

PHA Sustainability Network Shares Challenges, Successes



Source: [Andrea Campi](#) (Creative Commons license)

Housing authorities across the country are joining the PHA Sustainability Network.

Created in January by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and Enterprise Community Partners, the network allows HA staff to share what they've learned in the areas of green building and sustainability.

Casius Pealer, director of the USGBC's Affordable Housing Initiative, wanted his organization to support the green work that was going on at housing authorities, even if they weren't necessarily calling it "green building."

"Housing authorities were already trying to save money, be efficient, and keep the residents healthy," Pealer says. "Green building's not so much a totally new concept as it is an integrated way of doing what we've always been doing, better."

The network allows HAs to share their challenges as well as their successes.

"For example, when somebody says energy efficiency is really hard to do in a smaller city in the Midwest, I'd like to be able to say, 'Yes, it might be more of a challenge there, but there are three PHAs near you that are saving a million dollars

a year from energy retrofits in that area," says Pealer.

Each month, the network holds a phone call/webinar. Recent months have featured the Housing Authority of Baltimore County's Monica Watkins talking about energy performance contracts and resident energy management and education, as well as Yolo County (Calif.) HA director Lisa Baker on energy-efficiency retrofits and green implementation.

After the main presentation (interruptions are encouraged), callers also share upcoming training opportunities, news, and updates about green building legislation.

Next month's call will take place July 22. Topic: Stimulus dollars, specifically Category 4 grants, and the upcoming obligation deadline. "We're using that as a trigger to have folks talk about what they're doing with the money," says Pealer. Miami-Dade Public Housing Agency Director Gregg Fortner is among the invited speakers.

In the future, the network might also include a database to capture green public housing practices and an interactive website, including a discussion group.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Energy in the Southwest

▶ July 14 - 15, 2010 | Santa Fe, NM
 ☞ www.tinyurl.com/28lmx9e

PHA Sustainability Network Webinar

▶ July 22nd, 2010
 ☞ cpealer@usgbc.org

IAQVEC 2010

▶ August 15-18, 2010 | Syracuse, NY
 ☞ www.tinyurl.com/ydglrk9

American Renewable Energy Day

▶ August 19-22, 2010 | Aspen, CO
 ☞ www.areday.net

Energy and Environmental Building Alliance

▶ October 12-14, 2010 | Portland, OR
 ☞ www.eeba.org

Enviro Build Expo

▶ October 13 - 14, 2010 | Hartford, CT
 ☞ www.envirobuildexpo.com

The list currently consists of 40-50 people. Pealer would like to see the group grow, especially at the staff level. Even if an HA doesn't have someone with the title of Sustainability Coordinator, they could have a point person tasked with overseeing that area, he says. "What I would like this network to be able to do would be to ask that question: whether it would make sense to have a point person who's formally tasked with sustainability."

Pealer envisions the network as "a catalyst for opportunities," and hopes that people will be inspired because of a question or story they heard in one of the calls.

"I'd like us to have a much more robust database of the successes that are happening out there in public housing," he says. "I'd like to be able to highlight those successes, because I know they're there."

For more information on the PHA Sustainability Network, contact Pealer at cpealer@usgbc.org.

Sec. Donovan Tours Denver Green Development

Along with representatives from the [Denver Housing Authority](#), Mayor John Hickenlooper, Congressman Ed Perlmutter, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan toured Benedict Park Place (BPP) in Denver, Colorado. Located near Denver's central downtown business district, BPP is a 15-acre sustainable mixed-

CONT from PI income, mixed-used redevelopment project.

Within walking distance to a Transit Oriented Development (TOD)-light rail line, bus stop, bike share station, grocery store, parks, charter school and downtown job center, BPP is a model for the this spring, will deliver 89 mixed-income rental units (30 public housing, 32 Low Income Housing Tax Credits and 27 market rate units) currently scoring as LEED Platinum under the [LEED for Homes Pilot Program](#).

“Not only is it important for our big cities and urban communities to have access to sustainable development resources, but for our small towns and rural communities as well,” said Donovan. “They face unique challenges when it comes to accessing health care, grocery stores, and adult education opportunities, among other things.” Source: [The Gov Monitor](#)

D.C. Housing Authority Breaks Ground on Sheridan Station Development

The D.C. Housing Authority and developer William C. Smith & Co. broke ground May 10 on a mixed-income development called Sheridan Station. The first phase involves completion of 114 housing units, including 25 replacement units for the neighboring Barry Farm residence, by early 2012. The building will have a 6,000-square-foot vegetative “green” roof and a rooftop solar array for power.

