



Housing Washington

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Congressman McDermott Seeks to Change Student Rule for Tax Credit Properties

By Joshua Okrent

Congressman Jim McDermott of Washington (D-7) has introduced legislation that would allow formerly homeless youths to pursue a four-year education and still qualify for a low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) apartment.

Currently, homeless youths cannot do both and must decide between pursuing an education or being homeless, according to Rep. McDermott who introduced HR 3076 along with Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN) Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) and Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH).

As he introduced the bill, Rep. McDermott said: "Education remains the best hope for homeless youth to escape poverty as adults. Today, our homeless youth must choose between being homeless or pursuing a full-time education. That is wrong, and this simple fix would have a significant impact in ensuring these youth can reach their educational goals."

"We applaud Rep. McDermott for his leadership as there are over 1,000 homeless young adults in King County that could put poverty and homelessness behind them if they could get an education like other people of college age," said Sharon Lee, LIHI Executive Director. LIHI recently opened Gossett Place to house 20 homeless young adults age 18-25 and has plans for 50 more units in Seattle's University District in partnership with Youth Care and Sound Mental Health.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, which was created under the Tax Reform Act of 1986, provides a reduction in tax liability for property owners who construct or rehabilitate low-income rental housing units. The LIHTC has been used successfully to build a number of properties intended to house

homeless youth. However, the LIHTC legislation as it is currently written does not allow tenants to be full-time students.

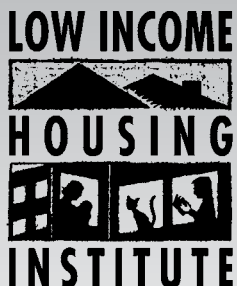
The original intent of this "Student Rule" was to prohibit LIHTC funds from

being utilized to construct dormitories, and to prevent college students, with temporarily low-incomes, from benefiting from resources meant for individuals and families with even more serious housing needs.

A number of individuals are currently exempt from the rule, including former foster youths, single parents, and parents receiving public assistance. The bill would add homeless students to this exemption, allowing these individuals to get an education while living in a LIHTC financed property. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates the bill will cost less than \$1 million over 10 years. Congress has made several attempts to reform this rule in the past. In January 2009, Senator Stabenow (D-MI) and Rep. Ellison introduced legislation to amend the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Several Senate offices advocated strongly for legislation to be incorporated into the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,



Congressman Jim McDermott has introduced legislation that would allow formerly homeless youths to pursue a four-year education and still qualify for a low-income housing tax credit apartment.



Gossett Place for Homeless Vets and Young Adults Opens in Seattle

By Josephine Kingman

On September 14, the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) celebrated the opening of its newest building, Gossett Place, located in Seattle's University District. Gossett Place is named in honor of King County Council Chair and human rights champion Larry Gossett. The opening celebration was attended by over 100 people. The speaking program featured King County Executive Dow Constantine, Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn, House Speaker Frank Chopp, United Way CEO Jon Fine, Bob Santos, Enterprise Vice President M.A. Leonard, LIHI Board President Melinda Nichols, and others.

Gossett Place provides 62 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans, young adults, individuals, and couples. "Gossett Place is a significant project for Seattle and King County," said Dow Constantine. "It ties directly to the goals of our 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness by creating housing for two groups of people who need our

from the levy.

During the opening celebration, Larry Gossett was joined by his family and friends as speakers paid tribute to his incredible career. "We didn't want to name our building after corporations," said LIHI Board President Melinda Nichols. "We wanted to name our buildings after real champions in the community who are not afraid to be outspoken, who fought for human rights and civil rights in Seattle... it is fitting that we name Gossett Place after our hero Larry Gossett." Named one of the most influential graduates of the University of Washington, Gossett has worked tirelessly for the rights of people of color and disenfranchised populations. He was a founder of the Black Student Union

at UW and for 14 years served as Executive Director of the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP).

Mayor McGinn said that future generations have a lot to learn from Gossett's legacy. "You stand up for what's right, you shine a light on injustice, you work to build a coalition, you work to be effective,

and you work for change." When it was Gossett's turn at the podium he expressed gratitude for the honor. "The building of Gossett Place and the special honor of having it named after me is something that will live in my



Gossett Place provides 62 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans, young adults, individuals, and couples

heart and mind forever, and I would like to thank everyone who was responsible for that."

The speaking program included an emotional speech by two of Gossett Place's new residents, Terry and Diane Shelton. They described being homeless for 18 years in the University District, sleeping in doorways and sweeping restaurants in exchange for food, and they praised the staff of Gossett Place for creating a kind and supportive environment. Terry gave the audience a huge smile, opened his arms wide, and said, "Welcome to our new home!"

LIHI has partnered with Sound Mental Health to provide on-site supportive services for residents, including job training and counseling. Residents will have access to a state-of-the-art computer lab and a large community room. Gossett Place is conveniently located close to mass transit lines, including the new Sound Transit light rail station. They will also benefit from the building's close proximity

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King County Council Chair and human rights champion Larry Gossett at the opening of Gossett Place in Seattle's University District

help: homeless young adults and homeless veterans." Constantine also thanked the voters of King County for renewing the Veterans and Human Services levy by a margin of almost 70%. Gossett Place received \$250,000 in operating funds

to shopping, employment opportunities, amenities, and parks. Residents will pay 30% of their income for rent.

This project was truly “shovel ready” as LIHI purchased the land with permits for \$2.5 million in 2009. The original owners were unable to complete financing for a boutique hotel due to the economic downturn, and LIHI was able to reuse the floor plans because the hotel units were designed with kitchens and bathrooms. Total development costs, including construction, were \$15 million. Gossett Place was financed with funds from the City of Seattle, King County, HUD, Washington State Housing Trust Fund, Washing State Housing Finance Commission, Seattle Housing

“WE WANTED TO NAME OUR BUILDINGS AFTER REAL CHAMPIONS IN THE COMMUNITY WHO ARE NOT AFRAID TO BE OUTSPOKEN, WHO FOUGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN SEATTLE... IT IS FITTING THAT WE NAME GOSSETT PLACE AFTER OUR HERO LARRY GOSSETT.” LIHI BOARD PRESIDENT MELINDA NICHOLS

Authority, and tax credit equity from Enterprise. MA Leonard, the Vice President of Enterprise, remarked, “LIHI and Enterprise share a strong interest in making sure vulnerable residents in our community have safe, healthy, and affordable housing. We are very pleased to have continued our long term partnership with our investment of \$9 million to create much needed housing at Gossett Place.”

