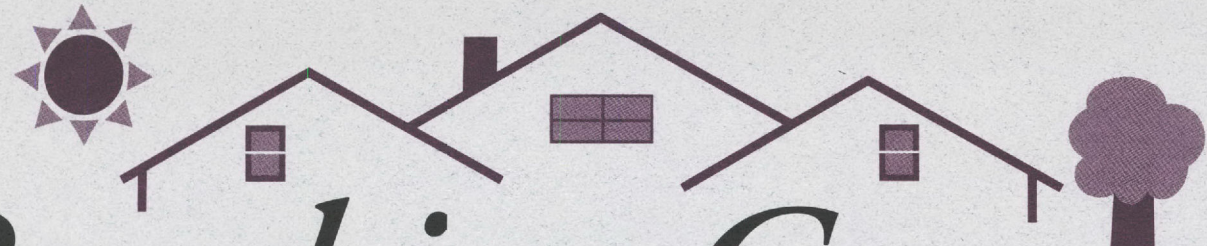


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# Breaking Ground

A newsletter published by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

Government Publications  
Texas State Capitol  
DEC 28 1999  
Daisy Stiner  
Dallas Public Library

## 1999 TDHCA Tax Credits Awarded

By Heather Tindall

**T**DHCA's 1999 Tax Credit allocations will help create more than 4,364 units of affordable multifamily housing for low-income persons and families.

The agency awarded 53 affordable housing developments \$21.4 million in federal housing tax credits at its July 30 board meeting. The allocations were made possible through the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC).

"Statistics show that 1.9 million families will be in need of housing assistance by 2001—27 percent of all Texas households. TDHCA is constantly striving to impact those numbers by providing an incentive for developers to build more affordable housing developments," said **Daisy Stiner**, TDHCA executive director.

The LIHTC program was created by the Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986 and is the primary means of

Please see "Awards" on page 2

## A View From the Capitol... The 76th Legislative Session

By Gordon Anderson

**T**he 76th Texas Legislative Session was something of a watershed event for the governing board and employees of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. A session that began with several question marks turned into one of the Department's most successful ever.

TDHCA faced a moderate degree of uncertainty when legislators descended upon Austin in January 1999. The agency's executive director had yet to be confirmed by legislators. Other issues—public education and property taxes, most notably—were dominant topics for discussion in the halls of the state capitol. Affordable housing and community development did not appear on many legislators' radar screens.

Hard work, particularly on the part of TDHCA executive director **Daisy Stiner** and **Dan Wattles**, Director of Governmental Relations, put them there. In the end, the Legislature demonstrated an unprecedented level of

support for the Department and its efforts to promote affordable housing and improve communities.

The Housing Trust Fund was the session's big winner. Funding for the only state-authorized housing program increased from \$2 million to \$12 million for the 2000-2001 biennium. This increase in funding will have a significant and positive affect on housing for low- and very low-income Texans, according to **Keith Hoffpauir**, program administrator for the Housing Trust Fund. "We're projecting that this increase in funding will allow us to assist an additional 1,100 households each year over the next two years," Keith says.

While the Department had requested an additional \$10 million for each year of the biennium, Keith says that the increase was an extremely welcome action on the part of Legislators. "We're very grateful to the Legislature for supporting the Trust Fund."

Please see "76th Session" on page 5

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## Yes! In MY Backyard...

## Getting to Know TDHCA's Tax Credit Neighbors

By Alecia Pulman

\*Alex and Elisa Garcia moved to Austin three years ago from Mexico. Alex is a distributor at one of Austin's largest food corporations, and Elisa takes ESL (English as a Second Language) classes and cares for their two-year-old daughter. With a small child to provide for and another baby on the way, the couple is careful with their expenses. *The Garcia's are focused on securing a bright future for their children and themselves. One step in that direction, is saving money to buy their first home.*

\*Sara and \*Brian are also preparing for their future together. Brian is holding down three jobs and working nearly 70 hours per week. The couple is trying to save enough money to send Sara to medical school, and to pay for their wedding in May.

