. I will be developing an agenda for these meetings. Please forward me your thoughts and ideas for these discussions. What do you want from your federal representatives? Please email me a [chris@L-housing.com](mailto:chris@L-housing.com).

Chris Lamberty  
Housing and Legislative Chair



# NE NAHRO

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Send address and informational changes to:  
NE NAHRO STATE SERVICE OFFICER

HEATHER LOOPER

1820 SW 25th St

LINCOLN, NE 68522

Phone, Answering machine and Fax

402-435-0941

We're on the web!  
[NENAHRO.org](http://NENAHRO.org)

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Do you have any dates  
for the Calendar of  
Events. If you do,  
please let me know.

January 28th—Combating Housing Fraud

February 15th—NE NAHRO Board Mtg. Wood River, NE

February 12-13—Housing Quality Standards

March 1st—Membership Dues Due

March 31st-April 2nd—Legislative Conference, Washington DC

April 17th—Spring Workshop, Kearney, NE

April 26th-29th—NCRC Conference, Cincinnati, OH

July 16th & 17th—Maintenance Conference

July 24th-27th—Summer NAHRO Conference, Nashville, TN

September 16th-18th—NE NAHRO Fall Conference, Omaha, NE