Josephine Kingman is Executive Assistant at the Low Income Housing Institute. For more information please visit www.lihi.org.

King County Passes Veterans and Human Services Levy

By Joshua Okrent

In August 2011, the voters of King County voted overwhelmingly to renew the Veterans and Human Services Levy for another six years. The final tally showed a 69% voter approval rate. The new levy preserves the 50-50 split of proceeds between veterans, military personnel and their families, and other individuals and families in need. The new levy also preserves the two citizen oversight boards. The levy is expected to generate about \$100 million for programs to aid veterans and needy residents.

“The citizens of King County have demonstrated their respect for our veterans and compassion for our neighbors most in need by voting to renew the Veterans and Human Services Levy,” County Executive Dow Constantine, a levy supporter, said in a statement Aug. 16. “I thank the voters for approving the levy and showing, once again, that King County is an extraordinary community in which to live.”

The first Veterans and Human Services Levy was passed by the voters of King County in November 2005 and expired this year. The levy rate is 5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. King County voters approved the ballot measure with nearly 58 percent support.

The recently re-approved levy, Proposition 1, is similar to the existing levy. The owner of a home assessed at \$340,000 is expected to pay \$17 in 2012 under the levy renewal.

Countywide, the levy funds a variety of services and counseling programs for veterans, including programs to treat post-traumatic stress disorder — a common affliction among veterans returning from conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq — as well as permanent supportive housing for veterans.

“King County voters again demonstrated their support for providing critical services for our veterans and

others in need,” County Councilman Bob Ferguson, sponsor of Proposition 1 and the initial levy in 2005, said in a statement on Election Day. “The Veterans and Human Services Levy is a small investment with a huge impact. It provides essential services that help our veterans and strengthen our families, from employment training and housing to PTSD counseling.”

Newcastle-area County Councilman Reagan Dunn co-sponsored the legislation to put Proposition 1 on the August ballot.

“Ten years into the war on terror, we are seeing the demand for veterans services increase significantly. It is estimated that there will be 2 million veterans coming out of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who served in some capacity,” he said in a statement. “I thank the voters for valuing the sacrifice of our returning veterans.”

For more information on the King County Veterans and Human Services Levy please visit www.kingcounty.gov.

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Environmental Justice Strategy Aims to Address Inequities Among Low-Income, Minority and Tribal Groups

By Lynne Peeples

Thirty years after the Midnite Mine on the Spokane Indian Reservation in eastern Washington was closed, clean up of the 33 million tons of radioactive remains at the site will finally begin. The new agreement to deal with the waste, reached between the federal government and one of the world's largest mining companies, comes after decades of ongoing concern over the inactive uranium mine's threats to tribal and environmental health.

The decision also reflects a growing recognition of the widespread and persistent disparities in the burden of toxic exposures.

In mid-October, at the inaugural SXSW Eco conference in Austin, Texas, Dr. J. Nadine Gracia, chief medical officer for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), announced the release of the 2012 HHS Draft Environmental Justice Strategy. According to Gracia, "The strategy recognizes that Indian tribes are a target population with unique issues that we need to work with." The plan also addresses environmental health inequities among low-income and minority populations, and highlights everything from air pollution and unhealthy housing, to hazardous work conditions, environmental disasters and lack of access to nutritious foods or recreational opportunities. Members of the public can submit comments on the draft until December 3. A final version will be released in February 2012.

"Sometimes when we speak of the environment, there's little mention of health," said Gracia. "The issue of environmental justice provides one of the clearest examples of the relationship between the environment and health." Bob Perciasepe, deputy administrator for the EPA, also emphasized the importance of this link and the need



Deb Abrahamson at the Midnite Mine on the Spokane Reservation. "How the cleanup will occur is important or we're going to have another generation facing occupational exposure to toxins." Photo by Sulutumoses.

to protect all Americans from environmental health risks, especially those who are least able to help themselves.

This is not the first time the federal government has recognized the environmental hazards disadvantaged communities face. The environmental justice movement began in earnest after reports in the 1980s found that hazardous waste facilities were more likely to be located in low-income and minority communities, prompting an executive order by President Clinton in 1994. The first environmental justice strategy was devised a year later.

The reinvigorated 2012 version of the strategic plan aims to further ensure that environmental justice factors into the federal decision-making process. Gracia noted the new strategy's enhanced focus on assisting states and tribes in identifying vulnerable populations, as well as improving weather surveillance and other public health preparations to help communities better respond to disasters. The plan now also formally addresses the effects of climate change — from sea level rise and extreme weather

events to exacerbated air pollution.

Further, the new plan encourages the meaningful involvement of those affected. "One of the big changes is recognizing that environmental justice really is not just about protecting communities from these hazards, but is actually about building healthy communities and giving them capacity to do so," Gracia said.

Green building is a powerful place to start addressing environmental injustice while opening up new opportunities for employment. Dana Bourland, vice president of Green Initiatives at Enterprise Community Partners, agreed that living in an energy inefficient house can be a "huge liability," likely resulting in energy costs four times as high as those residents of modern homes rack up.

"No more than two percent in total development costs is needed to achieve our energy and water standards," said Bourland. This comes out to about \$1,900, while the payback is far greater: about \$4,800 in energy and water savings, not to mention the health benefits, she said.

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Wages in High Growth Occupations Lag Behind Housing Costs

However, providing housing alone is not enough, Bourland said. “As a country, we spend about \$17 billion a year on gas just to sit in congestion.” She noted that low-income households are often disproportionately affected as about 70 percent of their income is spent on housing and transportation. “At the end of the day, they may have roughly 800 dollars a month left for other things,” added Bourland.

Given the built environment’s powerful influence on a person’s day-to-day choices, she suggested the importance of locating housing in areas that are walkable and in close proximity to grocery stores and parks. Across the country, an estimated \$226 billion could be saved if communities were better designed to limit costly congestion and energy waste, as well as to cut the high medical costs associated with asthma, obesity and other health consequences, Bourland said.

