



RRHA

nFocus

A newsletter for the employees of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority

December 2005

Make a Difference in 2006!

As 2006 approaches, RRHA has taken aggressive steps to define the future success of the agency. RRHA has launched a 5-year Strategic Plan that will create internal and external change and make a difference for our residents and communities. Departments have been reorganized, a new leadership team has been assembled and a new business mindset has been put into action throughout the organization. This plan will shape the future of affordable housing and community revitalization for the City of Richmond and the region.

Last month, RRHA held an agency wide business meeting that introduced new leadership and reinforced the necessity of all staff to become messengers or ambassadors of the strategic plan and its new vision and mission that RRHA will be the innovative leader creating dynamic partnerships that build vibrant communities — and we will be the catalyst for quality affordable housing and community revitalization. Also this meeting unveiled the proposed activities for the first phase of the five year plan.

To recap, during the first phase of the plan, RRHA will:

◆ **Bring homeownership opportunities to eligible public housing families through selling single family public housing units;**



Deputy Executive Director for Information Technology, Planning and Research Kenneth Francis and Customer Relations Assistant Lucy Johnson chat about the role of a RRHA ambassador



Deputy Executive Director for Affordable Housing Stephen Kopalchick and Budget Manager Darlene Giles review budget details to ensure efficiency

◆ **Totally modernize an existing public housing development (our version of an Extreme Makeover);**

◆ **Sell a small public housing building which will result in resources for other affordable housing and community revitalization initiatives;**

◆ **Sell or review the management of our portfolio of loans, which will bring proceeds to the agency for programmatic use;**

◆ **Sell small parcels of land that RRHA owns to generate revenue that can be reinvested in other RRHA efforts;**

◆ **And look to completely reconfigure and redevelop a public housing community through reconstruction and demolition.**

These plans are not finalized and more details are being developed. Several meetings with residents, staff and the

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community will take place to involve the community on initiatives.

In order to accomplish these tasks several important topics were discussed for staff to comprehend and configure into daily work activities.

- ◆ **Change**
- ◆ **Leadership**
- ◆ **Efficiency**
- ◆ **Values**
- ◆ **Waste Reduction**
- ◆ **Project Based Management**

Change

All staff must become change agents. Our environment is changing — and we cannot get caught in the trap of believing old ideas will succeed in a new market. Failure is not an option! We must and will maintain a competitive edge — stay aware, be

Did you receive your copy of

Mission — 2006, Building Our New Vision and Phase I Strategic Plan Initiatives ?

Copies of the video presentation and document are available in the Communications Office.

ready for change, and keep working to move forward. Our work and this agency will continue to evolve — and we must be ready for change.

Leadership

We need the leadership, dedication and work of everyone. Leadership is individual — it's collective — it's sacrifice — it's fearlessness, its discipline — all of which will allow RRHA to achieve — together. We must share the same vision, enthusiasm and commitment to make a difference at RRHA.

Efficiency

Efficiency can no longer be taken for granted and it cannot be neglected in any department. We must all do our part to attain efficiency by simple things such as reducing clutter and improving record keeping to give 100 percent instead of what it takes to just get by or make do. Take the extra step and initiative no matter the size of your task or project. When we are efficient and productive, we work faster and smarter and gain a competitive edge that will allow RRHA to grow and deliver higher quality services.

Values

Your values represent your highest priorities and can impact every aspect of this organization. Your personal work behaviors, decision making, contributions and interpersonal interactions are values that play a role. To be effective, your values should include integrity, respect and accountability. We must share similar values to have a positive end result.

Waste Reduction

Do you realize how much money is lost through waste?

- ◆ *An office person spends time searching for a file because it was not put back in its proper place*



Acting Deputy Executive Director for Administration Cassandra Scarborough discusses the importance of accountability at a team appreciation event

- ◆ *Maintenance workers have to make repeat visits to repair the same item because it was not done right the first time*
- ◆ *A maintenance item cannot be replaced immediately because the part is not in inventory*
- ◆ *Inventory dollars are wasted because of the lack of standardization of parts*

All of this translates into lost dollars for the agency. If each employee wastes an hour a day that equals 300 times 1 hour times 5 days times 50 weeks times 15 dollars per hour. This equals 1.125 million dollars a year! Think about how many programs we could create, homes we could build and services we could provide to our customers with that lost money.

