



In the News

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Home, sweet, home. Army veteran, retired healthcare worker and community volunteer Kenneth Hemphill was one of the speakers at the Tri-State Housing Summit June 8 in Hannibal. Hemphill participated in the USDA Rural Development Self-Help Housing Program administered by NECAC. With the help of NECAC Self-Help Supervisor Howard Sommer, he installed new windows and doors at his Hannibal home. NECAC was awarded another Self-Help grant to continue the program in nine counties. More about the grant and the summit on Page 2.



Successes are noted at Tri-State Housing Summit



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer

NECAC President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page, center, accepts a \$365,700 grant recognition from USDA Rural Development Missouri Single Family Housing Director Lindsay Cheek during the Tri-State Housing Summit June 8 in Hannibal. Also pictured, from left, are NECAC Deputy Director for Housing Development Programs Carla Potts, Bryan Nichols, Communications Director for Congressman Sam Graves; Randy Griffith of LIFT Community Action Agency; NECAC Executive Board Member Glenn Eagan; NECAC Self-Help Housing Director Howard Sommer; and NECAC Homeownership Program Assistant Amanda Smith.

Major renovation of a former hospital and expansion of a do-it-yourself home renovation program were among successes highlighted at the Tri-State Housing Summit June 8 in Hannibal.

Summit organizer and NECAC Deputy Director Carla Potts noted that state funding to help convert the former St. Elizabeth Hospital into a senior living facility awaits the signature of Gov. Mike Parson.

The \$15 million tax credit project involves renovating the former healthcare center into 60 apartments for seniors and building six single-family homes on donated lots. Partners are NECAC, NeighborWorks America, City of Hannibal and 3 Diamond Development of Lincolnwood, Ill. Additional funding sources may be sought.

“We are excited about this project,” Potts said. “It’s just another example of how partnerships can pay off with the construction of much-needed housing.”

NECAC plans to apply for funding with the Missouri Housing Development Commission. A timetable for construction has not been set.

Self-Help Housing

NECAC has been awarded an additional \$365,700 over two years from USDA Rural Development for the Self-Help Housing Program, which provides participants with one-on-one instruction on renovating their homes.

Lindsay Cheek, USDA Rural Development Missouri State Single-Family Housing Program Director, made the announcement at the summit, saying that 48 homeowners would benefit.

“We thank you for your partnership,” Cheek told Potts and NECAC President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page.

Self-Help Housing participant Kenneth Hemphill of Hannibal offered his take on the program. The 64-year-old Army veteran, retired healthcare employee and community volunteer replaced several doors and windows at his home.

“The program has done a great impact in my life, in my home, in my energy bill,” Hemphill said. “It has changed my home and my life. Keep doing the good work you’re doing.”

The new funding will cover Lincoln, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Shelby and Warren counties in Northeast Missouri. NECAC has been involved with Self-Help Housing since 1999. Under the original program, participants built each other’s homes: Forty-eight houses were constructed over about

10 years in Shelby, Monroe, Randolph and Montgomery counties.

In 2017, NECAC was awarded a \$159,000 USDA grant to begin Self-Help renovations at 26 owner-occupied homes in Marion, Monroe, Pike and Ralls counties.

Two years later, the agency was awarded a \$365,700 USDA grant to expand the program to 56 homes in Lincoln, Montgomery, Shelby and Warren counties.

Other voices

Many summit speakers echoed Potts, who said “nothing is more fundamental than housing.”

Hannibal Mayor Pro-Tem Mike Dobson highlighted the revitalization that the summit and other efforts have had in making communities better.

“You talk about revitalization, it’s contagious,” he said. “We can make a difference in our towns and neighborhoods.”

Page said housing impacts everyone.

“This isn’t a ‘poor people’s problem,’” he said. “Like every issue that affects all of us it may affect the poor more so than it does the rest of us, but this is an issue that affects anybody with a dream – and why is it even a dream? – of housing their families in a safe, affordable home.”