Still, the more immediate concern for many victims is simply how to get out of their current situation and into a wealthier and healthier one. With unemployment at 55 percent for tribal members living on the Spokane Indian Reservation, according to the Seattle Times, people are eager for jobs cleaning up the radioactive and toxic chemicals that have leaked for decades into the reservation’s streams, soil, plants and animals — a \$193 million project that is expected to take a decade.

“How the cleanup will occur is important,” said Deb Abrahamson, founder of the SHAWL Society and tribal activist, suggesting that tribal workers should know the risks and how to protect themselves, or “we’re going to have another generation facing occupational exposure to toxins.”

Edited from an article in the Huffington Post. Used by permission. For information on the new Environmental Justice Strategy visit www.bhs.gov/environmentaljustice. For more on the Midnite Mine Superfund site visit Yosemite.epa.org.

The five most frequently available jobs in the first quarter of 2011 are generally not paying sufficient wages to cover the cost of housing. The five high-growth occupations included in *Paycheck to Paycheck*, an interactive online database and report produced by the Center for Housing Policy, are: accounting, grounds maintenance, janitorial work, office work and security.

An evaluation of fair market rents revealed that rents, on the whole, have remained stable. Most rent increases have been modest (1.1%) over the past year. Yet renters face more narrow housing choices in the market as incomes continue to stagnate. Income growth among renters remains insufficient to cover rental costs in many parts of the country.

Janitors face the highest level of difficulty when purchasing or renting homes across most housing markets. A two-bedroom rental remains unaffordable to a janitor in all of the metropolitan areas, and the rent for a typical one-bedroom unit is only affordable in approximately a quarter of the 209 metropolitan area markets studied.

Between 2010 and 2011, purchasing a home became more affordable due to lower mortgage interest rates and falling median home prices across most metropolitan areas. The income needed to purchase a median-priced home decreased by at least 3% in nearly two-thirds (58%) of all metro areas. In a smaller subset of metro areas (16%), the income needed to purchase a median-priced home increased by 3% or more. According to the study, janitors can only afford to purchase a home in 5% of the 209 markets. Buying a home still remains difficult for many low to moderate income

earners due to tighter credit and down payment requirements.

Only one of the occupations in the report, accounting, offers workers compensation adequate to rent or purchase market-priced housing units in most metropolitan areas. Earning on average between \$44,000 and \$63,000 a year, accountants are able to afford two bedroom rents in 196 metro areas, and

INCOME GROWTH AMONG RENTERS
REMAINS INSUFFICIENT TO COVER
RENTAL COSTS IN MANY PARTS OF
THE COUNTRY.

median priced homes are affordable in 149 metro areas. Yet, homeownership remains unaffordable for accountants in sixty metro areas including parts of the East Coast and in California.

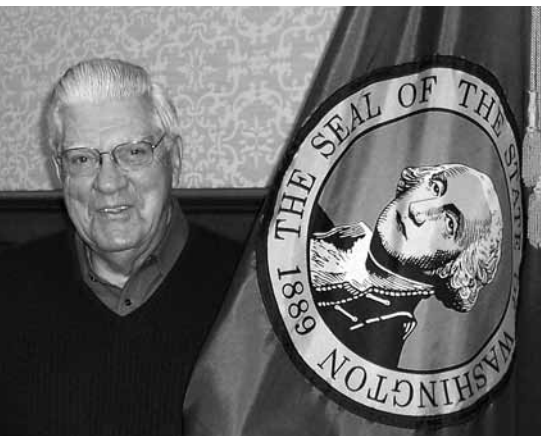
Paycheck to Paycheck uses wage data from February 2011 and data on sector hiring frequency from the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey covering the first quarter of 2011. Housing price data, from the first quarter of 2010 and 2011, are drawn from the National Association of Home Builders and assume conventional mortgage underwriting practices. Rent data reflect HUD’s estimated 2011 Fair Market Rents. The income needed to afford rents was calculated under the assumption that affordable rents do not exceed 30% of household income.

The report and an interactive tool to examine the mismatch between wages in 72 occupations and housing costs across the country are available on the National Housing Conference’s webpage at www.nhc.org.

HOUSING BRIEFS

Passing of Senator Frank Warnke

Former State Senator Frank Warnke passed away on Sept. 23 at age 78. Senator Warnke was a “Housing Hero” and was crucial in getting the State Housing Trust Fund established in the legislature. Warnke, a Native American, was first elected to the Washington



Former State Senator Frank Warnke was a “Housing Hero” who was crucial in getting the Washington State Housing Trust Fund established.

State House of Representatives in 1964 and represented two different South King County districts in the Washington State House and Senate for 20 years. During his tenure in the state Senate he was Chairman of the Labor and Commerce Committee and was later Democratic Caucus Chairman. He listened and learned about the housing crisis facing low-income families and along with former Rep. Gary Locke and former Senator George Fleming he sponsored many bills to set up and fund the Housing Trust Fund. He embraced the opportunity to fight for people in need of housing. We are sorry that he is gone. Donations can be made to the Frank J. Warnke Memorial Fund, which will be used to fund scholarships and internships.

Affordable Rental Housing A.C.T.I.O.N. Campaign

The Affordable Rental Housing A.C.T.I.O.N. (A Call To Invest in Our Neighborhoods) campaign has revised its legislative proposals for the 112th Congress. Over 130 national, state, and local organizations have signed on to the new National Consensus Letter stating the campaigns goals: protecting and preserving the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and enacting proposals to extend the 9% fixed floor rate and apply the same principle to 4% acquisition credits.

You can find and sign the new National Consensus Letter at www.rentalhousingaction.org.

Tacoma Housing Authority Receives \$1.9 Million HUD Award

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded \$1,881,652 to the Tacoma Housing Authority to construct an early childhood education and adult training facilities for public housing residents in the Hilltop neighborhood of the Tacoma. The Tacoma Housing Authority will use its grant to construct an 8,500 square-foot, two-story building on housing authority

THE TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL USE A GRANT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO CONSTRUCT AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ADULT TRAINING CENTER FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS IN THE HILLTOP NEIGHBORHOOD.

property at the corner of 27th and Yakima near the Hillside Terrace public housing complex in the city’s Hilltop neighborhood. When completed, the facility will provide early childhood education, adult education and job training. Partners identified include Bates

Technical College, Tacoma Goodwill and Tacoma Public Schools.

