The Manufactured Housing Consensus Committee (MHCC) was established by the Manufactured Housing Improvement Act (MHIA) of 2000 to provide recommendations for the revision and interpretation of HUD's manufactured housing construction and safety standards, related enforcement and procedural regulation recommendations, as well as developing national model installation standards for the manufactured housing industry. All proposals will be forwarded to the HUD Secretary who, as required under the FHA, must act on these recommendations within a certain time frame.

The newly formed group's first meeting, held Aug. 13-15 in Washington, D.C., was primarily an organizational meeting. Major accomplishments included the development of its by-laws and the implementation of subcommittees.

William W. Matchneer, manufactured housing administrator, served as the designated federal officer (DFO) and interim chair. Aaron Santana, from HUD's Office of General Counsel opened the meeting by providing the MHCC a basic understanding of how the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) governs their procedures. He also informed the group their meetings must be open to the public and prior notice of such meetings must be made in the Federal Register.

Robert Solomon of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the administering organization charged with running the consensus standards development process, presented an overview of the MHIA of 2000 and explained the MHCC's duties and responsibilities.

Solomon also described the MHCC charter and operating procedures. The MHCC charter outlines its authority, duration, scope, objectives, duties and responsibilities; appointment of the DFO; the provision to the MHCC of staff and technical support by HUD; membership and member selection; appointment of officers and coordination of meetings; and estimated annual costs to operate the committee.

After reviewing the charter, the MHCC approved its by-laws and made a list of issues to work on, including revisions to HUD Standards and Procedural and Enforcement Regulations as well as development of installation standards. The MHCC created the following subcommittees to facilitate prompt attention to these issues:

- A Standards Subcommittee on Planning and Prioritization
- A Standing Subcommittee on Enforcement

Subject to HUD's approval, the chair appoints the planning subcommittee of at least three people, with each MHCC member category equally represented. The subcommittee receives requests for action by the MHCC and will recommend the priority in which the issues are addressed. Members include: Douglas Gorman-producer; Susan Brenton-user; and Dana Roberts-general interest/public officials.

- Standards and Regulations Process Subcommittee

This group is working with the NFPA and HUD to identify precise federal requirements for submitting the proposed standards and regulations through rulemaking. The overall intent of forming this subcommittee was to expedite the rulemaking process after MHCC finalized its recommendations. Members include: Danny Chorban and Edgar Bryant-producers; Jerome McHale (chair) and Charles Lewis-users; Richard Weisart and Randy Vogt-general interest/public officials; Matchneer-HUD; and a representative from HUD's General Counsel Office.

Finally, the MHCC established subcommittees for Standards, Enforcement Regulations and Installation. Members of the public also will serve on each subcommittee.

- The Standards Subcommittee is charged with proposing updates to the HUD Code (Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards). They will present the top two priorities to address the next meeting. Members include: Nader Torossian—producers; Karl Braun, Alan Youse, McHale and Michael Zeeman (chair)—users; and Christine Walsh Rogers and Vogt—general interest/public officials.

- The Enforcement Regulations Subcommittee will propose periodic updates of the Federal Manufactured Home Procedural and Enforcement Regulations. They too will present their top two priorities to address at the next meeting. Members include: Ghorbani, LaMont and Gorman—producers; Braun, Brenton and Youse—users; and William Lagano, Roberts (chair) and Walsh Rogers—general interest/public officials.

- The Installation Subcommittee was created to develop standard manufactured home installation standards by Feb. 14, 2004 and a program for timely dispute resolutions between manufacturers, retailers and installers with respect to the responsibility for correcting defects home owners identify in the first year of owning their home. The HUD Secretary must implement programs for both tasks by December 2005 in states without comparable programs. Members include: Frank Walter, Ghorbani, Gorman and Tomasabi—producers; Jack Berger, Youse and Leven—users; and Lagano, Roberts and Bryan Portz (chair)—general interest/public officials.

MHCC subcommittees began their work immediately to prioritize issues and identify actions to take before the next meeting, Dec. 4-5, in Washington, D.C.