

NE NAHRO NEWSLETTER

SUMMER

JULY 2011

President's Update

Of utmost Importance – support the National NAHRO proposal regarding the operating subsidy offset – NAHRO wants all Housing Authorities to take a 5% cut in operating fund – receiving only 95% of the Operating Subsidy needed to operate their respective Housing Authorities rather than the deep cuts in operating subsidy due to offsets by operating reserves....for small and medium/small HA's in Nebraska, this could mean a **cut estimated at 38 – 44% of needed operating funds.**

National NAHRO has letters for congressional leaders, letters to the editor and will plan a National Call-In Day when the T-HUD Appropriations Bills is due to be marked up. I've sent my letter, have you sent yours? Tell your message to local elected officials, media and other partners, stakeholders in your community and organize letter writing campaigns by providing your residents with an update on the situation. Lastly, August recess is August 8 – September 5 – it's a great time to have your representatives tour your facility or speak at an event. Schedule with your legislator's scheduler or aide to ensure you have appointment for their time!

On the home front, be sure to get your nominations in for the many awards offered by Nebraska NAHRO – we have housing awards, resident awards, outstanding staff, commissioner and of course - Orville Stanton. It's always important to recognize our outstanding leaders in the housing industry! These special folks will be recognized at the Fall Awards Banquet in North Platte. If you haven't gotten your registrations in for

this training, please do so now! Get the early bird price – we can't afford to be late!

Special Thank You to our Omaha HUD staff – they are always there for us....to answer any questions, provide any service we need! THANKS SO MUCH!!!

Be sure to VOTE – exercise your NE NAHRO privilege to elect the Board Members and officers for the new term! We have an outstanding ballot and look forward to some friendly, competitiveness in the folks running for board membership!! We'll also announce the locations for the 2012 Maintenance Conference and the 2014 Fall Conference.

Now, more than ever, what we do counts! The support for our programs is growing at the grass roots – almost everyone knows someone that will be affected if Medicare does not survive, if Social Security goes away or a loved one can't find a job. Let your community know that YOU are there – the Housing Authority is the rock that provides a solid foundation for those wanting and needing to survive and thrive in these difficult times.

See you at Fall Training! Have a wonderful summer and glorious fall!

In Service,

Nancy

Nancy Bentley, President

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**NE NAHRO
Fall Confer-
ence/ Training
Registration is
attached to the
Newsletter
email!!! You
can also find it
on the web
page.**



Dear NE NAHRO Members:

I am honored to chair the committee for the annual Orville Stanton Award For Distinguished Service.

This award will be presented at the Nebraska NAHRO Fall Conference/training to be held in North Platte. As you may know, the Orville Stanton Award for Distinguished Service is the most prestigious award given by the NE Chapter of NAHRO because it honors an individual who has worked tirelessly for the Chapter and for the promotion of decent, safe and sanitary housing in our state. It is the time of year to begin accepting nominations for that award. If you would like to nominate an individual, please submit a letter naming the person and stating why you think this person should be considered for the award. It would also help if you could tell us a little bit about the person you are nominating.

Don't wait - take the time right now and nominate who you would like to see receive this award. There are lots of leaders around our state – from very small to large housing agencies. The only requirement is that the recipient be a member of our NE NAHRO Chapter Family. Send your nomination in writing as soon as possible to:

Sheila Miller

Norfolk Housing Agency

110 N. 4th St.

Norfolk, Nebraska 68701

smiller@ci.norfolk.ne.us

Nomination deadline is July 31, 2011. This year's committee is made up of recent recipients of the award, Rick Ruzicka, Chris Lamberty and myself. Please make the committee's job tough by having to select from lots of qualified people!!!