“What better time than now to invest in helping Americans win the future,” said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. “This funding fills the gap for public housing agencies that want to provide these services but lacked the resources. This is an investment to make certain we connect affordable housing with quality education and employment resources.”

VA Launches Initiative to Serve Veteran Families at Risk of Homelessness

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has announced the award of nearly \$60 million in homeless prevention grants that will serve approximately 22,000 homeless and at-risk veteran families as part of the new Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. This initial \$60 million award will serve veteran families at 85 non-profit community agencies in 40 states and the District of Columbia under VA’s new homeless prevention initiative.

The SSVF Program, a critical element of VA’s plan to prevent and end homelessness among veterans, will promote housing stability among homeless and at-risk veterans and their families. Under the SSVF program, VA awards grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that can provide a range of supportive services to eligible very low-income veteran families. Supportive services include outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits, and assistance in obtaining and coordinating other public benefits. Grantees will also have the ability to make time-limited temporary financial assistance payments on behalf of veterans for purposes such as rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs.

More information about VA’s homeless programs is available online at www.va.gov/homeless.

City Eases Tent City Regulations



On October 7, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to allow religious organizations to host tent cities for the homeless without requiring a city permit. Photo by La Chance, courtesy of Creative Commons

By Joshua Okrent

On October 7, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to allow religious organizations to host tent cities for the homeless without requiring a city permit. The City Council approved an ordinance that makes encampments a legal accessory use to a religious facility. That means churches, mosques, temples and other faith-based organizations can provide temporary shelter on their property, subject to basic health and safety rules and a limit of 100 people per encampment.

Under the new ordinance, religious organizations don't have to notify neighbors and there is no limit on how long an encampment may stay in one place.

In addition, the new law states that:

- There would be no specified limit on the overall number of such encampments in the city at any given time
- There would be no restriction on length of time an encampment would be allowed to stay at a specific location
- There would be no required notification to the neighborhood
- There would be no required buffers
- There would be no requirement to provide parking for the encampment, and no requirement for replacing parking if the encampment is located on a parking area of a religious facility
- In addition, an encampment would be allowed to apply for a temporary

use permit, for up to six months, on any site in the city.

Councilmember Nick Licata, who sponsored the legislation, said that with the city's homeless shelters filled to capacity, tent encampments represent "one solution."

The new law also responds to court rulings and a 2010 state law that says cities can't impose undue burdens on religious organizations that want to serve homeless people as part of their mission.

But some homeless advocates and residents of Tent City 3 opposed the legislation because the easier rules apply only to churches, not secular groups and private landowners, which have to apply for a temporary-use permit to host an encampment.

Under a 2002 court-ordered agreement between the city and SHARE/WHEEL, a nonprofit that organizes Tent City 3, nonprofits and private landowners that host Tent City 3 currently do not have to obtain a permit but must notify the city, said Bob Scales, government-affairs section director for the Seattle city attorney. That agreement expires in March.

Currently there are two tent encampments based in Seattle: Tent City 3 and Nickelsville.

You can find detailed explanations of the laws regarding tent cities in municipalities around Washington at www.mrsc.org.

Fair Housing Test Finds Bias in Seattle Rental Housing

By Joshua Okrent

In a recent report, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) found indications of bias in more than half of the rentals tested. Tests conducted at 48 randomly selected rentals in Seattle showed evidence of discrimination more than half of the time, with leasing agents quoting a higher rent to African Americans and refusing to accommodate service animals for people with disabilities.

In all, SOCR conducted 57 tests, including nine retests of certain properties. Tests at 26 properties focused on race, using white and African-American testers. Tests at 22 other properties focused on access for people who use a wheelchair or service animal. Overall, 54 percent of the tests showed problems. Evidence of race-based discrimination was found in 69 percent of the tests.

For tests on racial bias, testers selected a random sample of rentals from across the city and sent white and black applicants to each one. The "applicants" wore similar clothes, and the information they put on the application was designed to make them essentially the same. The researchers found that managers quoted a higher rent to African Americans, didn't tell them about move-in specials, and used stricter screening criteria than they did for white applicants, including credit or criminal background checks.

In the case of people with disabilities, inconsistencies that create barriers were found 36 percent of the time — including instances of not accommodating service animals, not telling testers about available units, or not providing parking designated for people with disabilities.

Seattle Municipal Code authorizes the Office for Civil Rights to enforce the City's fair housing laws. Julie Nelson, director of SOCR, filed charges in six cases — three for allegations of race discrimination and three for allegations of discriminating against people with disabilities.

For more information visit www.seattle.gov/civilrights.

Washington State Leads the Nation in Green Building Innovation

By Joshua Okrent

Washington state has become the proving ground for Net-zero energy buildings — buildings with zero net energy consumption and zero carbon emissions annually.

In Seattle, the Bullitt Foundation's future headquarters broke ground in late August. The developers of the Bullitt Center are hoping to shake up commercial building practices with a six-story structure that produces as much energy as it uses. Many of the innovations and the source lists for this "living building" will be shared with other projects, and the mechanical equipment in its lower levels will be visible to the public.

The Bullitt Center will provide all its own water and process all its own sewage. Timbers for the six-story building's frame will come only from forests certified as sustainable by the world's toughest review body. To reduce the project's carbon footprint, the steel, concrete, wood and other heavy materials all will come from within 300 miles. Common building materials that contain PVC plastics, mercury, cadmium and about 360 other substances considered hazardous won't be used.

"We set out to build the greenest office building — by far — in the world," says Denis Hayes, president and CEO of Seattle's environment-oriented Bullitt Foundation, the center's owner.

In Issaquah, a project called zHome recently opened as the Country's first net-zero-energy neighborhood. zHome is a newly completed cluster of 10 town homes arranged around a central courtyard atop the Issaquah Highlands. Beyond its energy self-sufficiency through solar power, said Brad Liljequist, the project manager with the city of Issaquah,

the development should cut water use by 70 percent, yielding an estimated annual utility savings of \$3,500 to \$4,000 per homeowner when solar power incentives are included.

