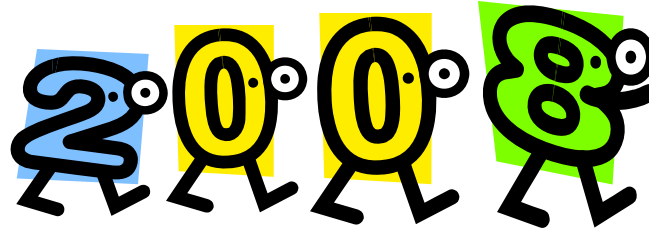


Around the House


Volume 5, Issue 1

January/February, 2008



**Housing and
Community
Services
Department
Mission**

*... to provide housing and
related services
to benefit the citizens and
neighborhoods of
Wichita*



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America is shifting to a "green culture" where all 300 million citizens are embracing the fact that environmental responsibility is everyone's responsibility. One of the strategies in being environmentally conscious is also tied to saving money. Following are tips for renters (and homeowners), to save energy costs.

- ◆ Replace your five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ENERGY STAR qualified lights. That can save more than \$65/year in energy costs.
- ◆ Always turn off your lights when leaving a room. Turning off just one 60-watt incandescent bulb that would otherwise burn eight hours a day, can save about \$15 per year!
- ◆ When purchasing appliances, consider an ENERGY STAR qualified model. They use at least 10 percent less energy.
- ◆ Many consumer electronics products use energy even when turned off. Unplug any battery chargers or power adapters when not in use (like your cell phone charger!).
- ◆ A 10 minute shower can use less water than a full bath.

- ◆ Make sure all air registers are clear of furniture so that air can circulate freely. If your home has radiators use heat-resistant reflectors between radiators and walls. This will help heat the room instead of the wall!
- ◆ During cold weather, take advantage of the sun's warmth by keeping drapes open during daylight hours. To keep out the heat of the summer sun, close window shades and drapes in warm weather.
- ◆ Save water by scraping dishes instead of rinsing them before loading in the dishwasher. Run the dishwasher with a full load and use the air-dry option if available.
- ◆ Wash your laundry with cold water whenever possible, which can save between \$300 and \$400 a year on electric or gas bills.
- ◆ Don't over dry your clothes. If your dryer has a moisture sensor that will automatically turn the machine off when clothes are done, use it to avoid over drying. Remember to clean the lint trap before every load.

You can find more tips like these at energystar.gov.

Results That Matter

A Public Housing tenant was spared the expense and possible injury resulting from fire damage, due to the quick actions of Housing & Community Services staff. Mary Williams-Bey took a call from the tenant who reported smoke coming from her furnace. Mary contacted the fire department and Housing Maintenance staff. Michael Fisher, Housing Electrician, responded even before the Fire Department! Fortunately, because of these quick actions, the fire was limited to the furnace. Dana Noland, Housing's HVAC staff person, then responded and made the necessary repairs, to ensure the family had heat that night.



P.S. This is a good time to remind tenants to purchase renters' insurance, in case of fire or other damage. The Housing Authority is not responsible for your personal items.



From the Director's Chair Mary K. Vaughn

In this first newsletter of the year, I would like to share my thoughts on 2008—a year of change and opportunity!

As 2007 ended, change was already in the air. Wichita City Manager George Kolb, announced he was leaving his position of 3-1/2 years—and the Mayor and Council announced an interim City Manager, Dr. Ed Flentje from Wichita State University. Additionally, the Housing and Community Services Department Assistant Director, Marty Miller, is leaving to direct the Botanica

Center. These personnel changes will be addressed eventually, by introducing new faces and names to already successful operations.

The opportunities of 2008 will be realized not only in the change in City leadership but also in the new initiatives which will be introduced. One such initiative is the report of the Task Force on Ending Chronic Homelessness, which will be released early in 2008. That report will recommend ways to address the needs of the homeless on a permanent basis—including providing housing.

In case you were wondering how you'll be able to keep up with all that 2008 will offer, for many of you the solution will be in your mailboxes later this month.

The **first-ever 2008 Housing and Community Services Department calendar** is being sent to tenants and clients. It is my hope that you will use it to keep track of the important events of 2008, as well as to learn more about the programs which we provide.

On behalf of all the employees of the Housing and Community Services Department, I wish each of you a *Prosperous and Happy New Year!*

It's Survey Time Again!

For those of you who are long time residents of Public Housing, you know that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, conducts an annual survey of residents. Everyone does not receive a survey each year, but for those who do, it is important that you fill it out. Following is a list of frequently asked questions about the survey.

What is the Survey? The Resident Service and Satisfaction Survey is sent to a sampling of public housing residents at each public housing agency (PHA) on a yearly basis to find out how satisfied they are with the living conditions of their unit or development. This survey is part of

HUD's increased commitment to monitoring Public Housing Agencies.

How will HUD use resident's input?

Your satisfaction and experience with your living conditions will be included in HUD's yearly evaluation of your housing agency. This survey was developed with the help of PHA's, resident leaders and representatives of the industry.

Who will be asked to fill it out?

Public Housing residents throughout the nation will be included in the survey process. Not all residents will receive a survey. The

surveys should arrive in mailboxes sometime between January 7, 2008 and March 5, 2008. Wichita Public Housing residents will be chosen randomly using a computer program. The survey will take place yearly, so if a resident does not receive a survey this year they may in the future.