Project Based Management

A major change that this authority and other authorities across the country are preparing for is Project Based Management. This means developing a more delivery focused

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Partnership brings new homes to historic Jackson Ward




RRHA and Miller & Associates/Walker Row Partnerships, Inc. have partnered to build Jackson Commons, a premier downtown community in the Jackson Ward community. This \$20 million development project will bring 61 single-family attached town homes and 25 multi-family housing units to the historic area and is one of several revitalization efforts in Jackson Ward. RRHA recently hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the model unit and the first phase of new homes.

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approach to the planning, communication and control of our properties. This HUD mandated initiative will be in place by 2007. Such a method will improve the successful delivery of services and their planned benefits and will be increasingly important to internal and external customers.

This will be a major shift for our business. For example, our public housing properties will be managed as business components and we must organize and prepare for this new way of operating our business. The Affordable Housing and Administration Departments are taking the lead with involvement to come from all departments.

Times are changing and we must change too in order to return to being a top performing housing agency! Let us take the end of the year as the close of a chapter and the

end of the old ways of thinking at RRHA. Let 2006 be the start of something new — a new way of thinking, a new way of doing business, a better way to make a difference in 2006! 

NEW HIRES

CARLA RANDALL: Budget Analyst

LISA TRAVIS: Assisted Housing Specialist

ERICA TRICE: Human Resources Assistant

— As of 12/05



Crime prevention the highest priority for RRHA *Public safety efforts expand to Hillside community*

In an ongoing effort to develop safer public housing communities and enhance the quality of life in the City of Richmond, RRHA implemented a public safety plan that involved working in partnership with the Mayor, the Richmond Police Department, City Council, RRHA Tenant Councils, tenants, and many partners and agencies. The plan is focused on crime prevention using new techniques, strategies and technologies.

Improvements have already occurred in Whitcomb Court and Gilpin Court and more recently, RRHA expanded new public safety enhancements to Hillside Court. Ultimately, the agency plans to incorporate similar enhancements in all its public housing developments.

Plans include the continued enforcement of the RRHA No Trespassing Policy / Privatized Streets and Sidewalks in designated public housing communities, a Crime Hotline and e-mail (780-4066 and safety@rrha.state.va.us) for RRHA residents and the public to report confidential information to RRHA Public Safety Officers and the installation of new technology and crime prevention equipment in various communities. The use of devices such as cameras in high crime areas, additional lighting and fencing and redirected traffic flow in designated communities have demonstrated RRHA's commitment to crime reduction.

Hal Hazelton, public safety chief, said, "The improvements have made a clear impact. Crime rates have experienced a 34 percent decrease in Whitcomb, 22 percent in Gilpin and 6 percent in Hillside.

These numbers tell me that we are definitely on the right track in our efforts. I would like to commend the Public Safety Unit for their hard work, our Richmond Police Department partners for their continued support and input and especially our maintenance staff for their assistance in getting the lighting, cameras and fencing rolling!

Other partnerships with law

enforcement agencies such as the ATF, DEA, FBI, Virginia State Police and other public safety agencies have allowed for sweeps, investigations and other activities to make sure weapons do not make their way into RRHA communities.

Additionally, a new background screening procedure has been introduced as part of the revised residential lease and property management policies. Initially implemented in Gilpin Court, the tenant screening procedure involves background checks on residents 18 years of age and older, persons applying to live in RRHA housing as well as those on the waiting list. Background checks are an essential crime prevention tool and are conducted so residents can feel safer in knowing their neighbors are law-abiding citizens.

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Public Safety team member in action

On December 16, 2005, the Richmond Police Department reported a robbery and shooting incident that occurred in the Church Hill area. A thorough description was broadcast to all area police agencies including the RRHA Public Safety Unit.

Approximately 30 minutes after the incident, RRHA Officer Tom Ratliff was on patrol in Fairfield Court when he observed a vehicle matching the description and individuals matching the earlier description exit the vehicle and enter an apartment. Officer Ratliff secured the front of the apartment and radioed other police units in the area. Several moments later, entry was made by officers resulting in arrests for the shooting and the seizure of several guns.