The project persevered through several bankruptcies in large part through its many public and private partnerships and direct financing

remarkable energy efficiency, zHomes have a rainwater catchment system that reclaims water for use in toilet flushing and clothes washing. There are also high-efficiency toilets, clothes washers, dishwashers, showerheads, and bathroom faucet aerators. Builders used Forest Stewardship Council-certified lumber to construct almost



The Bullitt Foundation's future headquarters has ambitions of becoming the greenest office building in the world. Rendering courtesy of the Bullitt Foundation.

by the Japanese builder Ichijo. "No one has taken this risk before in the region," said Patti Southard, a manager at the King County GreenTools program. The team's endurance, though, might help inspire other residential builders and public officials. Ms. Southard noted that the entire green building community had rallied around the project.

zHomes have on-site solar energy, super-insulated walls, double-paned windows, a ground-source heat pump, hydronic heating, high-efficiency lighting and appliances, and an energy feedback monitor. In addition to

all of the framing in zHome, and 9 percent of the wood was salvaged from other projects. zHome earned a national honor from the Forest Stewardship as the greenest residential project in the United States.

Together, zHome and the Bullitt Center reflect a few other notable trends in green building. First, technology and know-how are spreading so rapidly that they are no longer the primary barriers to high-impact projects. Virtually all of the Issaquah development's technology has been used before, though few other projects have concentrated so many features

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under a single roof.

A partnership between Architecture 2030, based in Santa Fe, N.M., and the American Institute of Architects in Seattle has yielded a wildly popular instructional course on energy reduction in the building industry. The AIA Series teaches architects, engineers and other professionals how to construct

now possible. "And then that turns more people into thinking, 'What else can be done?'"

For many developers, at least, the will is already there. In a recent study, Professor Mason found a surprising level of environmental altruism within the region's construction industry. "What we're finding is that at least the

for cars. Despite being within walking distance of a transit hub, zHome's location in a suburban community does not permit it the same luxury. Its garages, though, will be pushed to the edge of the site along a permeable driveway, and only subcompacts will fit in a small visitors' lot equipped with electric charging stations.

Finally, there's the matter of price. In the Issaquah Highlands master development, other three-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom town homes built within the last five years go for about half the \$625,000 list price of a comparable zHome unit. Then again, having ownership in a pioneering community has a certain cachet, as the Bullitt Center has demonstrated by using its ultra-green credentials to help line up potential tenants.

Other cities are keen to get in on the action, and

some building industry leaders are already turning their attention south, to Portland's Oregon Sustainability Center. Assuming that financing falls into place for the roughly \$60 million project (still not a sure thing), the eight-story, 130,000 sq. ft. building could raise the bar yet again when it breaks ground sometime late next year.

Some information for this article came from the Green Blog of the New York Times. More information about the Bullitt Center can be found at bullittcenter.org. For more information on zHomes, visit z-home.org.



In the Issaquah Highlands, zHome recently opened as the Country's first net-zero-energy neighborhood.

buildings that use 60 percent less energy than current standards. Introduced in 2009 in Seattle and taught by some of the same experts who have led the Bullitt Center project, the 10-session course has since expanded to nine other locations throughout the United States, with four more on the way.

Susan Mason, an associate professor of political science at Boise State University in Idaho and an expert in green building trends in the Pacific Northwest, said that she sees both zHome and the Bullitt Center as invaluable opportunities to educate the public and industry on what is

first entrepreneurs in this are doing it because they think it's the right thing and then they are finding out that it is profitable," she said.

Profitability, of course, requires buy-in from potential tenants or residents who will be called upon to help structures live up to their net-zero-energy billing. Developers of residential properties must maintain a particularly difficult balance between conceding to potential homeowners' demands and staying true to their environmental vision.

The Bullitt Center, for instance, will include a garage for bikes but not

Numbers of Homeless Students Rising – A Call to Action

By Judy Lightfoot

A 30 percent increase in the number of homeless students in Washington is affecting all of our public schools. In addition, a new county-by-county analysis shows that the steepest rise is placing a disproportionate burden on rural classrooms.

As Washington state students get back to their studies, many of the young people and their teachers face a disturbing reality created by forces outside the school doors. The numbers of students who are homeless has risen significantly in recent years.

The rate of student homelessness in Washington rose by 29.7 percent between the 2006-07 and 2009-10 academic years, according to the most recent available data published last December by the Office of Public Instruction (OSPI). In 2006-07, the state's school districts had identified 16,853 students as homeless; three years later, the number had risen to 21,826.

The increase is not surprising in light of a recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau: childhood poverty across America has risen from 20.7 percent in 2009 to 22.0 percent in 2010. By the end of 2010, according to the agency's report, 15.1 percent of the U.S. population, or almost one in six Americans, lived below the poverty line.

If the percentages of Washington's homeless students were the same in every school, or if percentages were highest in the wealthiest districts and lowest in the poorest ones, new demands on district programs and school resources might be more evenly met across the state.

However, an analysis of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) data released in September by Columbia Legal Services, *Student Homelessness Across Washington State*, shows how unevenly the new numbers

were distributed across Washington's 39 counties. The percentage of homeless children within public school student populations has risen highest in rural counties, with the result that the demands on teachers and services are disproportionately higher in locations where the raw numbers of homeless students are lower.

For example, the total number of 3,620 homeless students identified in King County is 1.4 percent of the county's entire population of students. Mapped onto daily classroom life, the statistics mean that a teacher with a class of 35 students in King County, which would be considered fairly large, stands a 50-50 chance of having one pupil in that class saddled with the kinds of problems typically caused by homelessness — absenteeism, chronic health issues, anxiety, friendlessness, lack of a place to play or do their homework, etc.

But in Asotin County, in the southeast corner of Washington, a far smaller number of homeless students — 293 — is 8.79 percent of the total student population. The teacher of a fairly typical class of 25 pupils is likely to have an average of two who are often absent, ill, anxious, socially isolated, unable to concentrate, or behind in their work, just because they have no home. Even though the state disburses federal money aimed at helping homeless students to districts needing it most, in too many schools the need far outstrips resources.

Erin Shea McCann, an attorney at Columbia Legal, said that analyzing the totals of homeless students in Washington's 295 districts on a county-by-county basis is an attempt "to make this not just the school district's problem." Colleague Casey Trupin said, "This is a county issue. If you create affordable housing where there is student homelessness, the burden on



The rate of student homelessness in Washington rose by 29.7 percent between the 2006-07 and 2009-10 academic years. Photo by Vet Life 2005, courtesy of Creative Commons

the school district is lightened."

