2004 Year in Review

Florida Housing’s 2004 Annual Report is now available in our online newsroom and library at www.floridahousing.org. In reading through the report, it becomes clear that the impact Florida Housing continues to make on affordable housing in Florida is noteworthy. Creating opportunities for affordable rental housing construction is not easy in today’s economic climate, given rising land, construction and operating costs. And helping Floridians become homeowners is an ongoing challenge as home sales prices soar in some areas.

Despite these challenges, Florida Housing’s multifamily and single family programs helped a tremendous number of individuals and families obtain the housing they need. Our programs helped create over 15,000 affordable rental units and over 12,000 opportunities for homeownership in 2004. It’s no secret that last year’s hurricane season was one of the most devastating on record, but we worked through the unanticipated obstacles and developed processes that will enable us to respond even more quickly and effectively in the future.

Florida Housing’s Board of Directors and staff are proud of our 2004 accomplishments. At the same time we are positioning ourselves to face new challenges this year and beyond. The development of successful affordable housing is founded on strong partnerships across multiple levels. As always, we will continue to rely on our partners to help us make housing affordable.

Orlando Cabrera, Executive Director

Doors Open at Addison Place Apartments

Florida Housing’s $7.8 million in multifamily bond funds and an allocation of over $390,000 in Housing Credits led to the construction of Addison Place Apartments, which opened its doors in Crestview, Fl in February. Addison Place is the only development in Crestview to offer three bedroom, family-friendly units. Tenants will have the opportunity to put five percent of their rent toward the purchase of a new home if they maintain their residence for two years, pay rent on time, and uphold the terms of the lease. Addison Place is conveniently located near downtown Crestview and is 30 miles south of Ft. Walton Beach and 20 miles from Eglin Air Force Base.

David Westcott (front row, 3rd from the left), Florida Housing’s Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bond Program Administrator, was among the celebrants at the grand opening of Addison Place Apartments in Crestview, Fl. Florida Housing provided multifamily bond financing and an allocation of Housing Credits toward construction of the property. Doors opened in February.
HELPING FLORIDIANS REALIZE THE AMERICAN DREAM

Homeownership Programs

Blountstown Teacher Becomes First Time Homebuyer

Florida Housing’s First Time Homebuyer Program helped Scott Bontrager, of Blountstown, FL, achieve his dream of homeownership. Scott received an $84,900 loan as well as $10,000 in closing cost and down payment assistance through the program to help him transition from renter to homeowner.

“It was so easy,” said Scott. “I kind of expected there to be a lot of red tape…but it was really simple. The process was a dream.”

Scott originally heard about the program through his brother-in-law, the late Representative David Coley (R). From there, Scott said the process was much less trouble than he anticipated, taking just over seven weeks from start to finish. Scott graciously welcomed the ease of the process after what he and his family experienced just months earlier. Like so many others, Scott and his family suffered damage from the devastating 2004 hurricane season.

The roof on the 800-square-foot house he and his two children, Mary and Benjamin, were renting was damaged by a tornado related to one of the storms. Scott was left searching for a new home when he came across “…the perfect fit,” said Scott. “It was a 1600 square-foot home that was within walking distance of my job.” Scott teaches Biology, Chemistry, Anatomy and Physiology at Blountstown High School.

“I was really touched by the opportunity to become a homeowner, and we can’t say thanks enough to Florida Housing’s program for making this all possible,” said Scott. Mary and Benjamin are excited as well. They say they’re eagerly anticipating summer, when they’ll get their first chance to use the swimming pool in their backyard.

Up to $25,000 Down Payment Assistance Available in High Cost Counties

Some First Time Homebuyer Program applicants may also be eligible for up to $25,000 in down payment assistance through the HOME Program. Florida Housing recently increased the amount of down payment assistance eligible applicants in high cost areas could receive. Counties where this increase applies include: Baker, Broward, Clay, Collier, Duval, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns and St. Lucie. For more information about Florida Housing’s First Time Homebuyer Program go to www.floridahousing.org, then Homebuyers & Renters.

Tallahassee Homebuyer Showcase Reaches Over 300 People

Florida Housing partnered with the Tallahassee Lenders’ Consortium to host the Spring 2005 Homebuyer Showcase. The event catered to first-time homebuyers and was held at the North Florida Fairgrounds in March. Local providers of housing and housing services, including builders, lenders, nonprofit and for-profit organizations, local and state agencies and others met with potential homebuyers and discussed homeownership opportunities. Over 300 people attended the event.
HELPING MAKE HOUSING AFFORDABLE

Special Programs

SHIP Program Brings Homeownership to Families in Need

Florida Housing’s State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program continues to provide affordable housing opportunities across Florida for households in need. Just ask Ollie Mae Knight of Gadsden County or Ezelle Deshazier of Leon County.

Ms. Knight, a double amputee, received $10,000 in closing cost and down payment assistance through SHIP in combination with $47,000 from other agencies that helped her obtain a newly constructed home. Housing support from Gadsden County also played an instrumental role in the construction of Ms. Knight’s new home. “I’m always happy to be able to help people who are desperately in need, especially someone from an older generation,” said Gadsden County’s Housing Coordinator, Phyllis Moore.