Commander John Keohane, Richmond Police Department 1st Precinct said the incident and investigation was resolved expeditiously due to Officer Ratliff's keen observations. He did an awesome job. The communication, partnership and teamwork of different units and departments were textbook and a great model for all to follow. Thanks for your hard work and dedication to the first precinct.

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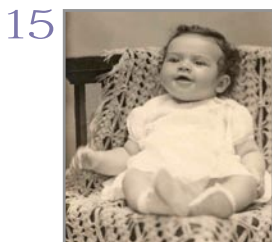
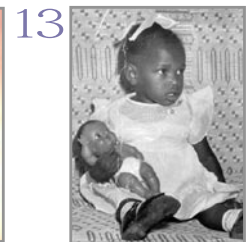
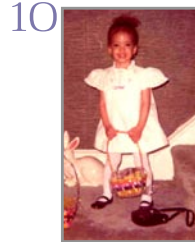
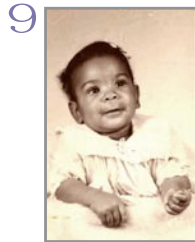
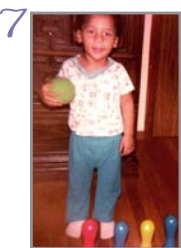
“The resident criminal background screening is just one more tool to be used by housing Managers to make our communities a little safer and peaceful for our law abiding residents (who are the majority),” said Assistant Director for Public Housing Steven Benham. “Residents have always had a responsibility to report criminal activity by members of their households. This addition to the lease allows managers to step in and discover criminal activity when family members are reluctant to do so. By exposing criminals in this manner we not only remove the criminal but in many instances we remove the enabling family. This makes the community safer and less likely to simply replace one criminal with another. I sincerely want our law abiding residents to know that public housing is not a hiding place for criminals.”

Another essential ingredient in providing a safe community is the availability of resources to enhance the lives of RRHA residents. The agency continues to

look for new services to enhance a family’s quality of life with access to health, education and other services through partnerships with various agencies. Programs such as the RRHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program, the RRHA Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy, the Weed and Seed Program and the Joint Agency Services Integration Project (JASIP) and other initiatives assist families in personal growth and developing healthy lifestyles.

“We have made a commitment to improving public safety in our communities to the families we serve and the City of Richmond,” said Executive Director Sheila Hill-Christian. “With the assistance of our partners, RRHA will aggressively assess public safety needs and proactively implement public safety strategies to improve and enhance our neighborhoods. Reducing crime in our communities is a priority for this agency as we continue to advance our strategic plan initiatives to create healthy and stable neighborhoods.” 

Do You Know This Baby?



ANSWER KEY:
 1) Lester Frye; 2) Sandra Brooks; 3) Belinda Hawkins; 4) Alike Rossler; 5) Darlene Giles; 6) Gloria Martin; 7) Eric Leabough; 8) Terri Garrett; 9) Antoinette Light; 10) April Batchelior-Hunt; 11) Jackie Salam-Hicks; 12) Anthony Scott; 13) Marcella Wyche; 14) Valena Dixon; 15) Jacquetta Johnson; 16) Linda Jackson-Shaw.

End of the Year Employee Appreciation Event



RRHA wishes you *Seasons Greetings* and a *Happy New Year!*



Two RRHA employees provide a helping hand through military service

Michael Hampton, safety and security specialist, and James Dickerson, accountant, both serve in different branches of the military — the Virginia National Guard and United States Army. Both are lending a helping hand to those in need during important matters in the world.

As a sergeant in the Virginia National Guard, Hampton spent five weeks in the Gulf Coast area to assist the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The kind




thoughts and e-mails from RRHA employees were comforting, knowing he was being thought of.

“The devastation there is beyond comprehension,” he said. “Continue to remember the victims of these hurricanes and as well pray for our troops engaged in the war on terror.”

Dickerson has been stationed in Iraq since September 2005 training soldiers for *Operation Iraqi Freedom* as a unit supply sergeant. Each day is a new experience from his first helicopter ride, seeing first hand what we hear on television

and even receiving the Joint Service Achievement Medal (JSAM) for staffing a supply room to support the 500 plus coalition soldiers at his camp.

