



RRHA

nFocus

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

August 2006

RRHA Introduces its Human Resources Team!!

Changes are taking place in RRHA's Human Resources department! With new faces on the HR team, RRHA will experience changes and improvements. New employees welcomed to the agency include Dionne Woody, RRHA University Training Coordinator, who joined RRHA in May and Barbara Zayer, Senior Human Resources Generalist, who joined the agency in June.

"The goal was to establish a team that could help change the culture of the organization," said RRHA Deputy Executive Director of Administration Cassandra Scarborough.

"The new HR team is accomplishing this goal by simply implementing the values of [RRHA's] Strategic Plan..."she said.

"The bar has been raised in HR. They are professional, objective...and competent. In a short four-month period, the team has automated RRHA's time and attendance process, developed a new compensation plan... and resolved audit findings that have existed for three years all while addressing daily personnel, recruitment, and staff development matters. Look



RRHA Human Resources Team (l) to (r): Sherita Anderson; Grace Lewis; Karen Jones; Antoinette Light; Alonzo Williams; Aisha Hunter-Casey; Dionne Woody; Barbara Zayer; Ann Perkins; Erica Trice (not pictured)

for more initiatives from HR in the near future impacting our recruitment efforts, direct deposit, and more."

RRHA's Human Resources department is headed by Ann Perkins, Deputy Director of Human Resources, and Grace Lewis, Acting Deputy Director of Human Resources.

Lewis, who partners in the supervision of the Human Resources department with Perkins, is responsible for duties including daily operations and development of organizational

continued on page 2

Business Recap: RRHA Celebrates Strategic Plan



Anthony Scott, Interim Executive Director

RRHA celebrated its one-year anniversary of the Strategic Plan implementation during its recently held agency-wide business meeting on Wednesday, June 28!

RRHA's Strategic Plan is an initiative put in place as a result of the collective input of RRHA staff, residents and city stakeholders. The plan focuses on four major goals: revitalizing residential and commercial communities, economic independence, efficiency and fiscal responsibility and quality customer service.

"The heart of our Strategic Plan is predicated on the idea that it takes an entire community – government, residents, small businesses, large corporations and . . . our employees – all working together in partnership to revitalize our city," said Interim Executive Director Anthony Scott, who spoke at the meeting.

"This is the only way it can be done . . . all working together as one," he said.

Scott reviewed the mission and vision of the agency as well as goals of the Strategic Plan with attendees. He then shared the results of RRHA's efforts in accomplishing these goals through the agency's Phase One initiatives:

- Revitalize a small public housing community into a mixed-income/mixed use community via reconstruction and demolition

continued on page 3



Grace Lewis



Ann Perkins



Erica Trice

Human Resources continued from page 1

strategic planning, staff training and development and budgets for the RRHA University.

"In the area of training and staff development, I am currently delivering an agency-wide training [referred to as "Gung Ho!"] which introduces...dynamic principles [that] create highly motivated staff and increase organizational productivity," said Lewis.

"If these...principles are adopted by our agency as the standard, we will see a phenomenal change in our organization's culture and productivity."

Perkins' role as Deputy Director of Human Resources is to plan, implement and manage aspects of RRHA's Human Resource program to support the strategic initiatives and business goals of RRHA.

"I see my role as leveraging the contributions of a very talented and experienced team to assist in moving [RRHA] forward in making all of the strategic plan goals a day-to-day reality," she said.

Human Resources is innovating ways to benefit staff as well as the residents that the agency serves. One example is a recently developed compensation plan created with RRHA's Deputy Executive Directors and approved by Interim Executive Director Anthony Scott.

According to Perkins, the plan will allow managers to address compensation issues with greater flexibility and efficiency, and makes RRHA more competitive in employee maintenance.

"It will benefit RRHA staff in many ways and assist us in attracting, retaining and motivating our workforce," she said.

The Human Resources department is also working on implementing a Web-based recruitment system, which Perkins says emphasizes goal # 3 of the Strategic Plan: Efficiency and Fiscal Responsibility.

"Web-based recruitment will make the application and interviewing process very fast," she said. "Applicants will get a quick response from RRHA and supervisors and managers will be able to fill positions in a very timely manner."

RRHA Human Resources team members include:

Dionne Woody – As Training Coordinator for the RRHA University, Dionne manages RRHA's Resident Services and

Work Experience programs, conducts professional development workshops for residents and oversees RRHA's Tuition Assistance Program.

Alonzo – Alonzo is RRHA University's Senior Office Support Specialist. He oversees registration for training programs offered by the university and teaches several of its computer literacy classes, such as Introduction to PC, PC Basics and Introduction to Internet. He also supports Grace Lewis in her role with the university.