Hope to be hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sheila Miller

Professional Development

We are finalizing the September training in North Platte which will include the Property Management Essentials and Housing Choice Voucher Occupancy. Both of these trainings are typically three days but NAHRO made an exception and will do the training in two days and have the third day for testing. Both trainings are part of the NAHRO certification program. The HCV training is a step toward the Certified Senior Specialist of Occupancy HCV (CSSO-HCV). The Property Management Essentials will work towards the Certified Manager of Property Operations (CMPO). We have spoken with the instructors to clarify the parts of the agendas that will be most beneficial to our areas. Be watching for those agendas in the near future. There is still time to sign up for either of these trainings.

A "New Executive Director" training is scheduled for July 26th & 27th. This will be held at the HUD office in Omaha and participants will be able to stay at the Magnolia Hotel in Omaha and be shuttled to the HUD office. The cost will be around \$100.00 per participant. There are about 20 Executive Directors signed up to take this course. There will also be a HCV Tool Training on July 25th at the Omaha field office. See the ad for more information. Thanks for signing up for the trainings and we look forward to seeing you there.

We are attempting to spark some interest in Commissioner Training in each of our areas. Contact Anita or Tracy if you are willing to host this training and be

watching for agencies in your area that will be hosting.

We also want to remind the membership that learning and training opportunities are invaluable. We realize budgets are tight, but we want all agencies to have the highest quality of professional development available. Any impute or ideas to deal with this challenge are greatly appreciated.

Anita Thoene
Burwell Housing Authority

Tracy Wieckhorst
Nebraska City Housing Authority

POSTER CONTEST REMINDER!!

The deadline to submit your entries for the NE NAHRO Poster Contest is August 15, 2011. Entries will be judged by the Member Services Committee. The winner, in each of the three categories, will receive a \$50.00 prize at the NE NAHRO Fall Conference to be held in North Platte, NE, September 20-22, 2011. The three Nebraska winners will then be submitted to National NAHRO for the national contest.

LET'S REPRESENT NEBRASKA WELL!!

Entries must be received no later than August 15, 2011 at the following address:

Peggy Christoffersen
Blair Housing Authority
758 S. 16th St.
Blair, NE 68008



It's Not Too Late!

HCV Utilization Tool Training.

Training will be held July 25 at the
HUD offices in Omaha.
Lunch provided on site.

Contact Heather for registration form!

2011 NE NAHRO AWARDS REMINDER!!

The deadline to submit nominations for the 2011 NE NAHRO Awards, to be presented @ the NE NAHRO Fall Conference, September 20-22, 2011 is July 31, 2011.

Nominations can be submitted for:

- Resident of the Year
- Commissioner of the Year
- Maintenance Person of the Year
- Outstanding Staff of the Year
- Best Newsletter/Calendar
- Project Design
- Program or Administrative Innovation

RECOGNIZE THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVERS/ACHIEVEMENTS IN YOUR HOUSING AUTHORITY!!!

Applications must be received no later than July 31, 2011 at the following address:
Peggy Christoffersen, Blair Housing Authority, 758 S. 16th St., Blair, NE 68008

The Realities of Rental Assistance

As Rural Development (RD) employees, we are proud of the jobs we do. Across the nation, we put over \$1 billion of Rental Assistance (RA) out in rural communities each year. Our properties pay real estate taxes to support services in those communities. Our properties employ thousands of site managers, maintenance people, and contractors. We hear really great stories about how our properties contribute to the well-being of communities. Through our work, we assist owners and managers by doing due diligence in servicing the properties or helping borrowers devise a workout plan to save a property. RD has been instrumental in contributing to the quality of life for those tenants and the community at large. This is all very positive.

The reality, though, is that RA isn't just contributing to the economy; it's also costing the government money. And when the \$1 billion is on the other side of the ledger, everyone seems to forget that it's used for keeping the heat on in the winter, and making repairs to the leaky water system, and patching the holes in the parking lot, and keeping people in a home whose monthly income – monthly income – is \$800. Instead, because it's such a big number, it's viewed as a cash cow. And people ask, "What will it hurt if we take a little here and take a little there?"