RRHA welcomes Hampton back and sends well wishes and a safe return to Dickerson. Dickerson can be e-mailed at james.dickerson3@us.army.mil. RRHA sends its thanks and prayers to all the brave men and women in service to our country. 



Construction of single-family homes in Fulton is underway

HOPE VI Revitalization Program begins construction of single-family homes

As part of the multifaceted \$26.9 million HOPE VI Revitalization Program awarded to RRHA and the City of Richmond, construction of 308 single-family homes has begun! One hundred and eighty-eight (188) homes will be constructed in Blackwell and 120 in neighborhoods around the city.

Starting in Fulton, 32 energy efficient homes are underway in the area of Admiral Gravelly Boulevard by RRHA's development partner Health-E Community Enterprises

LLC. Officially titled Fulton Village, the homes will be approximately 1,500 to 2,000 square feet with prices starting at \$160,000. Amenities include three to four bedrooms; 2 and ½ bathrooms; wall to wall carpeting and vinyl flooring; rear loading single car garages; energy star rated windows; and much more.

“We are very pleased with the progress being made towards the current HOPE VI project,” said HOPE VI Project Manager L. Dexter Goode. “We are confident that community members and the general public at large will be happy with the end results.”

In early spring 2006, the construction of 16 homes is planned for the Swansboro community. Eight single-family homes will be built on Pilkington Street ranging from 1500 to 1800 square feet and eight

homes will be rehabbed (seven on Decatur Street and one on Bainbridge Street) by Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (SCDHC). Prices will range from the mid \$140's to the mid \$180's with amenities such as three to four bedrooms; 2 and ½ bathrooms; wall to wall carpeting and vinyl flooring. Rehab homes will have similar basic amenities and other options based on previous construction of the homes.

By late spring 2006, 37 homes (188 total) as part of the first of four phases of construction are tentatively scheduled to begin in Blackwell. To be constructed by SCDHC, size will vary from 1,450 to 2,040 square feet with three or four bedrooms and many amenities such as decks, front porches with decorative rails and columns, wall to wall carpeting and vinyl flooring. Homes will be sold at the initial sales price of approximately \$150,000 to \$190,000.

Other tentative dates for future

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**Richmond Redevelopment
and Housing Authority**

Sheila Hill-Christian
Executive Director

Valena Dixon, Editor
Director of Communications

Alika Rosser
Public Relations Specialist

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construction are Phase II - 45 homes by Better Housing Coalition in Summer '06, Phase III - 55 homes in Fall '06 and Phase IV - 51 homes in Spring '07.

Executive Director Sheila Hill-Christian stated, "RRHA and the Blackwell community had a vision to beautify this neighborhood and provide quality affordable homeownership opportunities. This vibrant community is flourishing from the revitalization efforts, and we are proud to have played a role."

RRHA and the City of Richmond were awarded a HOPE VI grant of \$26.9 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to revitalize Richmond's Blackwell community. HOPEVI, which stands for Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere, is the federal government's largest urban revitalization program created to provide housing opportunities for public housing residents and improve the quality of their lives. In Blackwell, HOPEVI included the construction of *Townes at River South*, 161 townhouse and garden style apartments, the construction of an elementary school, a recreation/community center and a refurbished park.

HOPEVI also meant a comprehensive menu of programs for former Blackwell's public housing residents to achieve self-sufficiency through the creation of the Self-Sufficiency Training Program (SSTP). SSTP provided educational and job training and employment, day care, supportive services and transportation assistance amongst its many services.

Through the HOPEVI Program qualified homebuyers will be provided with mortgage subsidies such as down payment assistance and funds for second mortgage financing.

For more information on housing opportunities and the HOPEVI Revitalization Program, contact L. Dexter Goode, HOPEVI Project Manager, at 780-4108 or Gwen Howard, HOPEVI Resident Services Advisor, at 780-4171. 

In case of a weather emergency...

To determine if RRHA offices are closed or have a delayed opening, use the following steps:

1 Call the Communications Office at 780-4167 or Human Resources Office at 780-4304

2 Check local television and radio stations for status:

 **WTVR - CBS 6**

 **WRIC - TV 8**

 **WWBT - NBC 12**

 **WRVA - 1140 AM**

3 Change your voicemail with delayed opening or office closed messages to better serve our customers

Thank You!