



In the News

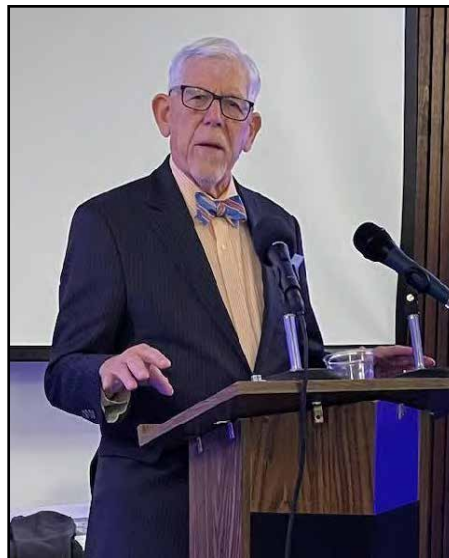
September-October 2023

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Annual Meeting is held



Mike Bridgins



Charles McCann



Dan Page

Successes highlighted, challenges to be addressed

NECAC held its Annual Meeting and Installation of Officers and Directors Dinner on Oct. 24.

NECAC President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page gave an update on significant progress made during the year and offered praise to board members, staff and volunteers.

In addition to highlighting numerous successes, Page discussed challenges ahead, including efforts already under way to improve employee retention and discussions about for-profit ventures.

“There will be bumps and there will be mistakes but those can sometimes be anticipated and minimalized,” Page said. “We have a board that wants to see us continue to grow. We have a staff that want to see us continue to grow. With the collaboration of this board and the staff, we are destined for great things!”

Mike Bridgins of St. Charles County was re-installed as board chairman, with Glenn Eagan of Shelby County as vice-chairman and Lowell Jackson of Ralls County as secretary. Trustees are Troy Dawkins of Shelby County, Curtissa Kerr-Hunter of Lincoln County and Mickey Shipp of Macon County.

Bridgins paid tribute to Maxine Jones of Randolph County, who passed away on May 19 at age 83. Mike Whelan of Monroe County and Fred Vahle of Warren County were sworn in and recognized for each serving 27 years on the board.

The guest speaker was Community Action pioneer Charles McCann of St. Joseph, former director of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) with the Missouri Department of

Social Services and a Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) with the National Community Action Partnership.

McCann performed the installation ceremony, and spoke about the values of hope, service and dignity embodied by Community Action.

“Community Action is our game,” he told the crowd. “Respect the game.”

Also sworn in were the following board members:

Lewis County: Travis Flear of Lewistown and Phil Darnell and Paul Kinney of Canton.

Lincoln County: Matt Bass and Jere Burkemper of Troy.

Macon County: Clarence Walker and Jean Jones of Macon.

Marion County: David Lomax of Palmyra and Jim Miller and Roy Hark of Hannibal.

Monroe County: Jessica Chase and Harold Long of Paris.

Montgomery County: Dave Teeter and Carole Weeks of Montgomery City.

Pike County: Tommy Wallace of Louisiana, Curt Mitchell of Clarksville and Lori Smith of New Hartford.

Ralls County: John Lake of Center and Janet Hoyt of New London.

Randolph County: Sid Conklin and Lorna Miles of Moberly.

Shelby County: Melissa Killen of Leonard.

St. Charles County: Mary Hutchison of St. Charles and Diane Hileman of St. Peters.

Warren County: Lisa Key of Wright City and Angie Light of Warrenton.

Board members are recognized at Annual Meeting

Pictured below are NECAC board members recognized during the Annual Meeting Oct. 24 for their service. President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page and Board Chairman Mike Bridgins presented the certificates. Members from Lewis and Randolph counties were unable to attend.



Lincoln County
Jere Burkemper. Not pictured: Matt Bass and Curtissa Kerr-Hunter.



Macon County
Clarence Walker, Jean Jones and Mickey Shipp.



Marion County
Roy Hark, David Lomax and Jim Miller.



Monroe County
Mike Whelan and Jessica Chase. Not pictured: Harold Long.



Montgomery County
Carole Weeks and Dave Teeter. Other position is vacant.



Pike County
Lori Smith and Curt Mitchell. Not pictured: Tommy Wallace.



Ralls County
John Lake, Janet Hoyt and Lowell Jackson.



Shelby County
Troy Dawkins and Melissa Killen. Not pictured: Glenn Eagan.



St. Charles County
Mike Bridgins and Mary Hutchison. Not pictured: Diane Hileman.



Warren County
Fred Vahle and Angie Light. Not pictured: Lisa Key.

Couple enjoys Self-Help Housing renovations

Jerry and Linda Lillard are getting a little help in fixing up their 116-year-old home.

The two are part of the USDA Rural Development Self-Help Housing Program administered by NECAC. It provides participants with free building materials and one-on-one instruction in renovating their homes.

The Lillards replaced nine windows and three exterior doors, working with NECAC Self-Help Housing Construction Supervisor Howard Sommer.

“It’s been a blessing to us,” Lillard said. “It’s helped us cut down on our utility bill I hope.”

The house was built in 1907 and the couple has lived there since 2011. Lillard, 60, is a Navy veteran who has years of experience in auto mechanics and carpentry, but a disability means he isn’t able to do as much work anymore. Still, he and his wife were hands-on during the project.



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer
Linda and Jerry Lillard measure a parting stop for a window at their home. The couple participated in the USDA Rural Development Self-Help Housing program administered by NECAC.