\*Lillie Smith is a single mother of three. She works long hours in one of Austin's largest medical facilities, but is still able to give extra attention to raising

her children. She too hopes to one day be able to afford a home with a big backyard where her children can run and play and perhaps own a dog.

All of these families live in apartment complexes created through the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) Program. Administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), the program directs private capital toward the creation of affordable rental housing units. More than 74,000 affordable rental housing units have been built throughout Texas since 1987 as a result of the LIHTC Program. There are approximately 49 developments in Austin alone. Tax credit properties are safe, secure, and well-maintained, which gives Lillie Smith great peace of mind. They have amenities similar to other apartment complexes, such as swimming pools, community centers, and other recreational facilities. In most cases, support services are offered that

exceed those in other market rate developments—such as daytime childcare, medical care, career counseling, financial and credit education, and access to computer equipment. The LIHTC Program, established by the federal Tax Reform Act of 1986,

Please see "Neighbors" on page 3



## 1999 TAX CREDIT AWARDEES

### General

Development Name	City	Credits	# of L/I Units
Plum Creek Townhomes	Houston	\$773,758	114
Houston Villas in the Pines, The	Houston	\$914,354	141
Eban Village II	Dallas	\$830,897	165
Rancho del Cielo, Phase II	Brownsville	\$487,070	90
Antiqua Terrace Apartments	Odessa	\$873,028	128
Mainland Crossing Townhomes	Texas City	\$906,670	150
Villas at Costa Brava	San Antonio	\$756,853	150
Shoreham Apartments	Houston	\$808,200	120
Spring Valley Townhomes	Austin	\$1,030,847	173
Park Vista Townhomes	Watauga	\$1,049,790	166
Western Mesa Hills, Ltd.	El Paso	\$819,144	128
Western Eastside Seniors, Ltd.	El Paso	\$84,455	19
Roseland Townhomes	Dallas	\$776,565	114
Sunset Arbor Townhomes	Abilene	\$1,100,880	220
Commonwealth, Phase II, Ltd, The	Nacogdoches	\$234,451	54
Treymore at LaPrada, The	Dallas	\$695,838	150
Westcreek Townhomes	San Antonio	\$950,000	165
Columbia Greens	Houston	\$902,313	174
<b>TOTAL - GENERAL</b>		<b>\$13,995,113</b>	<b>2,421</b>

### Non-Profit

Veranda Apartments, The	Killeen	\$421,854	88
Georgetown Place Apartments	Georgetown	\$558,829	105
Stonebriar Village of Plainview, Ltd.	Plainview	\$342,681	90
Amarillo Green Acres, Ltd.	Amarillo	\$412,758	144
Parkview Gardens Townhomes	Tyler	\$702,901	120
South Boulevard Retirement Center	Dallas	\$177,784	30
<b>TOTAL - NON-PROFIT</b>		<b>\$2,616,807</b>	<b>706</b>

### Rural

Brownwood Apartments II, The	Brownwood	\$384,186	72
Springs Apartments, The	Dripping Spgs	\$327,464	76
Walker Creek Village, Phase I	Pittsburg	\$465,811	76
Village at Hillcrest	Wimberly	\$230,407	45
Windmill Run Apartment Homes	Sweeny	\$417,128	75
Huffman Hollow	Huffman	\$281,966	57
Mariposa Gardens	Mathis	\$449,998	66
Park @ Clear Creek	Hempstead	\$478,312	76
Sun Meadow Apartments	Alamo	\$310,330	76
Sea Mist Apartments	Rockport	\$507,804	76
<b>TOTAL - RURAL</b>		<b>\$3,853,406</b>	<b>695</b>