Barbara Zayer – As Senior Human Resources Generalist for RRHA, Barbara supports most of RRHA's Affordable Housing Division and provides services to various departments in areas such as recruitment, classification and employee relations issues.


Antoinette Light – Antoinette is the HR contact for RRHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program, Administration, Information Technology, Planning & Research and Community Revitalization departments in her role as Senior Human Resources Generalist.

Erica Trice – Erica, HR Assistant for RRHA's Human Resources department, handles overall HR services and procedures and initiates most HR-related processes.

Karen Jones – As Payroll/Benefits Administrator, Karen oversees RRHA's payroll and employee benefits programs.

Sherita Anderson – A participant in RRHA's Work Experience Program, Sherita supports the entire HR team in administrative assistance.

Aisha Hunter-Casey – As Office Support Specialist for the RRHA University, Aisha provides information and service to customers and assists with daily office support. She also prepares materials for the university's orientations.

"The HR team is extremely excited about working with our co-workers to make RRHA the type of entity that was envisioned in the Strategic Planning Process by both our residents and staff," said Perkins. 

RRHA ITPR Department Update

RRHA has recently made changes to its Information Technology, Planning & Research department with the addition of a new member! Leslie Cohoon has been assigned to the position of Planning and Research Manager. Within this position, some of her duties will include:

- Instituting quality assurance programs to ensure that quality work is being performed within the agency. This will include the development of performance targets and goals for certain key business activities; improvement recommendations to management and reporting to track progress.
- Implementation of a Regulatory Compliance Assurance Program (RCAP) to ensure RRHA is compliant with all regulatory requirements as it conducts its activities.
- Development of a Strategic Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Team, as well as a database, to establish Strategic Plan performance baselines and improve recommendations.

Cphoon joined the agency in June and reports to Ken Francis, Deputy Executive Director of Information Technology,



Planning & Research. Her activities will include meeting with various departments to learn more about our efforts regarding Strategic Plan initiatives that are underway.

The department is also underway with recruiting for the positions of Management Analyst and Policy Writer.

In addition, the ITPR department is also recruiting for a new IT Manager. The agency extended its thanks and a fond farewell to Sonya Mills-Harvey, who recently left the agency to pursue new opportunities.

If you need additional information on our Strategic Plan monitoring efforts, contact Leslie at **780-4939** or e-mail at lcohoon@rrha.state.va.us.

Recap continued from page 1

- Completely modernize a public housing community
- Create homeownership opportunities for eligible public housing families by selling RRHA single-family public housing units. (Neighborhood Housing Program)
- Sell or reassign agency loan portfolio
- Sell a small marketable residential building
- Sell marketable lots of land, (in-fill) lots

Additionally, he reported on the agency's ongoing operating improvements such as reducing turnaround time on vacancies by 25%, and also forming important partnerships with several businesses in Richmond including Phillip Morris, Capital One and Bon Secours/Richmond Community Hospital.

"I think we can agree that we are on our way," he said. "Each day it is important to recommit to our vision, mission and goals. In my role as Interim Executive Director, I will ask the tough questions, I will seek challenging solutions and I will expect your commitment to excellence."

"I see [your] commitment everyday, from those that arrive at 7 a.m. to those who leave at 7 p.m."

The next agency-wide business meeting will be held Friday, **October 6, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.**

Thank you! STAY FOCUSED! 

>> Customer Service Reminder From The Public Safety Unit

Attention Employees!

The RRHA Public Safety Unit is here to serve, and we need your continued cooperation!!

To reach the Public Safety Unit, please call 780-4155 for ALL inquiries.

For non-emergencies and to report activity that needs the Richmond Police Department's response, please call 646-6842. For Police Emergencies dial 9-1-1.

Thank You for your Cooperation!
Hal Hazleton, Chief
RRHA Public Safety Unit



An interior view of the residential unit.

Phase One of West Cary Street Development a Success

West Cary Street is on a major rise!



RRHA and Richmond City officials, neighborhood leaders and our developers joined to cut the ribbon on the Lofts at Cary Place.

East West Partners, RRHA, the City of Richmond and West Cary Street Planning Committee were all onboard to celebrate Phase One of the revitalization of West Cary Street with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The ceremony took place Thursday, June 1, 2006 at The Lofts at Cary Place, located at 1915 West Cary Street. Phase One of the revitalization project includes ten commercial condos and residential lofts, all of which have been sold.