“They were a very good couple to work with because they had some experience in construction and needed little training on how to do these replacements,” Sommer said. “The material was delivered on Aug. 16, and they started

work right away and stayed with it every day even in some very hot conditions. They finished well ahead of their projected date. My thanks to them.”

Self-Help participants are being sought in Lincoln, Mar-

ion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Shelby and Warren counties. Applicants must own their homes and meet income guidelines. In June, NECAC was awarded an additional \$365,700 over two years from USDA Rural Development to fund the program.

NECAC has been involved with Self-Help Housing since 1999. Under the original phase, 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.



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer

Weatherization Day successful

NECAC held a successful Weatherization Day demonstration Oct. 26 at the River Bluff Senior Apartments in Hannibal. Pictured are NECAC’s Tom Branham, left, and Clintan Caldwell preparing for a test to pinpoint problem areas. NECAC Marion County Board Members David Lomax and Jim Miller were among those who attended. NECAC weatherizes more than 150 homes a year, providing energy-efficient improvements and extending the life of housing stock in communities.



Employee Spotlight: Standley likes fast pace of energy assistance

Deadlines don’t intimidate Cindy Standley.

NECAC’s longest-serving Energy Assistance Counselor enjoys the pressure she faces every fall.

With applications for utility help streaming in, Standley and her co-workers are kept busy.

“I do something different every-day,” said Standley, who joined NECAC on Sept. 25, 2014.

It’s Standley’s job to make sure applications that cross her desk are completed properly and that clients meet eligibility guidelines for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the Energy Crisis Intervention Program.

Standley works five-and-a-half hours a day, and sees 20 to 25 applications during that time.

“Every application is different,” she said. “The time frame to get them done quickly and correctly is tight.”

The first step in the process is to date each application as it comes in. That starts the clock. Standley now has three days to register the application with the state. If it’s a disconnect notice, she has just 48 hours.

Some people would shy away from being put in such a position, but not Standley. “It makes me use my brain better,” she said.

At the end of the day, Standley goes home satisfied that she’s helped NECAC meet its goal of helping those in need.

“I like helping people,” she said. “It gives you a sense of accomplishment.”



Standley

Applications pour in as utility assistance season starts

NECAC has begun the winter utility assistance season.

Applications began in October, with payments made starting Nov. 1 for the elderly and disabled. Payments for others start Dec. 1. Two federally-funded programs are available. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) offers a one-time payment to income-qualifying households based

upon the type of utility. The maximum benefit for tank propane-heated homes is \$495. It's \$326 for natural gas and fuel oil, \$318 for electricity, \$219 for wood, \$153 for kerosene and \$177 for cylinder propane.

The Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) may be used by income-qualifying household through September 2024, with a maximum of up to \$800

from Nov. 1 to May 31 and \$600 from June 1 to Sept. 30. Applicants must have received a shut-off notice.

NECAC assisted about 9,600 households with utility assistance last year, and expects the number to increase this winter due to inflation and escalating costs. Applications continue to be accepted online or in person at NECAC Service Centers.



By Tony Wagner, Housing Inspector

Warren coats and shoes

Warren County Service Coordinator Desiree Antoniou has been collecting winter coats since Oct. 1. Three have been distributed so far to homeless people. She also received a donation of 23 pair of new shoes. In addition, the service center offers a food pantry to those in need.

Harrell earns national recognition

NECAC's Dawn Harrell has earned a national certification.

Harrell has been named a Nationally Certified Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Implementer following an intensive five-month course sponsored by the Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers.

ROMA is a Congressionally-approved management and accountability process to measure the performance and success of agencies such as NECAC that receive federal funding for client self-sufficiency programs.

Harrell, a NECAC Emergency Services Coordinator, will use the new training in planning new contracts, tracking program outcomes and determining client needs.

"It's a great accomplishment," she said. "It will be a good tool to use to help the agency in the future."

"I'm very proud that Dawn received her implementer certification," said NECAC CSBG Director Kayla Wasson. "It will really be another asset to NECAC."

Harrell is a Hannibal resident and a 1997 graduate of Hannibal High School. She joined NECAC in 2015.



Harrell

Pike County offers two ways to help for upcoming holidays

NECAC is offering people in Pike County two ways to help make the holidays brighter.

"The need is really great this year and we know we can count on Pike County residents to come through for their neighbors who are struggling," said NECAC Pike County Service Coordinator Penny Dixon. "No child should go without a Christmas present and no family should go hungry during the holidays."

NECAC, the Salvation Army and Bowling Green Walmart are offering the Angel Tree Christmas gift program for Pike County kids. Applications are being taken with a deadline of Dec. 7.

Starting Nov. 24, people who shop at Walmart will be able to select a tag from the Angel Tree and buy gifts listed. NECAC and the Salvation Army will make sure the packages get

to families. Angel Tree is open to Pike County, Mo., residents only. Tags will not identify recipients, but will have their age, gender and gift requests. Clothing and toys are especially needed. All gifts must be new, but shoppers are allowed to substitute age-appropriate items.

In addition, NECAC has teamed with the Salvation Army, Walmart in Bowling Green and County Market in Louisiana for the Red Kettle fund-raising campaign, which kicks off Nov. 21 and runs through Dec. 24.

People are needed to ring bells for a couple of hours at a time outside either facility. The schedule is flexible.

"We've had success in the past and we look forward to donations and purchases this year," Dixon said. "Some of the stories are really heartbreaking, and we want to do all we can to make Christmas brighter."



Mike Bridgins,
Chairman of the Board



Dan Page,
President & CEO