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty has shown that affordable housing costs less than some of the services that school districts are required by law to provide homeless children in order to give them some of the stability that research has shown reduces the damage on their lives. For example, housing homeless families with school-age children is cheaper than fulfilling the legal requirement of busing the children daily to their original schools in cases where they have been forced to move from their home neighborhoods.

What are the long-term consequences of homelessness among America's children? An easily measured result is that too many fail to graduate from high school. This failure, added to the increased likelihood that these children will engage in risky behaviors and will develop health problems persisting into adulthood, including psychological difficulties, affects not only their lives but also the well-being of society.

Researchers at Columbia University have calculated the social costs of denying children an excellent education. High school graduates typically earn about \$200,000 more in a lifetime than do individuals who drop out, according to a research summary in *America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness: Washington State*, based on data compiled by the U.S.

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Harnessing the Power of Advocacy

Department of Education for 2006-07.

The impact of lower incomes earned by those who fail to graduate is a public issue, says the report, because it means lower tax contributions. After subtracting the likely costs of raising graduation rates from the increased taxes paid back to society by high school graduates (many of whom go on to college and earn far higher lifetime incomes than fellow graduates who do not), the net lifetime gain in contributions to society would be about \$127,000 per student.

Such a calculus has dire implications for Washington state, which has a graduation rate of less than 25 percent among homeless high school students, says the report. If the rate persists, the 4,367 of these students counted by OSPI in 2006-07 “will lose \$700 million in lifetime earnings, and society will lose \$416 million in potential contributions from them.” In addition, “Other studies have shown that they will have shorter and less healthy lives, and are very likely to pass on to their own children the diminished opportunities of poverty.”

Mere self-interest, then, should tell us to work hard on helping every citizen grow up educated and healthy so that each will become a benefit to society instead of a burden on it. And for those of us who take seriously the ideal of basic fairness — that our public schools should be level playing fields where students can compete on the basis of their abilities, not of their family’s fortunes or misfortunes — it should feel tragic that increasing numbers of kids are showing up for the competition with lead weights tied around their ankles.

Judy Lightfoot, formerly a teacher and the Founding Head of Eastside Prep in Kirkland, is a Seattle writer and volunteer. She can be reached at judy.lightfoot@crosscut.com. For additional statistics and data on youth homelessness in Washington, please visit www.schoolhousewa.org.

By Rachael Myers

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless merged on October 1st, becoming one organization. The merged organization, operating as the Housing Alliance, will advocate for the continuum of homeless and low-income housing needs across the state.

Members of both organizations believe that this move will lead to a stronger state-wide advocacy organization, harnessing the power of a more unified movement. The Housing Alliance will continue to advocate for a range of housing needs, from ending homelessness to expanded homeownership opportunities for low-income households, but will do it more efficiently, with a stronger, collective voice.

According to Troy Christensen, President of Board of the Coalition for the Homeless, “The work of the two organizations is already closely tied and we believe we will be even stronger when we come together formally. We’re excited about joining the two organizations. We expect the merger to make us more effective advocates for ending homelessness and providing an affordable home for everyone in Washington.”

Initially, the Coalition for the Homeless will continue to operate as a program of the Housing Alliance, in order to ensure that members of the Coalition remain involved. “The Coalition has been working to end homelessness since 1984. Providers and advocates across the state feel a strong connection to the organization and we don’t want to lose that with the merge,” said Linda Hugo, Housing Alliance Board President.

Advocates know well that housing and homelessness are interconnected, and the Housing Alliance and Coalition for the Homeless have worked closely together for many years. Every year, the two organizations host a joint advocacy day at the state capitol and their legislative agendas have significant

overlap. They worked together last year to try to pass House Bill 2048, to increase document recording fee funds for preventing and ending homelessness and to remove the sunset on a portion of those funds. That is expected to be a priority again this year, along with increasing funding for the state Housing Trust Fund, which provides housing for people leaving homelessness, low-income first-time homebuyers, farmworkers, and many others who can’t afford market rate housing.

By merging, the Alliance and the Coalition hope to:

- Have greater impact on policy decisions related to low-income housing and homelessness;
- Engage a broader base of grassroots and other supporters;
- Create efficiencies that will free up resources for advocacy; and
- Expand funding opportunities.

The Housing Alliance’s vision is that all Washington residents have the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities. This encompasses ending homelessness.

Rachael Myers is the executive director of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. For more information about the merger or upcoming events, please contact the Housing Alliance at 206-442-9455.

“THE WORK OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS IS ALREADY CLOSELY TIED AND WE BELIEVE WE WILL BE EVEN STRONGER WHEN WE COME TOGETHER FORMALLY... WE EXPECT THE MERGER TO MAKE US MORE EFFECTIVE ADVOCATES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS AND PROVIDING AN AFFORDABLE HOME FOR EVERYONE IN WASHINGTON.”
TROY CHRISTENSEN, PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF THE WASHINGTON STATE COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Seattle City Councilmember Organizes Urban Development Research Trip to Portland

By Josephine Kingman

On July 22, Seattle City Councilmember Sally Clark boarded an early morning Amtrak bound for Portland, Oregon. She was accompanied by an enthusiastic crowd armed with cameras, notepads, and pens. The diverse group included representatives from the City of Seattle, Seattle Planning Commission, Seattle Housing Authority, and the Low Income Housing Institute. Councilmember Clark and her crew were headed to Portland to meet with the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the City of Portland's urban renewal agency. Inspired by a March trip by councilmembers to look at Portland's transit system, Clark decided to organize the trip because she felt that Portland offered some great examples of urban and neighborhood planning and successful public-private developments. The information gathered could prove to be helpful as the Seattle City Council moves forward in reviewing land use and the future development of Yesler Terrace and South Lake Union.

The day began in Portland's River District. This district was formerly a light industrial area and home to the Union Station rail yards. In 1998, the City of Portland designated the district as an Urban Renewal Area (URA). That same year the City entered into a development agreement with Hoyt Street Properties. Under this agreement, the City would provide infrastructure to support development and Hoyt Street Properties would develop housing and amenities. The agreement outlined minimum density requirements, design guidelines, goals for parks and open spaces, mixed-use specifications, and affordable housing requirements.

