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Public Housing Agencies are Leaders in Seeking LEED Certification



Asst. Secretary Henriquez, Deputy Asst. Secretary Gross and HACEP Staff attend the ribbon cutting for the Paisano Green Community. Photo Credit: HACEP

The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) reports that half of all LEED for Homes® certified units (approximately 10,000 LEED-certified homes) are affordable housing; this includes a number of units from Public Housing Agencies. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; the certification is issued by an impartial third party who verifies the design and construction while promoting strategies to create a healthier environment through water efficiency, reduced energy use, waste reduction and improved air quality.

In Los Angeles, CA, the [Dana Strand Senior Apartments](#) earned a LEED Gold certification. Developed through a partnership between the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and ROEM Development Corporation, the apartments contain 100 one-bedroom apartments for seniors. The project used sustainable building techniques and several green features for energy efficiency such as Low-E Windows, Green Label Plus carpet, paint with low volatile organic compound (VOC), high-efficiency showers and toilets.

The Housing Authority of the City of El Paso (HACEP) earned LEED Platinum certification for its Paisano Green Community. This property provides 100 low income seniors affordable housing through its 73-unit development. Assistant Secretary Sandra Henriquez and Deputy Assistant Secretary Debra Gross attended the ribbon cutting for the Paisano Green Community and toured the many green improvements which include the latest technology in solar panels and wind turbines.

Housing authorities interested in getting LEED certification must be aware of the requirements, eligibility and the LEED Rating System Checklist that applies to your project. General LEED information is available at: <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1988> and the Affordable Housing Initiative at <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?>

Big Changes Coming to the PIH Newsletters

EcoWise, *The Resident* and *Public Housing Management* are going quarterly! This will be the last issue of this newsletter until the fall. When *EcoWise* returns, it will have a new look and a new format. One thing that will stay the same is HUD's commitment to bringing you the latest information and most inspiring stories on environmental improvements in Public Housing. You can get in touch with HUD's newsletter team by writing TheResident@HUD.gov. Please contact us with questions, comments or story ideas. For now, happy reading and see you in the fall.

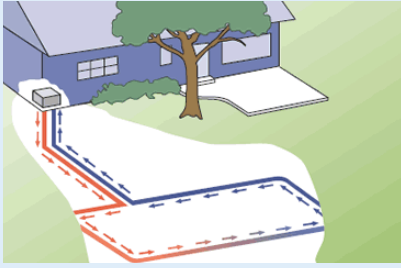
Upcoming Conferences

Energy Performance Contracting: Use Performance Contracting to Green Your Housing Authority
August 6 – 11, 2012
Chicago, IL

For more information regarding course registration, course agenda, or lodging, please visit: <http://www.cvent.com/d/wcqp3p/1Q>.

Smoke Free Multi-Unit Housing: A Focus on Affordable Housing
August 14, 2012
Kansas City, MO
<http://bit.ly/KjnTHZ>

Geothermal Savings in Public Housing



Geothermal system cooling a home during the summer. Photo Credit: USGS

Geothermal heat pumps, also known as ground-source heat pumps, are gaining increasing attention for saving money and supporting the environment. These units transfer heat extracted from ground and water

rather than produce heat. They are at least 30 percent more efficient than heat pumps, electric resistance heating or gas furnaces and are 75 percent more efficient than oil furnaces.

When warming a building, geothermal heat pumps rely on a system of pipes, pumps, and glycol/water solutions to extract heat from the ground, lakes, and ponds. When in air conditioning mode, the pumps reverse the flow to discharge heat. These pumps do not have outdoor coils or components that can be damaged, thereby also saving on maintenance costs. In fact, geothermal heat pumps have the lowest life-cycle costs for space heating, water heating, and air conditioning.

Kimberly Woodhull, Executive Director for Newton Housing Authority (NHA) oversaw the installation of geothermal heating for the PHA's new Liberty Towers complex. "We used to normally pay between \$2,500 and \$3,000 per month on oil bills for water heating," Woodhull said. "That's gone now." The towers have since won the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials' Mid-Atlantic Region award of excellence for saving \$32,000 worth of energy in 2 years.

Nashville's Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) began implementing energy and water conservation in the 1990s to cut utility bills. In 2009, MDHA installed geothermal heating and cooling in a 125-unit apartment complex and found it to be a huge success.

"You have to know the technology and how it works, but we find geothermal to be a more durable system than most," said Phil Ryan, Director of the MDHA. "There seems to be less wear and tear on the components, and it require[s] little maintenance. Our residents at this particular site pay their own utilities, so they couldn't be more pleased."

For other housing agencies hoping to increase their use of sustainable design strategies, Ryan says, "Be bold. Don't think you can't use a technology without giving it a thorough look. Housing authorities and other big institutional users, we typically have much longer periods of ownership, so we ought to be the ones leading the way in technologies. If not us, who will?"

More information on geothermal systems is available at: <http://1.usa.gov/yDHDB>

Resident's Corner | Federal Asthma Action Plan

Low income children are more likely to have asthma reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. Asthma is also directly linked to performance in school, with 10.5 million days of school missed annually due to asthma. Children with asthma are more likely to be overweight and obese than children without asthma. They are also less likely to have access to health care and more likely to lack health insurance coverage. Uninsured people with asthma are less likely to take the preventive medicine they may need to keep their condition under control, making them more likely to suffer an attack.

A Presidential task force has developed an action plan that will tackle the burden of asthma on low income children. The Action Plan will coordinate efforts to improve asthma management and prevention through four strategies:

- 1) **Reduce barriers to health care focusing on asthma management.** Asthma health care will include access to medical services, education, and environmental concerns. Focusing on comprehensive asthma care will reduce emergency room visits and hospital admissions which will lower the cost of these health care services.
- 2) **Increase the ability of community-based asthma care systems.** The best practices of current programs will be used to develop and improve community-based asthma care systems across the country.
- 3) **Identify children, families, and communities most impacted by asthma.** Standardized reporting of asthma and asthma risk factors will allow asthma care programs to track financial and medical resources.
- 4) **Accelerate efforts to understand the causes of asthma and what may prevent asthma.** By understanding the causes of asthma, the asthma care programs can provide education to the public including public housing residents that can minimize new cases of asthma and minimize asthma severity.

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said, "The numbers don't lie: Asthma disproportionately impacts low-income minority families which is why we must do everything we can to ensure all children have a healthy place to call home. Today's announcement will help the federal government support the development of innovative new approaches to improve and control asthma."

To read more about the Action Plan and to follow its progress, go to <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/childrenstaskforce/index.html>

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