### TxRD

Alvarado Seniors Apartments, L.P.	Alvarado	\$37,638	24
Village, The	Tomball	\$48,168	64
Country Place Apartments	Atlanta	\$116,952	72
Country Square	Lone Star	\$46,620	24
Ole Town Apartments	Jefferson	\$29,439	24
Spring Creek	Linden	\$19,579	24
Colorado City Apartments, II, Ltd.	Colorado City	\$41,310	32
Runge Apartments	Runge	\$47,124	32
Palacios Seniors Apartments	Palacios	\$45,963	28
3013 Place Apartments	Eagle Lake	\$58,709	36
Hillside Apartments	Mexia	\$50,886	47
Western Hills Apartments	Ferris	\$12,030	16
May Road Apartments	Seagoville	\$106,742	80
Bremond Street Apartments, Ltd.	Franklin	\$14,556	20
Rose Maria Arms, Ltd.	Hearne	\$23,473	16
Jewett Apartments, Ltd.	Jewett	\$21,063	24
La Posada II	Elsa	\$62,416	34
Burleson Heights Apartments, Ltd.	Caldwell	\$44,708	24
Ridgecrest Inn Apartments, Ltd.	Livingston	\$93,320	50
<b>TOTAL - TxRD</b>		<b>\$920,696</b>	<b>671</b>

**GRAND TOTAL (all credits awarded & total units) \$21,386,022 4,364**

Waiting List	City	Credits Requested	# of L/I Units
Southwest Trails	Austin	\$679,909	295
Hillsboro Gardens	Hillsboro	\$555,076	76
Tidwell Estates	Houston	\$656,385	99
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,891,370</b>	<b>470</b>

## 1999 Tax Credit Awards

continued from page 1

directing private capital toward the development of affordable rental housing. The program encourages developers of affordable housing to apply for a tax credit that is then used to offset a portion of their federal tax liability in exchange for the construction of affordable rental housing for low-income individuals and families. Since 1987, the LIHTC program has provided for the construction of more than 75,000 units of affordable multifamily housing throughout Texas.

Unlike most publicly-subsidized housing — which is designed to assist the elderly, disabled, minimum wage workers, or the unemployed — the housing tax credit program does not provide tenants with governmental rent subsidies. The program's benefit is an affordable monthly rental rate.

TDHCA awards the tax credits through a competitive application process. In 1998, the Department received 195 applications—and just 56 received an award that year. More than 200 applications were received during the 1999 application acceptance period.

Please refer to TDHCA's website at [www.tdhca.state.tx.us/lihtc.htm](http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/lihtc.htm) for additional tax credit information, as well as a complete list of the 1999 applications.

### FACTS: 1999 TAX CREDIT AWARDS

- ◆ As was the case in 1998, demand for the credit continues to exceed the state's credit ceiling by a ratio of **five to one.**
- ◆ At the close of the application acceptance period, this year's 204 applications represented a total credit request of **\$124 million.**
- ◆ The available 1999 state credit ceiling, which includes credits recovered from prior years, is **\$21.38 million.**
- ◆ TDHCA held **four public hearings** in Dallas, San Antonio, Houston and Austin to receive comments on 1999 applications from citizens, neighborhood groups, and elected officials.
- ◆ The total tax credit allocation is expected to serve **6,226 households** by the end of 2001. Of the units serving these households, 5,771 (93%) will involve new construction.
- ◆ Of the 59 recommended allocations, 46 developments (78%) will involve new construction. Of the units constructed under this recommendation, 5,151 (83%) will be tax credit units. The other 1,075 units will be market rate units.

# A Sneak Preview of TDHCA's 1999 Housing Conference...

By Alecia Pulman

It's almost that time of year again! TDHCA is proud to present its *Fifth Annual Housing Conference: Raising the Roof in '99: Building Communities, Building Relationships*.

Scheduled for October 31 through November 2 at the Marriott at the Capitol in Austin, the conference is one of the largest statewide gatherings of professionals in affordable housing, community affairs, and community development.

The conference offers organizations a great opportunity to network and learn about Texas housing issues, and there are some great additions for '99.

## LOWER REGISTRATION FEES

Registration fees are lower than previous conferences, and include a kickoff reception, two breakfasts, the *Scholarship Luncheon, Awards Dinner*, and closing lunch.

Individual/For-profit:	\$150
Non-profit:	\$100
Federal/City/County employees:	\$100
State employees:	\$90
Students/Legislators & Aides:	Contact Heather Tindall for information at 512/475-3964. Fees do not include travel, lodging, or parking.