The River District has been extremely successful in developing affordable housing. "From day one when it was formed as a URA, it was



Seattle City Councilmember Sally Clark with a diverse group of Seattle representatives toured Portland's neighborhoods, including the River District.

clear that the district needed to represent the community as a whole," said Steven Shain, Central City Manager with the PDC. According to the 1998 agreement, 35% of new units must be affordable to households earning less than 80% of Portland's median family income (MFI), and 15% of those units must be affordable at 50% of MFI and below. Affordable housing in the River District has been financed in part by Tax Increment Financing (TIF). According to a 2006 decision by the Portland City Council, 30% of TIF funds in URAs must be set aside for affordable housing. Lew Bowers of the PDC cited these TIF funds as an essential component to urban development in Portland. "The plans (that the PDC) comes up with

have some traction because there is the money to implement them."

As of 2011, the River District has approximately 1,250 units of housing available at 80% of MFI and below, with sixty-year affordability. Developers have been extremely successful in creating affordable housing that melds with the design and character of the River District as a whole. Mr. Shain likes to ask visitors if they can guess which buildings are the low-income housing projects. As Councilmember Clark remembers, "there was no obvious choice, and that was very encouraging. It was also great to see low-income housing located across the street from a beloved local park with easy access

to transit and other services." The two most recent projects to open in the River District are Bud Clark Commons and the Ramona Apartments. Bud Clark Commons combines a resource center for homeless people, a 90-bed emergency shelter, and 130 units of studio housing affordable at 40% of MFI and below. The Ramona Apartments target low-income families with 138 units that are affordable at 60% of MFI and below. Both buildings are LEED certified with extensive green-building features.

The group toured the Pearl District and then jumped on the Portland Streetcar and headed to the South Waterfront District. Whereas the Pearl has been an obvious success for

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Portland, the South Waterfront has proved to be more challenging. The area has a history of heavy industry and large parcels of vacant land. South Waterfront is part of the North Macadam URA, designated by the City in 1999. In 2003, a development agreement was signed between the City, North Macadam Investors, and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). This agreement established plans to develop 31 acres within the North Macadam URA, including 1.5 million square feet of OHSU research, clinical and educational space.

As of 2011, eight buildings have been completed in South Waterfront: the OHSU Center for Health and Healing and seven residential towers. The Seattle group toured one of the residential buildings, the Mirabella, which is a market-rate senior living community. Transit infrastructure has improved with the extension of the Portland Streetcar and the construction of an aerial tram that connects South Waterfront with OHSU's campus at the top of Marquam Hill. According to Geraldene Moyer, Senior Project Manager with the PDC, the next priority is to develop job opportunities in the district. "The next step for South Waterfront is definitely a focus on employment," she said.

Construction is currently underway on South Waterfront's first affordable housing development, Block 49. The project is being developed by REACH, a Portland-based affordable housing non-profit. The building will have 209 units that are affordable at or below 60% of MFI, with 42 units targeting formerly homeless veterans. In addition, there will be 17,000 square feet of retail/business space. Financing for the project is coming from bonds, tax credit equity, and TIF set-aside funds. The building exceeds Portland's green affordable housing guidelines and is being built to LEED

Silver standards.

The visit wrapped up back in the River District where the PDC hosted a roundtable discussion between Portland officials and developers. "We had such great speakers, the people who have planned and shaped new buildings, streets and transit," Councilmember Clark said. "They were very generous with information and explaining what's gone well and not so well." One of the aspects of development that has gone well in Portland is sustainable design and building. Lew Bowers credits the Portland community for this. "You want to do what your citizens want. Real estate is an expression of community values." Looking ahead, the PDC expects an evolution towards more in-depth planning, which could be positive for affordable housing development. "Now we're much more concerned with who's in the building rather than just building the building, or who gets the job rather than just creating the job," Mr. Bowers said.

At the end of the day, Councilmember Clark felt that the trip was a success. "I'm glad we did it," she reflected. "Nothing gives you the feeling of a place like actually being there." When asked if she would plan future trips to Portland, Clark said "I really like the idea of quick study tours. The City (of Seattle) didn't pay for anyone to come along to Portland, we just set the itinerary and arranged to have a great tour with great speakers." She had expected a couple dozen people to sign up for the trip, but the final count was over fifty. The train ride home was lively as Seattle residents, architects, developers and housing advocates discussed what they had learned in Portland and what they envisioned for Seattle's future.

For more information on urban development in Portland, visit the PDC's website at www.pdc.us

including Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Patty Murray (D-WA), who filed an amendment to the stimulus package. However, the amendment was not cleared for floor action.

House Congressional offices investigated the possibility of an administrative change that might accomplish the same purpose. In early February of that year, a meeting was held that included staff for the Joint Tax Committee and the Tax Counsel for the Ways and Means Committee. After speaking with tax attorney experts at the meeting, staff concluded that a legislative change was in fact necessary.

For more information on HR 3076, please visit Representative McDermott's website at mcdermott.house.gov.

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Seattle Housing Authority Receives HUD Choice Neighborhoods Grant to Begin Transformation of Yesler Terrace

By Joshua Okrent

On the last day of August, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn, Seattle Housing Authority Executive Director Tom Tierney and HUD Northwest Regional Administrator Mary McBride announced that the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) won a \$10.27 million HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant to begin a 15-year, \$2 billion transformation of Yesler Terrace, a public housing site adjacent to the City's central business district.

Seattle is one of just five cities nationwide to win the first-ever HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants under HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, a new strategic approach intended to help transform high-poverty, distressed neighborhoods into communities with



A concept drawing for the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. Rendering courtesy of the Seattle Housing Authority.

other cities to win Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants.

Seattle as well as the other four grantees have completed comprehensive local planning processes, and are now implementing plans to redevelop their neighborhoods. They had to demonstrate their ability to revitalize severely distressed public and/or assisted housing while bringing together the partnerships and resources to create high-quality public schools, outstanding education and early learning programs, public assets, public transportation, and improved access to jobs and well-functioning services.