As the proud mother of eight sons, three of whom are deceased, Ms. Knight has seen some rough times. After a fire destroyed her home, she temporarily moved into one of her son’s refurbished barn. She says her living conditions were comfortable and allowed her to avoid the confines of a hospital room. More importantly, she says, she was able to watch the construction of her new home from one of the barn’s windows.

Ms. Knight admits that her journey from hospital room to barn to new home has been dramatic and challenging. But she’s looking forward to her new home, scheduled to be finished in March.

Similar to Ms. Knight’s story, Ms. Ezelle Deshazier of Leon County experienced the hardships of losing a house to an electrical fire last year. Some 14 months later, she resides in a completely renovated home in Leon County thanks in part to $37,000 in SHIP funds. Due to her circumstance, Ms. Deshazier was also awarded $25,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and over $5,000 in funds from the Leon County Housing Finance Authority. All of this assistance allowed her to rebuild on the same property, which has been in her family for years.

“I’ve always helped people all of my life because I’ve always felt that somewhere in time, in life, I might need help,” said Ms. Deshazier. “It’s just a blessing that I am able sit here and say thank you to everybody who had a part in getting me in my home.”

For more information on the SHIP program, visit Florida Housing online at www.floridahousing.org, then Local Governments (SHIP).

Multifamily Development Programs

2005 Universal Cycle Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2005</td>
<td>Issue NOPSE scores</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26, 2005</td>
<td>Cures Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4, 2005</td>
<td>NOADs due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25, 2005</td>
<td>Issue Final Scores &amp; Notice of Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early-to-Mid July, 2005</td>
<td>Informal Appeal Hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25-26, 2005</td>
<td>Board approves final ranking</td>
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The above schedule is tentative. All dates are subject to change.

NOPSE - Notice of Possible Scoring Error relative to another applicant’s application.
NOAD - Notice of Alleged Deficiency relative to another applicant’s score.

Ezelle Deshazier (below), of Tallahassee, at her renovated house.
Creating Inclusive Communities Handbook Now Available

Governor Jeb Bush’s Hurricane Housing Work Group released its recommendations for the use of disaster funds to address housing recovery needs resulting from the devastating 2004 hurricane season. The group, chaired by Lt. Governor Toni Jennings, met to determine the best use of one time hurricane housing recovery funds totaling $354.4 million.

Florida Housing’s Executive Director Orlando Cabrera served as a member of the group, which met from November 2004 through February 2005, to assess affordable housing issues and identify strategies to help the market respond.

“Members of this group worked together to develop resource allocation methods that underscore the need for quickly addressing community needs,” said Mr. Cabrera. “In addition to Florida Housing’s $42.5 million commitment, we redesigned some of our multifamily programs’ funding priorities in the 2005 Universal Application Cycle to allow financing in the 11 hardest hit counties.”

Governor Bush charged the Work Group with identifying regulatory barriers that will hinder the rebuilding of suitable housing, ensuring state and federal resources for hurricane recovery are targeted as effectively as possible, and recommending any appropriate market-based strategies that would help communities better meet the housing needs of their residents.

The group’s recommendations include:

- A $208 million locally-administered Hurricane Housing Recovery Program that would accommodate the different housing needs of different communities.
- A $95.5 million Rental Recovery Loan Program that would leverage available federal resources and private capital to build and rehabilitate affordable rental housing.
- A $20 million Farmworker Housing Recovery Program that would leverage other resources to provide financing for the areas where farmworker housing was devastated by the storms.
- A $20.5 million Special Housing Assistance and Development Program that would offer repair funds and development financing that serves some of Florida’s most vulnerable residents.

In addition to the recommendations for specific housing programs, the Work Group has also proposed:

- A $10 million Community Contribution Tax Credit program and additional Training and Technical Assistance totaling $400,000 for local governments, nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

For a full copy of the Work Group’s report, visit Florida Housing’s online newsroom and library at www.floridahousing.org.

Hurricane Housing Work Group Releases Recommendations

Creating Inclusive Communities Handbook Now Available

The latest version of the handbook Creating Inclusive Communities is now available at Florida Housing. The book, which is in its second printing, was originally developed as an anti-NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) tool to educate local officials about affordable housing. However, the book has been used by local governments, developers, housing advocates and others as a general educational tool.

With full color examples of housing and chapters on how affordable housing works and is developed, who lives in it, design, citizen involvement and legal liabilities from NIMBY-ism, the book provides a wealth of information in an easy to read format. To obtain your copy today, contact Sheila Freaney at sheila.freaney@floridahousing.org, or at 850-488-4197. The book is free, but shipping will be charged for requests of five or more copies.

2004 Annual Report Available Online

Florida Housing’s 2004 Year In Review is currently available online at www.floridahousing.org in the Newsroom and Library section. The 44-page book provides details on program accomplishments and activities in 2004, and includes feature articles on Florida Housing’s response to the 2004 hurricane season and on its recent emphasis on capacity building.

For more information, contact Florida Housing’s Communications Office at (850) 488-4197.