## CONFERENCE AWARDS

TDHCA is also sponsoring the first annual *Excellence in Achievement Awards* to recognize the outstanding efforts and accomplishments of organizations and individuals throughout Texas who have helped promote and support affordable housing. Categories

include:

- \* Creative Partnership
- \* Homeownership
- \* Management Innovation
- \* Special Needs Housing
- \* Rental Housing
- \* Community Development
- \* Friend of Affordable Housing
- \* Special Recognition

Nomination letters, criteria, and applications will be mailed within the next few weeks. The deadline for submitting all forms is September 27, 1999. Winners will be recognized at the conference's *Awards Dinner* on November 1.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

TDHCA will also award college scholarships to five students across the state. A \$1,000 scholarship will go to one student each from The University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, Huston-Tillotson College, Prairie View A&M, and The University of Texas at El Paso.

Students eligible for the scholarships must exhibit an interest in pursuing a career in residential construction, affordable housing, community development, or a related field of study.

The scholarship is specifically awarded to pay for books, tuition, or other academic needs. Winners will be recognized at the Scholarship Awards Luncheon on November 1.

## CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

More than 30 workshops will be offered in the areas of Homeownership, Community Development, Community

Affairs, and Rental Housing. Two tracks have been added in the areas of Case Studies and Communications.

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Capitol of Texas Travel is the official travel agent of the 1999 TDHCA Conference. Book your hotel, airline, or rental car now by calling them toll-free at 1-800-880-0068, and identifying yourself as a conference attendee. Participants will receive a special rate at the following hotels:

- \* Austin Marriott at the Capitol \$110.00 single/double (reserve by 10/10)
- \* Omni Downtown \$70 single/\$110 double (reserve by 10/10)
- \* Doubletree Guest Suites \$70 single/double (reserve by 10/5)
- \* La Quinta \$85 single/double (reserve by 10/10)
- \* Sheraton \$70 single/double (reserve by 10/10)

## START PLANNING NOW!

If you are interested in being a sponsor, exhibitor, panelist, or participant at this year's conference, or if you would like an Awards nomination packet or add your name to the conference mailing list, please contact Heather Tindall at (512) 475-3964, or email her at htindall@tdhca.state.tx.us. Registration packets will be mailed in late August. Mark your calendar now—and check our website for info! Don't miss the chance to be a part of this year's event!

[www.tdhca.state.tx.us](http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us)

## Briefly...

### Volunteers Work to Clean Up Colonias

By Yolanda Lara, Webb County Self-Help Center

The dumping of trash and illegal hazardous materials is a growing problem in most colonia communities. The Webb County Self Help Center—in partnership with the County Economic Development Department—recently organized a Colonia Clean-Up Campaign to encourage colonia in Laredo to take action against illegal dumping. Volunteers and Self-Help Center staff gathered several tons of trash that could have caused health problems and created unwanted landfill dumpsites. In addition, the campaign encouraged the creation of a "Neighborhood Watch" program to prevent hazardous waste materials from being dumped in these communities.

## Yes! In MY Backyard: A Look at Texas' Tax Credit Neighbors

Continued from page 1

provides developers an opportunity to invest their time and money in the construction of affordable rental housing for low to moderate income households.

Developers, who are more likely to concentrate on higher income housing developments, receive a tax credit as an incentive to set aside a certain percentage of low-income units. The tax credit is typically sold to investors in affordable housing who use it to offset a portion of their federal tax liability. The LIHTC Program is recognized as the most effective way to get developers involved in the development of new affordable multifamily housing. Thus, households like the Garcia's can live comfortably while paying slightly below market rents.

Despite the many obvious advantages of building tax credit properties, the LIHTC Program has sometimes met with tremendous opposition. Affordable housing units are often misperceived as being "public housing," which refers to government-owned property that is subsidized. In the case of tax credit properties, the government does not own the properties, and tax credit residents typically are not given

rent subsidies. More likely, tenants might include teachers, police officers, firefighters, and single parents who are balancing career and family while possibly attending school. The only benefit tax credit residents receive is an affordable monthly rental rate.

In Austin, for example, a family of four with an annual income of \$33,240 can live in a three-bedroom tax credit apartment for \$864 per month, which includes an allowance for utilities.