HUD Regional Administrator Deke Clayborn highlighted helpful programs his agency offers. While HUD doesn’t “have all the pieces of the puzzle” in place, it can “work together to get things done.”

“We need more housing in all its varieties,” Clayborn said. “What you’re doing is important.”

Chad Frederick, Community Development Director at the Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials in Quincy, outlined his agency’s Land Bank Authority work in Quincy and Jacksonville, Ill.

It’s a tool for upgrading abandoned or vacated residential and commercial properties.

The Land Bank “tries to help start the process, hopefully, early – getting the ones that actually still have some value and getting them back to where there’s something that can be done with that property or on that property,” Frederick said.

Additional speakers were Wayne Crawford of Missouri Inclusive Housing and Chris Krehmeyer of Beyond Housing. More than 80 people attended the 17th annual event, which was held at the Rialto Banquet Hall in Hannibal.

Community Action Month receptions held in May

NECAC recognized the May observance of National Community Action Month with receptions at each of its 12 county service centers.

Board members, staff and local stakeholders got a chance to discuss agency initiatives while enjoying refreshments.

NECAC was founded in 1965, just one year after President

Lyndon Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act. It created Community Action Agencies to mobilize resources and address employment, education, health and other needs of disadvantaged people in their locales.

NECAC is one of 19 not-for-profit agencies in Missouri and more than 1,000 nationwide.



Lewis County



Lincoln County



Macon County



Marion County



Monroe County



Montgomery County



Pike County



Ralls County



Randolph County



Shelby County



St. Charles County



Warren County



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Mike Bridgins,
Chairman of
the Board



Dan Page,
President &
CEO



Return Service Requested



Employee Spotlight: FSS Coordinator finds it hard to bid farewell

Sandy Gamble is ready to retire, but the decision has not been easy.

The Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator will miss the relationships she's developed with clients and co-workers over more than a decade.

"To be able to help meet their needs and see them succeed, it's really been rewarding," said Gamble, 69. "Not for me, but the client. The client did all the work. I just guided them. Of course, it hasn't been all roses, but for the most part it's been great."

Gamble is one of four staff overseeing the FSS Program. "I love what I have done and I'm going to really miss it."

Gamble estimates she's counseled at least 85 clients over the years, sometimes covering up to nine counties at a time.

The program sets aside part of clients' Section 8 Housing Rental Assistance money in an escrow account. Upon com-



Sandy Gamble

pletion after five years, they may use the savings to buy a house, start their own business, go back to school, purchase a car or anything they feel fits their family's needs.

Many participants must go it alone, and Gamble can relate. The single mother has two biological, two adopted and two oth-

er children, in addition to 12 grandchildren ranging from four months to age 21.

"It's hard," she said. "Sometimes, you don't have the resources and you don't have anyone to talk to. Clients needed to vent. I was able to listen and help them, and if I didn't have an answer, I sought one out and they appreciated it."

Before coming to NECAC in December 2012, Gamble had experience in social services and public service. She plans to continue with volunteer work, traveling and spending time with family.

Gamble has given notice of her retirement to clients and asked them to keep in touch. After all, it's hard to walk away from a job that was so satisfying.

"I appreciate the time and opportunity working for NECAC," she said. "I wish I had this job many years ago. May NECAC continue to serve their communities with compassion and care to others."



NECAC's Jesse Ohnemus, left, and Jacob Windmiller unload air conditioners.

Air conditioners available to elderly, disabled

NECAC is offering free air conditioners to qualifying elderly and disabled residents of nine counties.

The 75 window units were donated by Ameren Missouri and Cool Down Missouri. Ameren customers living in Lewis, Lincoln, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, St. Charles and Warren counties can participate.

Applicants should bring to their appointments a Social Security card, proof of last month of income and their latest Ameren bill. Air conditioners are available at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis.

NECAC is contractually required to publish the following: "This program is funded 100% at \$100 with federal funds received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as provided by the Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division."