The residential lofts, which range from 1,060 to 1,310 square feet, sold for a base price of \$289,000 with amenities such as private bedrooms, on-site parking, walk-in closets, stainless steel appliances and hardwood floors. The commercial units sold at the starting price of \$189,000.

Incoming tenants to the commercial lofts include Johannes Design Group, an upscale salon, a restaurant and a few graphic design firms.

"We are pleased to be a part of this exciting partnership that is bringing a vision for a vibrant neighborhood that will complement the historic character of West Cary and provide new residential and business opportunities," said RRHA Board Chairman Charles T. Peters, Jr.

RRHA's partners also took a moment to express enthusiasm and pride in the project.


"This is a project that has been in the works for literally 15 years," said Chris Corrada, project manager and vice president of East West Partners. "This is a true example of neighborhoods that can come together to make a positive change in their environment."

He went on to say that Cary Place is destined to be one of Richmond's great neighborhoods.

Ed Eck, chairman of West Cary Street Planning Committee, shared a similar view of the once-barren area.

"This is what can happen when you have a cooperative effort between the private and public sector," he said. "This area has changed from being run down with crime and is improving everyday."

Phase Two of the Cary Place partnership project, The Townes at Cary Place, will begin later this year in the 1700 block of West Cary Street. The complex is planned to be a gated community consisting of 28 2,000-3,000 sq. ft. townhouses priced in the low \$400,000s. The cost of the both projects is approximately \$18.5 million.

For more information, contact Lee Householder, Acting Deputy Executive Director for Community Revitalization, at 780-4338. 

Great Turnout for RRHA's 4th Annual Bike-A-Thon

In partnership with the City of Richmond Police Department, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) hosted its fourth annual Bike-a-Thon event on Saturday, June 17, 2006.

RRHA Gilpin Court Staff, Resident Services Staff, the Public Safety Division, volunteers and Richmond Police officers took part in the five-mile ride with youth of all ages, to spread the message of bicycle safety, crime prevention awareness and community involvement.

"The turnout was very good, this year's Bike-a-Thon was a great success, and we look forward to more adults getting involved in the future," said RRHA Resident Services Advisor Wallace Wilkins.

Hal Hazelton, Chief of RRHA Public Safety Unit, shared similar views.

"Safety was paramount... and fun was the key," he said. "As always, year-to-year, the turnout was better than the previous year."

This year the Bike-A-Thon featured games at the Calhoun Family Investment Center for younger children not partici-



pating in the five-mile ride. Some of them included a bike rodeo and a motorcycle/car exhibit.

"Previously it was awkward for them [to participate] because of [things like] distance and heat," said Hazelton, "so the kids' activities [were] incredible. It was a big hit. I can't wait to see next year's event!" he said.

The five-mile ride departed from the Calhoun playground in Gilpin Court and traveled through Jackson Ward, the Virginia Commonwealth University area and Carver/Newtowne-West communities before returning back to their original starting point. Our special thanks to all who made this a successful event! **IF**





1812 Building: Back In Service!

RRHA is pleased to announce that its Central Maintenance building, 1812 Brook Road, is back in operation.

The building caught fire in April 2004 and had been in the renovation process.

"I think it's real nice to be home again," said Joe Sarver, Manager of Maintenance Administration. "Incidentally, through all of the upheaval, these changes were invisible to our resident population [and most of our co-workers]. The service center and maintenance staff...never missed a beat."

As a result of the renovations, features to the building now include five new energy efficient air handling systems, a new sprinkler system for fire suppression and a new generator which provides emergency power to the entire building during a loss of power.

In addition, the corridors of the building have been widened to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and a new firewall has been added to separate the garage of the building from the office spaces.

There are two conference rooms and more than 30 office spaces.


"These offices will be utilized by maintenance, contracting and Information Technology (IT) staff," said Sarver.

He also stated that the building has a new installation of



five Centrex telephone lines, similar to those used for the emergency 911 call system.

"Working in concert with the IT department, this is expected to back up the service center in the event that our LAN-based telephone system goes down," he said.

Staff members are welcome to stop by! Contact Joe Sarver at 780-8718 or William Perkins, Manager of Maintenance Operations at 780-8707. 



The RRHA 2006 Tomorrow's Promise Scholars (l-r): Alison Morton, Brian Childrey, Tatiana Mayfield, Cherelle Smith, LaNiece Johnson, Keosha Cosby, Cynthia Brooks (not pictured).

RRHA Salutes Education and Achievement

On June 29, 2006, RRHA hosted its annual Recognition of Graduates Celebration and Tomorrow's Promise Scholarship Awards ceremony. Seven scholarship recipients and other graduating high school seniors from RRHA communities were recognized.