For-profit and non-profit developers own tax credit properties, and all properties are monitored for a 15-year compliance period. If a property fails to meet state and federal regulations each year, the developer loses the tax credit benefits. After the compliance period ends, properties are monitored for at least another 15 years to ensure they stay affordable.

Tax credit properties are essential to combat the growing lack of affordable housing. In a 1995 statewide survey of city and county officials, 83 percent indicated a shortage in affordable rental housing units in their community. A recent survey from the Texas State Data Center predicted that 1.9 million

families will be in need of housing assistance by 2001. That is a shocking 27 percent of all Texas households. The lack of affordable housing, coupled with the increase in low- and moderate-income families, creates an urgent need to construct more tax credit properties. The irony is that interested developers are literally lining up to participate in the LIHTC Program, but are unable to do so. There simply are not enough tax credits to go around.

Federal tax credits are allocated to each state through the Internal Revenue Service, based on a formula of \$1.25 per capita—Texas receives approximately \$25 million annually.

There are thousands of individuals in Austin and all across Texas—just like Brian, Sara, the Garcia's, and the Smith's. They are building their futures and the futures of their families, and are succeeding in life thanks, in part, to the LIHTC Program. Thousands of other success stories are waiting for that same chance.

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals profiled in this story.

## “Pioneering in Paris”: The Etta Mitchell Story

By Eric Pike, TCDP Program

In 1997, the city of Paris—a town of 25,000 residents located in the northeast portion of the state—was awarded a \$225,000 TCDP grant under the Housing Rehabilitation Fund to rehabilitate 15 units of owner-occupied housing primarily for handicapped individuals.

As is usually the case in housing rehab, the house most in need cannot be rehabilitated under these programs. This is because the cost of this rehabilitation is too great; the value of the home after rehab is

about half of the rehabilitation cost; and the economic life after rehab is extended only a few years. However, the city of Paris decided to try another approach.

When it came time to address the application of an elderly, handicapped applicant living in a dilapidated home, the city decided it would try to replace the home while remaining within the program’s budget: 15 homes would be addressed at an average cost of \$15,000.

The applicant’s home fit the classi-

cal description of substandard units: foundation on the ground; gaping holes in the roof; dangerously faulty wiring; water damage to interior walls and ceilings; incomplete plumbing; and rooms added after the core structure was built.

Not only was cost a factor, but the prohibitive restrictions of relocation also had to be addressed. While the city’s consultant worked on plans and specifications for the home, city legal aid and code compliance personnel worked on documents that would allow the homeowner to request demolition of her existing unit and voluntarily relocate to live with family for the construction period.

In less than four months, Mrs. Lee Etta Mitchell, the 81-year-old applicant, moved into a house next to her daughter. With all the legal work out of the way, her home was taken down and replaced on-site with a frame structure on slab—completely energy efficient and handicap-accessible. A one bedroom, bath, kitchen and living room structure was constructed. Interior surfaces were dry wall, vinyl floors in kitchen and bath. Carpet was laid in living room and bedroom. All doors, interior and exterior were three feet wide. A roll-in shower with removable showerhead was installed. The sink, lavatory, and breakfast bar were constructed so a wheelchair would fit.

Thermostatically controlled heat and air

was installed; all windows and doors were insulated—as well as the walls and attic; and a vapor barrier was laid prior to pouring the slab. All this was done for \$16,500, plus about \$2,000 in demolition, landfill fees, and fill dirt.

On May 12, 1999, Mrs. Mitchell moved in her new home. When asked by a local reporter how this house was different from her old home, Mrs. Mitchell said, “The rain doesn’t come in this one.”

Since the success of this first replacement home, the City Housing Board has approved two more replacement homes, both of which are near completion.

This project would not have been possible without the cooperation of many people, not the least of whom were two individuals on the TCDP staff: **Rehabilitation Specialist Allison Russell**, and **Regional Coordinator Bonnie Terry**. Both approached this project with open minds, offered excellent suggestions, and worked with the City throughout the project. Providing replacement housing with rehabilitation funds is limited and used to address the most substandard units, usually occupied by a single individual who is willing and able to relocate for a 45-60 day period. This process provides cities with an alternative not available in the past.

