

Around the House

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Housing and Community Services Department Mission

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



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September is a month when most people think about children returning to school. But September is also **Healthy Aging Month**. The Healthy Aging® campaign focuses on Physical Fitness, Social Wellness, Financial Fitness and Mental Wellness.

It's no wonder then that one of the special days in September is **September 9 - National Grandparents Day**. In 1978, President Carter designated that the first Sunday after Labor Day would be National Grandparents Day. September was chosen as the time for Grandparents Day to help symbolize that grandparents and other seniors are in the 'autumn' years of life.

That leads to another special date: **September 23 - the first day of Autumn**.

As we transition from summer to fall this September, the Wichita Housing Authority would like to wish all our tenants and clients who are grandparents, a **Happy Grandparents Day!** And we encourage everyone to follow healthy aging tips which you can find in the Director's letter on page 2!

October is probably best known as the month when Halloween occurs, but a more important highlight of October is Fire Prevention Week, which is **October 7-13, 2007**. This year the national theme is "Practice Your Escape Plan".

As a part of this year's Fire Safety emphasis, a revised Fire Safety Workbook is being prepared for all Housing Authority residents and clients. In addition, special presentations by the Wichita Fire Department, will be made to residents in congregate settings.

Until you receive an updated Workbook or presentation, please note the following:

- Public Housing tenants should review the Fire Safety Workbook which was a part of your orientation—and prepare and practice your family's escape plan in case of fire.
- Greenway Manor and McLean Manor tenants are also reminded to review the special fire safety information sheet you received when you moved in.
- Section 8 clients should also prepare and practice an escape plan for you and your

Basic Fire Safety Plan steps:

- Identify 2 ways to exit; do not block the exits with furniture or other household items.
- Leave immediately when the smoke alarm goes off, or when you see fire or smell smoke!
- Call 9-1-1 after you leave.
- Never, never go back into a burning building.
- Practice your escape plan!

We want you to be safe!

Results That Matter

In July, Housing and Community Services Department managers joined eight youth who were part of a special youth employment team, and planted flowers along several blocks in northeast Wichita. Their work was a part of the New Communities Initiative which is focusing on improving conditions in the northeast area. It will later be moved to other areas. The flower planting capped an intensive clean up of the area and made a visible contribution to the City's Core Area and Neighborhoods goal to produce Results That Matter!





From the Director's Chair Mary K. Vaughn

I will celebrate a birthday in September and that might be why my attention was drawn to the fact that September is Healthy Aging month. The Healthy Aging® Campaign has identified several ways that we can take care of our health as we grow older. And you can start at any age! I hope you'll like them.

Physical Fitness. Choose an exercise that you like and stick with it; do at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise every day.

Social Well-Being. Contribute time to the community through volunteer groups (Public Housing residents are reminded of their community service requirements). Also, stay in close contact with friends and family. Write, email or call someone daily.

Mental Wellness. Keep your mind exercised too, by reading, learning a new skill and researching something that interests you. Develop a hobby!

Financial Fitness. Establish financial goals, invest in a savings plan that compounds interest, establish a budget and stick to it!

Healthy aging can happen if we put our minds to it. I plan to do so —I hope you'll join me!

*You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old.
~George Burns*

Housing Authority Annual Plan

On October 21, 1998, the *Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998* (QHWRA) was signed into law as part of the FY 1999 Appropriations Bill. One provision of the Act is the mandate for public housing authorities to prepare a five-year plan showing the needs and goals for that period (update every five years) and a more detailed annual operating plan. The annual plan must include, among other things, information on the housing needs of the locality, population served, method of rent determination, operations, capital improvements, unmet housing needs of families with low to moderate incomes and efforts to coordinate the program with local welfare agencies. These plans cover the administrative policies and anticipated subsidies for

both Section 8 and Public Housing Programs. This year's Annual Plan includes amending the Plan to preference Public Housing applicants that have employed family members, elderly (age 62 and over) heads of households and disabled households as defined by the Social Security Administration.

Section 511 of the QHWRA requires the board of directors of housing authorities to conduct a public hearing to discuss the housing authority plans and to invite public comment regarding the plans. In the event that the board receives public comment, written or oral, which is deemed significant enough to amend the plans, the board may

amend the plans and certify the plans as amended.

The 5-year and 2008 Annual Plans will be available for public inspection at 332 N. Riverview. Written comments regarding the Plans can be mailed to 332 N. Riverview, Wichita, KS 67203 and must be received by September 28, 2007. The public hearing will be held in the City Council Chambers in City Hall at 455 N. Main, following the City Council Meeting which commences at 9:00 a.m. on October 2, 2007.



Behind the Scenes ...