RD properties are becoming more dependent on RA. In 2007, it was 61% RA usage in our properties nationally. Last year, it was 65%. The universe of RA units continues to increase with new construction and incentive (to remain as affordable housing) RA units and they come with long-term funding commitments. There continues to be pressure on the use of RA from regular operating cost rent increases which nationally average \$11 per unit per month last year to transfer (of ownership) increases that averaged \$93 per unit per month so far in 2011.

Despite the fact that RD pays out \$1 billion, RD is only renewing about 80% of all units. That means that 20% of all the RA units aren't even considered in the budget. In 2012, RD estimates we'll need \$970 million to do 221,000 renewals. RD received a cut of \$70 million, which means about 16,000 units – 16,000 families, the elderly, and the handicapped – whose contracts can't be renewed. RA was cut further in the 2011 Continuing Resolution by another \$10 million, and that's another 2,300 units. That's 18,300 units that can't be funded.

The question asked was what can we do now – very short-term – to stop the spending while keeping the direct tenant impact to a minimum? Unused RA was a target. But Unused RA is volatile and not easily captured because of turnover and appeals, etc. Unused RA often is set aside for transfers and preservation deals. So the obvious answer next is to not recycle the RA. Look at properties where the RA use is stopping because the project is removed from our portfolio. We know not all RD properties are going to end up in foreclosure and we know that some tenants will take the RA with them when a property is removed from our portfolio either through foreclosure or payoff.

RD has not taken these steps lightly. These actions did not have to be approved by the Undersecretary's office, and RD advised the Office of Management and Budget what RD is planning to do. For all these reasons, we had to look at the portfolio and get a true picture of what we can do to save what we have. Each state was asked to look at their individual projects and evaluate their state portfolio by the end of August. A new unnumbered letter (UL) entitled "Dynamic Servicing Strategies for the Multi-Family Housing Loan Portfolio" dated May 18, 2011, was issued with guidance provided to RD MFH staff presenting a new policy on recapture and retirement of RA units. This UL is available at the RD regulations website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RegulationsAndGuidance>. The following is a sample of actions RD staff will be taking in following the directives in the UL.

Your first source if you need RA for a transfer or MPR should be unused RA.

We can move RA for a tenant in a prepaid or foreclosed property to another RD property over the 4 months allowed in the regulation.

The UL is designed to help you figure out where limited resources should go. Short-term changes are needed now if we want to save the properties.

Evaluate your entire portfolio.

Be sure your project has a workout plan in place and is classified a "B" in MFIS (our automated tracking program) if a transfer is underway or any additional funding is contemplated to improve the property condition.

Evaluation of the properties is an on-going, continual process because things change at properties all the time.

NE RD is one of the states with the highest percentage of unused RA. We are going to begin a more aggressive management of these units to reduce this percentage.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Linda Anders, Multi-Family Housing Specialist, at (402) 437-5734 or linda.anders@ne.usda.gov



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PO Box 35305 • Charlotte, NC 28235
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Housing.NE.gov is a free, online housing locator helping tenants find housing and landlords fill vacancies across Nebraska. Housing.NE.gov also offers extensive services to housing authorities, and these services are **FREE** to your agency thanks to funding by the Assistive Technology Partnership in collaboration with other statewide agencies.

Your agency may benefit from **comprehensive Section 8 vacancy listings management**, where your thorough vacancy-listing information is kept accurate and up to date with live call-center support. **Rent reasonableness** through Housing.NE.gov generates detailed unit comparisons that exceed HUD requirements.

Register your agency for a free demonstration of these valuable, timesaving tools by contacting Crystal Kirby at 1-866-457-7486 ext. 111 or by email at crystal@socialserve.com.

In 2011, Housing.NE.gov celebrates five years of service to Nebraskans with a new design! Check it out at <http://Housing.NE.gov>



Be Watching!
More Educational
Opportunities Coming

We are planning an educational opportunity for November 2011. Also we are looking for agencies that would like to HOST Commissioner's Trainings.