These were students that have exhibited academic expertise, a strong work ethic in extracurricular activities and after school employment and a commitment to volunteerism in their communities.

"[It's rewarding] when the youth return from college and express their realization that there is a larger world than the public housing community in Richmond that I reside," said Ralph Stuckey of RRHA Resident Services.


"[With] this year's program, this class instantly realized how much the agency is invested in their success [and] helping them reach their goals," he said.

Since 1995, the Tomorrow's Promise Scholarship Fund has been available to assist academically successful students living in public housing with the ability to pursue higher education.

Through the RRHA 2006 Tomorrow's Promise Scholarship Fund \$26,000 total was awarded to provide financial assistance to the seven selected recipients.

With the assistance of area businesses and supporters' contributions, over \$140,000 in scholarship funds have been awarded.

In order to qualify, students must be graduating seniors with a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher who will be pursuing a college degree. This year, recipients had an average GPA of 3.3.

For more information contact Ralph Stuckey of Resident Services at 780-4291. 

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!!

RRHA Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy Expanding Boundaries with New Water Sports

Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority's Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy has come up with a unique sport to offer to its youth participants: scuba diving!

Over the past two years, the academy has provided non-traditional sports and cultural activities for more than 200 youth throughout RRHA communities, including ice hockey, tennis, golf, boxing and karate.

In addition, the academy also provides resources for cultural enrichment and extracurricular activities through workshops, seminars and field trips.

As of April 2006, RRHA youth ages 12 and older have been participating in the Academy Scuba Diving Club. Students have the opportunity to earn their scuba certification upon successful completion of the course. The course is taught by Jim McNeal, owner of The Dive Shop in Richmond, as well as volunteers from local dive clubs.

According to the academy, its ultimate goal is to help RRHA youths break the cycle of poverty by encouraging them to become more self-sufficient and independent.

"We're giving them hope for the future through exposure and possibilities they were unaware of when they first enrolled in the academy," said Joan Seldon, Assistant Director of Resident Services for RRHA.

The academy also has a swimming program that meets on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the Calhoun Family Investment Center, 436 Calhoun Street.

In addition to learning how to swim, participants learn the importance of safety while swimming as well as careers in swimming and competitive swimming. RRHA's competitive swim team, the RRHA Cougars, are members of the Virginia Community Swim League. Several members have been invited to join the Richmond Racers, a national swimming organization



that sponsors local, state and national meetings leading to the Olympics and other national competitions, and the team has participated in numerous swim meets state-wide.

"These sports give them experiences and exposure they otherwise would not get. That's what's so rewarding, knowing we're providing quality, programs that will make a lasting impact," said Seldon.


"We have high expectations of our participants, [for example], good grades, attendance, behavior, leadership, respect [and] character development [because] without this exposure they would not be as driven," she said.

"I was once one of them – [I] lived in public housing. As an adult in this business for [over] 30 years, I know the difference that organized, structured activities can make. Now they know there's another world outside of public housing that's appealing to them."

Tutoring, mentoring and other support services that promote academic achievement are also available.

RRHA's Communications office is in the process of assisting the Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy with its marketing efforts to increase awareness about the different services and programs that are offered, build its volunteer corps and raise funds to increase programming. A DVD about the academy has been developed, and other marketing materials are being designed.

Since 2004, RRHA's Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy has given hundreds of RRHA youths exposure to its different sports programs and extracurricular activities.

If you would like to volunteer with the Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy, contact Joan Seldon at 780-4933 or Ralph Stuckey at 780-4291. 



Welcome Home Sergeant!!!

RRHA is pleased to announce that James Dickerson will return to the Authority September 5! He has returned safely and is enjoying time with his family before reporting to work.

We are also proud to salute James as he was recently promoted to Sergeant First Class/E7. We are proud of his service to our country!

Upon returning home, Dickerson shared, "I want to say thanks to my RRHA family for all the e-mails and support!"

Promotions

Lee Householder

Acting Deputy Director for Community Revitalization to Acting Deputy Executive Director for Community Revitalization; EFFECTIVE 6/19/06

Garland Curtis

Deputy Director for Community Revitalization to Acting Deputy Executive Director of Community Revitalization, EFFECTIVE 6/22/06

Cathy Parker

Housing Analyst to Assisted Housing Supervisor; EFFECTIVE 6/29/06

New Hires

Leslie Cohoon

Planning & Research Manager (Information Technology, Planning and Research department); 6/27/06

Shirley Gilliam

Sr. Office Support Specialist (RRHA Central Maintenance department); 5/22/06

Rayne Jones-Fultz

Assistant Housing Manager; 5/11/06

April King

Office Support Specialist (RRHA Public Safety department); 5/11/06

Dionne Woody

Training Coordinator (RRHA University); 5/15/06

Barbara Zayer, Sr.