### “Best Practice” Winners:

## TDHCA’s HOME, TCDP Program Honored by HUD

By Heather Tindall

Both TDHCA’s HOME Program and the Texas Community Development Program (TCDP) recently received *Best Practice Awards* from HUD.

The awards were presented during HUD’s “Building a Better Tomorrow 1999 Best Practices and Technical Assistance Symposium,” held July 20-25 in Kansas City, MO. Following a presentation on each program made by **Tres Davis**, senior regional coordinator of TDHCA’s HOME Program, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo presented TDHCA staff with the two awards.

“We have been happy to partner with HUD in helping Texas communities in their efforts to provide affordable housing for low-income Texans,” said **Daisy Stiner**, executive director. “It’s a great honor to be recognized for our efforts.”

In all, HUD received more than 3,000 entries in the various judging categories. One-hundred of those entries were chosen to receive awards,

and 50 were selected to make presentations during the Symposium. HUD Deputy Secretary Saul Ramirez and a panel of top HUD officials and industry partners reviewed the nominations for Best Practices contacted the top 100 semifinalists.

The HOME Program secured an award in the “Housing” category for HOME On-Line, a web-based system designed and implemented by two TDHCA staff members in 1998, that allows HOME Program administrators to make draws and access contract information regarding expenditure, commitment and reimbursement. Davis, creator of HOME On-Line, said the system has allowed the HOME Program to receive up-to-date information and completely eliminate lost paperwork, while also cutting the draw time in half.

In addition, the system was developed in-house and did not cost the agency extra funds to design, implement or install. He estimates it has already saved TDHCA thousands of dollars in

administrative and mailing costs as compared to the old system.

The TCDP also received an award in the “Increasing Affordable Housing and Homeownership” category for its Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and the homes that were constructed in Commerce, Nash, Marble Falls, and Venus as a result. Since its creation in 1996, 22 projects have been funded through HIF, providing public facility improvements in support of the construction of affordable new single family and multifamily housing. Public facilities include water, sewer, street, drainage, demolition/clearance, gas and electric improvement.

**Eric Pike**, TCDP programs specialist, said that HIF encourages communities to form local partnerships with private developers, non-profit organizations, and other local government and financial institutions.

“Those creative partnerships were instrumental in TCDP receiving an award,” Pike explained.

### OUI, OUI... INNOVATION IN PARIS, TEXAS!

Local participants in the project from left are: Tommy Haynes, Project Director; Bob Jones, Consultant with RIM Enterprises; Mayor Pro Tem Fisher; Mrs. Mitchell and family; V.L. Ferris, contractor, Mayor Neeley and Michael E. Malone, City Manager.



# UPDATE: The 76th Legislative Session

continued from page 1

"We also recognize that many organizations worked hard to promote the Trust Fund during the session, and for that we are extremely thankful," he says.

For TDHCA's Housing Finance Division, the Legislature voted to increase the portion of tax exempt, private activity bonds directed toward qualified rental projects from 7.5 percent to 16.5 percent. The portion dedicated for mortgage revenue bonds decreased in the same bill to 25 percent from 31.5 percent.

"The cap increase will have a major impact on the production of affordable multifamily housing," points out Brent Stewart, Director of Multifamily Finance for TDHCA. "I think it reflects a shift of emphasis on the part of the Legislature from single-family to multifamily housing."

"Because these bonds are allocated through a lottery, it's impossible to predict how many more units might be produced," he explains. "However, our funds now jump from \$74 million to \$165 million, meaning TDHCA could double its production of affordable housing over prior years."

In other legislative action, state officials worked to improve living conditions in Texas' estimated 1,500 colonias. One key bill related to TDHCA's Contract-for-Deed Conversion Program, administered by the Department's Office of Colonia Initiatives (OCI). The bill requires OCI to establish a program to guarantee loans made by private lenders to convert contract-for-deeds into deeds of trust using HOME Program funds.