Your cooperation in completing and returning the survey promptly will be appreciated.

Behind the Scenes ...

Dana Noland was recognized in a recent letter from a tenant who expressed appreciation to him for keeping her air conditioner running all summer!

Pat Orender was recognized in a note from a resident, who expressed appreciation for her and the other staff "who do the tough stuff as well as the needed stuff!"



We're proud of our people!

Another tenant sent a letter to **Pat, Tom Byler and Shreda Johnson**, thanking them for their housing assistance. The letter stated: "you really made a big impact in my life!" While the staff who are behind the scenes don't perform their jobs for thanks, we are always happy to hear from our clients and tenants. It is our pleasure to serve you!

WELCOME

In this issue we welcome **Robert "Joe" Rasico** and **David Hart** who are Rehab Specialists in the Neighborhood Improvement Services Division. We also congratulate **Clyde Samilton** who was promoted to Neighborhood Inspector in the Section 8 Division.

Section 8 News



Spotlight on Family Self-Sufficiency

The Wichita Housing Authority was notified in December of a grant award which will continue funding of the Family Self-Sufficiency program. This grant will pay for the three staff who help Section 8 families become self-sufficient by setting and realizing their personal goals. Using funds from previous grants, the Family Self-Sufficiency program was able to achieve the following results—which were recently reported to HUD:

- ◆ Helped 10 people obtain part time employment, with earnings of \$60,705
- ◆ Helped 91 people obtain full time employment, with earnings of \$1,692,868
- ◆ Transitioned 8 families from welfare to work.

In addition, the increase in income reduced program costs for rent, by \$2,513—which can be applied to help other families.

One of the ways these accomplishments were reached, was through attendance at workshops—and taking advantage of the information presented. The 2008

Family Self-Sufficiency workshop schedule is included in this newsletter, as well as workshops related to improving your credit. And once homeownership is achieved, there is an alumni club which helps answer questions about homeownership and pick up tips to make your homeownership experience successful.

All Workshops and Meetings will be held at the Atwater Neighborhood City Hall: 2755 E. 19th Street North

Anyone interested in the Family Self-Sufficiency program should call 462-3729 for more information. It could be the most important call you make for you and your family's future.

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## SECTION 8 LANDLORDS

Those of you who attended the annual Landlord meeting in November, heard about our plans to hold information meetings throughout the year (in addition to the annual meeting). These meetings are being planned to provide information and answer your questions, and to provide you with tips and tools to make your experience as a Section 8 landlord, the best it can be. More details will be forthcoming, but following is the meeting schedule:

**Information Meetings:**  
June 11 and September 10

**Annual Meeting:**  
November 21, 2008

### 2008 FSS Workshops 6:00 pm

- February 7
- March 13
- April 3
- April 17
- May 8
- July 10
- August 23
- October 9
- November 6

### 2008 CreditSmart Workshops 10:00 am

- April 26: Your Credit, Why it is Important
- May 10: Managing Your Money/Goal Setting
- June 7: Banking Services/Establishing, Maintaining Good Credit
- July 19: Understanding Credit Scoring/ Thinking Like A Lender
- August 23: Avoiding Credit Traps
- September 13: Restoring Your Credit/ Planning for Your Future
- October 18: Becoming A Homeowner

### 2008 Homeowners Alumni Meetings 5:30 pm

For current Section 8 homeowners!

- March 10
- May 12
- July 14
- September 15

## Current HAP Payment Schedule

| <i>Month</i>   | <i>Mail Date</i>  |
|----------------|-------------------|
| FEBRUARY, 2008 | JANUARY 29, 2008  |
| MARCH, 2008    | FEBRUARY 29, 2008 |

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*We're On The Web!*  
[www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing](http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing)

## Earned Income Tax Credit

Working families who earn low wages may be eligible for a special tax refund from the government. Following are common questions asked about the Earned Income Tax Credit program.

**Q. What is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)?**

**A.** The earned income tax credit (EITC) is a tax credit for certain people who work and have low wages. A tax credit usually means more money in your pocket. It reduces the amount of tax you owe. The EITC may also give you a refund.

**Q. What is Earned Income?**

**A.** Earned income includes all the taxable income and wages you get from working. There are two ways to get earned income: You work for someone who pays you, or; You work in a business you own.

**Q. Who can claim the credit?**

**A.** To claim the EITC on your tax return, you must meet all of the following rules:

- You must have a valid Social Security Number
- You must have earned income from employment or from self-employment.
- Your filing status cannot be married, filing separately.
- You must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year, or a nonresident alien married to a U.S. citizen or resident alien and filing a joint return.
- You **cannot** be a qualifying child of another person.
- If you do not have a qualifying child, you must:
  - be age 25 but under 65 at the end of the year,
  - live in the United States for more than half the year, and
  - not qualify as a dependent of another person.

Please check this out—it could mean money for your and your family!

The Government may owe YOU up to **\$4,716!!**

**Did you earn** less than \$39,783 in 2007?

You may be eligible for **Earned Income Credit**

Visit a VITA site for **FREE** tax preparation!  
**FREE VITA** Tax sites will be open on February 1, 2008.  
**Call 2-1-1** for more information.