Although the HUD award is less than half of the original \$27 million the SHA requested, it will help start the redevelopment project in the Yesler Terrace area east of Boren Avenue. The public housing at Yesler Terrace is now nearly 70 years old, and many of the 561 housing units, as well as key infrastructure systems, are badly outdated and in need of maintenance. In addition to replacing the low-income units currently in place, the project aims to add 1,240 additional units, all built to be more

environmentally friendly. Yesler Terrace's public housing units were the first in the United States to be racially integrated. After years of smaller-scale renovations, this is to be the largest revitalization in the area to date.

"This is a great day for Seattle and the countless families who will benefit from the transformation this funding will bring to Yesler Terrace," said Secretary Donovan. "Choice Neighborhoods recognizes that we must link affordable housing with quality schools, public transportation, good jobs and safe streets. This is the next generation of neighborhood revitalization that not only transforms distressed housing, but heals entire communities."

"I am so glad that the Seattle Housing Authority has been awarded this grant to invest in our community and revitalize Yesler Terrace for local families," said Senator Murray. "This project will bring together partners like the housing authority, local schools, and the workforce development council — and it is a great example of how much we can accomplish

"THE YESLER TERRACE PROJECT WILL BRING TOGETHER PARTNERS LIKE THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, LOCAL SCHOOLS, AND THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL — AND IT IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW MUCH WE CAN ACCOMPLISH WHEN WE LEVERAGE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES AND WORK TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES."
SENATOR PATTY MURRAY

healthy, affordable housing, safe streets, and access to quality educational opportunities. Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and San Francisco are the

continued on next page

2011 Friend of Housing Awards

when we leverage public and private resources and work together to support our communities.”

“Today we took an important step towards fulfilling the promise of Yesler Terrace,” said Mayor McGinn. “It’s a promise to deliver more affordable housing, safer streets, quality education and access to reliable transit to a community that deserves it.”

In consultation with local residents, businesses and community organizations, SHA has developed a 15-year plan to transform the Yesler Terrace neighborhood with nearly \$2 billion in public and private investments. The plan calls for the replacement of Yesler Terrace’s 561 public housing units, the addition of many mixed-income housing units, expanded retail, education and health care facilities as well as improved parks, urban agriculture, transportation infrastructures and other community resources. Key partners in the transformation plan include the City of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, Neighborcare Health, Neighborhood House, Workforce Development Council, Seattle Department of Transportation, Perry Rose Development, United Way and others.

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is a centerpiece of the Obama Administration’s interagency Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative — a collaboration between HUD, Education, Justice, Treasury, and Health and Human Services (HHS) to support the ability of local leaders from the public and private sectors and attract the private investment needed to transform distressed neighborhoods into sustainable, mixed-income neighborhoods with affordable housing, safe streets and good schools.

More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov. Learn more about the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace at www.seattlehousing.org.

On September 28, at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane, the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC) presented one lifetime achievement award and seven *Friend of Housing* awards to exceptional individuals at a ceremony attended by more than 300 people. The event took place during the annual *Housing Washington* conference.

Washington’s tradition of excellence in affordable housing is exemplified through the efforts of individuals and



Ray Rieckers of Spokane receives the 2011 Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award from Karen Miller of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. Photo courtesy of WSHFC.

organizations around the state that are committed to improving access to affordable housing and enhancing the quality of life for its low- and moderate-income residents.

“This year’s nominees represent a broad spectrum of distinguished individuals who have worked at achieving impact in their communities with imagination, leadership, and service,” said WSHFC Executive Director Kim Herman. “Even though, in this economy, livelihoods are threatened and funding for housing and social services are reduced, there is a strong

resolve to succeed in our work and our honorees are remarkable in what they have each accomplished.”

Ray Rieckers of Spokane was awarded the 2011 Margaret M. Sevy Lifetime Achievement Award. Rieckers, an Adjunct Professor of Social Work and Human Services at Eastern Washington University and the retired Director of Housing Opportunities for Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners, was recognized for his 28 years of experience in the delivery of social services and the development of housing in Washington state.

The 2011 Friend of Housing Awards were awarded to John M. Campbell of Orcas Island, the founder of Homes For Islanders; Arlene L. Patton of Spokane, a retired HUD Field Office Director for both the Spokane/Eastern Washington and the Boise, Idaho HUD offices; Ray Mooney of Deer Park, a retired executive of Sterling Savings Bank; Marc Cote of Seattle, the Program Director of Washington Homeownership Center and of Parkview Services, both based in Shoreline; Mark Flynn of Burien; retired Seattle Program Center Director for

the Northwest HUD field office; Betsy Lieberman of Seattle, the Founder and Executive Director of Building Changes; and Elena Basset of Nespelam, Executive Director of the Colville Indian Housing Authority.

The Commission received 23 nominations for the *Friend of Housing* awards from people working in the public, private and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry.

For more information about the WSHFC please contact Bill Wortley at 206-464-7139 or Patricia Williams Patricia.Williams@wshfc.org.

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2011 NLIHC Annual Policy Conference and Lobby Day

The 2011 National Low Income Housing Coalition conference takes place from Sunday, March 27 to Wednesday, March 30. As the economic and affordable housing crises continue unabated, people are asking, "Where are we headed? Is my home safe? How can I ensure my family's future?" Join the NLIHC conference for a wide range of policy, research, tenant and advocacy topics. At the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington,

DC. More information and registration at www.nlihc.org/conference.

22nd Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness

The 22nd Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness will take place in Yakima on May 15-18, 2012. Hosted by the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, in collaboration with Building Changes and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, this annual event focuses statewide attention on advocacy, training and education on issues of homelessness in Washington state. More info at endhomelessnesswa.org.

Millions of Americans Struggling to Meet Their Most Basic Needs

In September the U.S. Census Bureau released 2010 data showing that 46.2 million people live in poverty and an even greater number have no health

insurance. The number of people living in poverty rose to 15.1 percent, up from 14.3 percent in 2009, underscoring the importance of national discussions around job creation, health care reform, safety net programs and charitable giving. For in-depth poverty resources and U.S. Census Bureau data visit www.census.gov.

President's Job Plan Strategy

On Monday, September 19, President Obama released his plan, Living Within Our Means and Investing in the Future. The plan outlines the investments necessary to support the American Jobs Act and proposes budget reductions of \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years. The plan includes a \$447 billion investment in job creation and makes cuts and reforms to a wide range of mandatory programs. A distillation of the President's proposal can be found in a White House Fact Sheet, www.whitehouse.gov.