2011 FALL NAHRO

Nebraska NAHRO Fall Conference

September 20-22, 2011

Hosted by the Housing Authority of North Platte, NE



I think I can....

I know I can...

Property Management Essentials or HCV Occupancy

Reasons to register....

Both classes are National NAHRO classes

Testing is by choice

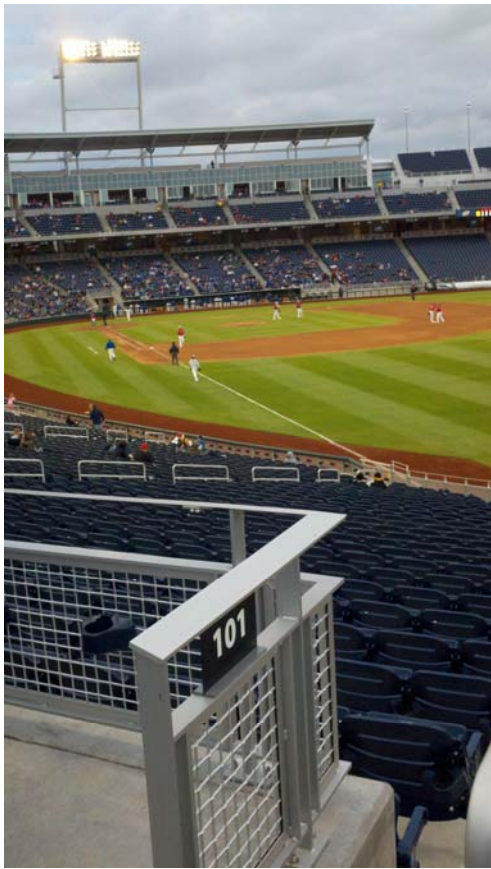
Compared to other National NAHRO class offerings, these prices are very reasonable.

Knowledge is something you can never have too much of.

North Platte: Nice central location!

Get to see/meet other housing staff that you can share and compare successes and struggles with.

Look online or in your emails from Heather for your registration form!



New Ameritrade Ball Park. This is the ball game that followed the NCRC Conference reception at the mattress factory – it was sponsored by Johnson Controls. Cindi Taylor and Susan Schmidt of SBHA were watching the game from up high!



Retirement Reception for Cheryl Smith, Broken Bow. Cheryl Smith at her retirement party 6/24/11 – joining her are Nancy Bentley, Cheryl, Pat Hosick and Cindy Naber. Other ED's that joined Cheryl that day to celebrate her 21 years at Broken Bow Housing were Charlotte Erickson, Joan Sides, Diane Adams and Rita Griggs.



Esperanza Bernal, one of the NE NAHRO Scholarship winners, accepting her Award with Nancy Bentley.



We're on the web!
Nenahro.org

The South Sioux City Housing Agency would like to thank the staff of Goldenrod Regional Housing Agency who helped move our office due to the pending flood threat. We appreciate their help which made the moving a lot easier.

Also, we would like to thank the housing authorities that contacted us to see if we needed help. Your thoughtfulness and consideration is appreciated.

South Sioux City Housing Agency
Connie & Becky

Salary Survey Books are complete!! Thank You to all those that participated. The Books will be available for purchase at the Fall Conference. Price is \$25.00 for those that participated in the survey and \$30 for all others. Email me if you are interested and I will reserve yours today!

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Send address and informational changes to:**

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402-435-0941

Calendar Of Events

July 25th — HCV Utilization Tool Training, at the HUD Office in Omaha.

July 26th and 27th — NE Executive Director Training at the HUD office in Omaha.

July 28-30 — National Summer Conference, Louisville, KY

September 21-23 — NE NAHRO Fall Conference/Training , North Platte, NE

October 23-25 — National NAHRO Conference, St Louis, MO