When all four phases are completed, Sheridan Station will have 344 housing units, almost double the number in Sheridan Terrace. All units will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certified. Funding for the first phase comes from \$5.8 million in federal stimulus grants and a \$20 million grant from HUD through HOPE VI, a federal program to turn public housing projects into mixed-income communities. The estimated cost of the entire project is \$100 million. Source: [The Washington Post](#)

Tallahassee Launches Residential Green Construction Pilot

The city of Tallahassee, Fl., has launched the Residential Green Building Pilot Program, which provides \$1.50 per square foot, up to a maximum of 1,500 square feet, for the construction of new or substantially rehabilitated homes according to green building criteria. Funding for the program comes from an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant of \$115,000 the city received from US Department of Energy last September.

Venus Childs, strategic programs evaluator in the city’s office of Environmental Policy and Energy Resources, compared it to the city’s EnergyStar program that offers rebates to homeowners who purchase and install energy-saving appliances.

The green construction pilot, however, “focuses on water conservation, indoor air quality, landscaping and a host of other things,” she said. “Our goal is a few steps beyond. We don’t just worry about the kind of appliances,” Childs added.

At a maximum incentive of \$2,250 per dwelling, Childs estimates the project can fund up to about 50 homes. Source: [The Tallahassee Democrat](#)

Columbia S.C. Development Named Top Green Project for Affordable Homes

At the National Green Building Conference on May 18, the National Association of Home Builders named the Columbia, S.C., Midlands’ Rosewood Hills the country’s top green project of 2009 for affordable, non-custom single-family homes.



Image Source: Mungo Construction

A Mungo Construction-designed-and-built Columbia neighborhood, Rosewood Hills is a partnership with the Housing Authority of Columbia and consists of LEED for Home certified affordable for-sale and rental units.

Mungo Division President Thom Chumney reached out to the Home Energy Group, a Mt. Pleasant-based consulting company, for help in understanding green design.

The brightly colored houses with Charleston-style porches use better insulation, EnergyStar appliances, HVAC systems with a more environmentally friendly refrigerant, and a different framing technique that reduced the amount of lumber used for each building.

Mungo also sourced materials locally, finding concrete and cabinets from within 500 miles of Columbia.

The project has even influenced Chumney outside of work: he’s now building his own home to the LEED for Homes standard. Source: [Free Times](#) and [The Post and Courier](#)

HUD to Use LEED-ND Criteria

HUD will begin using the [LEED-ND](#) (Neighborhood Development) rating system in its grant scoring criteria for about \$3.25 billion in grants.

“You and I both know that for decades, the Federal government has actually encouraged sprawl – whether it’s building the beltways and highways in the second half of the 20th century that connected employment centers outside city limits or, more recently, a housing finance system that perpetuated the ‘Drive to Qualify’ myth,” HUD Sec. Shaun Donovan said at a recent [Congress for the New Urbanism \(CNU\)](#) conference in Atlanta.

“Today, we live in a changing world where cities, suburbs and the rural areas that surround them share an economic future and metropolitan regions are the engines of our economy. Where people are voting with their feet more and more – in search of walkable neighborhoods with transportation options. And where the global threat of climate change is very real.

“That’s why, for the first time in the history of federal grant competitions, I want to announce today that HUD will be using location-efficiency to score our grant applications.

Donovan added, “It’s time that federal dollars stopped encouraging sprawl and started lowering the barriers to the kind of sustainable development our country needs and our communities want.”

LEED-ND encourages better planning in three areas: Smart location and linkage, neighborhood pattern and design, and green infrastructure and buildings. It was developed jointly by CNU, the [National Resources Defense Council \(NRDC\)](#), and the USGBC. Source: [HUD](#)

Resident’s Corner Make a Green Resolution This Year

Summertime Energy-Saving Ideas

(This part goes without saying: Keep your windows closed if you’re using the A/C!)

1. Air-dry beach towels. They don’t really NEED to go in the dryer.
2. Take shorter showers. (And since it’s hot out, turn down the heat!)
3. Unplug your TV. It’s probably not news to any of you at this point that all plugged-in electronics constantly suck energy even when they’re “turned off,” but recently, the triple threat of flat screen TVs, cable boxes, and DVR devices have officially overtaken refrigerators as the biggest energy drain in American homes.
4. Really turn off your home computer. Don’t just put it to sleep.
5. Weather-strip your doors. It costs about \$1.50 at the hardware store and is easy as masking tape.

Source: [Smartpower.org](#)

We want to hear from you! Please send us nominations for projects to be highlighted in EcoWise.

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