Human Resources Generalist (HR department); 6/13/06



Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority

Anthony Scott, Interim Executive Director

Valena Dixon, Editor, Communications Director

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The Authority Moves to a Web Based Time and Attendance System

In keeping with RRHA Strategic Plan Goal #3 Efficiency and Fiscal Responsibility, Authority employees will begin using the new iEmployee paperless web based time and attendance system effective September 1st. The new system will provide process improvement and effective data management of time and attendance records.

With the new system:

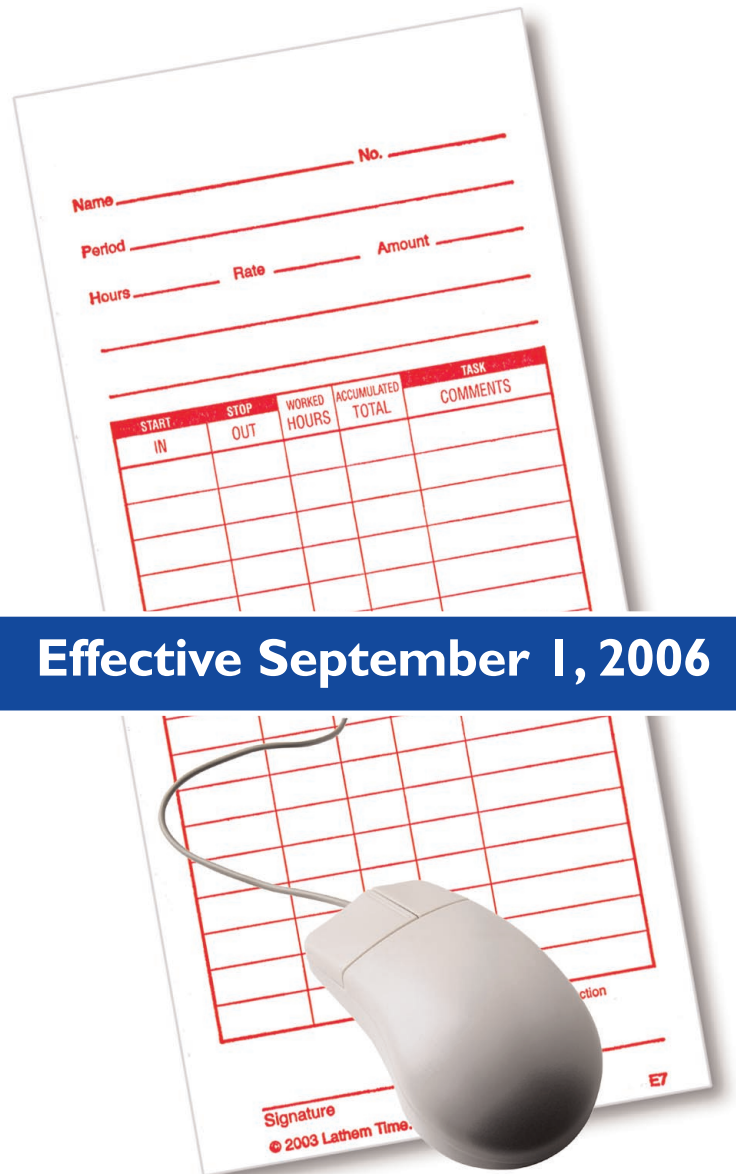
- Employees will have 24 hour access to their timesheet and leave usage/balances from any internet browser
- Exempt employees will no longer be required to submit timesheets and will only use the time off module
- Non-exempt employees will use the timesheet and time off modules.

As a Supervisor you will be able to:

- Approve timesheets and time off requests of your direct reports in the system
- Track overtime and leave usage
- Prepare various reports using the new system.

To effectively use the system, it is very important for you to ensure Human Resources has current information about staff reporting relationships and location changes. Contact Erica Trice at ext. 4119 or Karen Jones at ext. 4926 to make sure your information about the physical location of your staff and to whom they report matches the information in Authority's Human Resources system.

Employees will have the opportunity to practice using the new system. Human Resources will send to you system



Effective September 1, 2006

access information (user name, password, and instructions) and access information for your direct reports. On August 23, a one hour refresher session will be held at 2 p.m. for persons you designate to train your staff on the new system in the Large Conference Room at 901. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in working together for what is best for our agency and customers.

Please contact Erica Trice at ext. 4119 if any additional information is needed. 