The City of Wichita has a new program called I.R.I.S.E. It encourages employees to nominate co-workers who are performing above and beyond normal expectations, according to the following: Integrity; Respect; Inclusiveness; Stewardship; and Excellence. Nominations are sent to the Human Resources Department and



We're proud of our people!

names are drawn from the submissions, to receive recognition and a small gift. Four Housing and Community Services Department employees have been recognized in this program: **Donna Sanchez; Kendra Walker; Carla Bonjour** and **Lena Wagner**. All but Donna work in the Section 8 program. Donna is in the Fiscal Division. Congratulations to all!

WELCOME

In this issue we welcome Mark Witt who joined the Housing and Community Services Department team as a Maintenance Worker. Mark will join a group of employees who work hard every day to address the maintenance needs of Public Housing's 575 properties. Welcome Mark!

Section 8 News

INSPECTION REMINDERS!

Section 8 clients and landlords are reminded of the importance of housing inspections. Prior to allowing a Section 8 voucher holder to move to a unit, that unit must pass an initial inspection. In order to remain in the program, the unit must also pass annual inspections.

Initial inspections are also required if a voucher holder wishes to transfer from one program to another (i.e., from Housing Choice Voucher to Shelter Plus Care), but remain in the same housing unit. That unit will undergo a complete "initial inspection".

Section 8 clients who wish to relocate within the same program, can do so at the time of their annual recertification. The Leasing Specialist will schedule the recertification appr. 60-90 days ahead. If you would like to move, you should allow at least 45 days for such a move because of the need for inspections and other paperwork—so plan ahead!

A final reminder: in order to relocate, a client must be in good standing with the Housing Authority, the landlord and the unit.

SECTION 8 LANDLORDS

\$ Do you want access to your Section 8 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) as fast as possible?

\$ Do you want to avoid trips to the bank with a paper check?

The City of Wichita invites you to sign up for direct deposit. With this system, your funds will be deposited to your bank account the evening prior to the check issuance date, so you'll have access to it on the day checks are normally mailed! And signing up is easy.

Just go to the City website at www.wichita.gov and click on the Finance Department. From there you will see a link for Automated Clearinghouse (ACH). Click there and you will see a page with 3 simple steps.

1. Print the form & complete your portion.
2. Take it to your bank for them to complete.
3. Return the form to the Finance Department.

We hope you will seriously consider this paper-less way to receive your payments. Many of you already know of the benefits of this service. Everyone is encouraged to give it a try!

Questions? Call the Controller's office at (316) 268-4651.

Reminder! The following workshops are mandatory for Family Self-Sufficiency participants and optional for anyone who has an

2007 Homeowners Alumni Calendar

Sept. 17.....Budgeting/Foreclosure Prevention
 Nov. 19.....Meeting

**All meetings start at 5:30 pm
 Atwater City Hall
 for current Section 8 homeowners!**

2007 CreditSmart Workshops

Sept. 15.....Restoring Your Credit & Planning for Your Future
 Oct. 13Becoming A Homeowner

All meetings at Dellrose United Methodist Church, at 10 am.

2007 FSS Workshops

Oct. 11.....Domestic Violence/ Substance Abuse
 Nov. 8.....Understanding Your FSS Escrow

**Meeting locations to be announced.
 Meeting time: 6 pm.**

Current HAP Payment Schedule

<i>Month</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
OCTOBER, 2007	SEPTEMBER 28, 2007
NOVEMBER, 2007	OCTOBER 30, 2007

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We're On The Web!
www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing

News You Can Use



Construction Update!

The Housing and Community Services Department office environment has been under construction most of the summer. First, portions of Riverview Street were re-paved. Anyone who drove on Riverview before the paving, knows how badly the re-paving was needed! Unfortunately, however, when the project started so did the June rains—and so construction was delayed until the weather cooperated! Right after the street was finished, we began re-paving our parking lot—another much-needed project. But by the time this newsletter arrives, all the orange cones will be put away and it will be smooth sailing for visitors to our office who drive on Riverview and park in our lot. Thanks for your patience during construction!

Survey Reminder! Responses to the Housing and Community Services Department customer service survey have been great. Thank you to everyone who has received and returned their survey. And as a reminder, surveys are sent out every month to some of our customers. If you receive a survey, please fill it out and return it. Your responses help us know which staff and programs are meeting your expectations and which ones need more work. So far, your responses have been very encouraging. And don't worry if you haven't received a survey yet—everyone will get a chance to

complete one over the course of the year.



!!NOTICE!! TENANT ADVISORY BOARD SEEKING NEW MEMBERS

Due to the resignation of a few Tenant Advisory Board Members, the Board would like those Section 8 and Public Housing clients who will be interested in serving on the Board, to contact Pat Harder at 332 N. Riverview, 462-3768 or pharder@wichita.gov. Tenant Advisory Board Members advise the management of the Wichita Housing Authority in the development of the Annual and 5-Year Agency Plans and related policies.