Legislators, who confirmed Ms. Stiner as executive director in February, also confirmed two new members and one existing member to the TDHCA governing board. Marsha L. Williams and Lydia Saenz were appointed and confirmed as board members for places 1 and 6 respectively, and Michael E.

Jones was re-appointed and confirmed as board member for place 7.

In addition to increased funding for key Department programs, the 76th Legislative Session produced a number of bills relating to or directly affecting TDHCA. Highlights of these bills include:

**\* Electric Utility Deregulation:**

Requires the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to consult with TDHCA



on the implementation of weatherization or other energy efficiency programs among low-income households.

**\* Appointment Process for TDHCA's Executive Director:**

Authorizes the Department's governing board, with the approval of the Governor, to employ TDHCA's executive director. Previously, the Governor appointed the Executive Director.

**\* Builder-Owner Program:** Requires TDHCA to establish a loan program, working through certified nonprofit organizations, enabling owner-builders to purchase real estate, construct a home, or renovate a home; and to solicit gifts and grants to fund the program.

**\* Section 8 Restructuring:** Requires

TDHCA to contact owners of property whose Section 8 housing contracts have expired or soon will expire and attempt to restructure the contracts to ensure permanent affordability of these properties.

**\* Delivery of Home & Community Support Services:** Requires TDHCA, with assistance from the appropriate health and human services agencies, to study opportunities for providing home and community support services to residents of affordable housing developments.

**\* Accessibility Requirements for Affordable Housing:** Requires a recipient of state/federal funds from TDHCA for the construction of affordable single-family homes to meet requirements relating to accessibility for the physically challenged.

**\* Omnibus Colonia Bill:** Provides for interagency coordination of colonia initiatives between TDHCA, Texas Water Development Board, Texas Natural Resources Conservation Committee, Office of Attorney General, and Texas Department of Health; in addition, creates a colonia ombudsman program in each of the six border counties with the largest colonia populations.

**\* Builder Incentive Partnership Program:** Requires TDHCA to implement a builder incentive partnership program for the development of affordable housing subdivisions in a manner that does not encourage the growth of colonias.

**\* Rental Housing Pilot Program for the Elderly:** Requires TDHCA, in coordination with Texas Department of Health, nonprofit organizations, public housing authorities and other groups, to develop on a pilot basis, providing subsidized multifamily rental housing for elderly residents of low-, very low-, and extremely low-incomes.

## Colonias: Partnership for Change Equals Success

By Ann Garcia, Office of Colonia Initiatives

State and federal entities have formed a partnership to help families in the state's colonias who often live in substandard housing and living conditions.

The partnership include leaders from the Texas Departments of Health, Housing and Community Affairs, Human Services and Education; Texas A & M University and the University of Texas-Pan American—along with national and regional leaders from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development.

In April, the Honorable Shirley Watkins, Under Secretary for USDA Food &

Nutrition Service joined TDHCA executive director Daisy Stiner and other partners to sign the *Partnership for Change* agreement—a symbol of a commitment to work together to improve the health, nutrition and living conditions of colonia residents.

Since the April signing, other leaders have joined the partnership, including Prairie View A&M University and the Texas-Mexico Borderlands Data and Information Center (BIC). The group has also designated Willacy and Webb counties as its first priority. Several agencies have committed resources to these areas and have already seen results. Examples include:

schools that are considering offering students free breakfasts; a funding commitment to bring Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services to a county that doesn't have a WIC clinic nearby; funds for vans that will transport clients to clinics and other assistance offices; and the establishment of more than six new WIC clinics.

All these improvements are a direct result of the collaborative efforts of the Partnership for Change organizations. For more information, contact Ann A. Garcia or Juan D. Palacios with the Office of Colonia Initiatives at 1-800-462-4251.



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## Breaking Ground

August 1999

### TDHCA's East Texas Technical Assistance Center Hosts September Workshop

By Carol Moore

The Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC) and TDHCA's East Texas Technical Assistance Center are co-sponsoring a workshop on the development of affordable housing in rural communities. The workshop will be held Friday, September 17 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in San Antonio from 10:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. (lunch is included), and will conclude TEDC's Annual Conference.

The objective is to provide a forum for rural community leaders to learn how to help these communities with the development of affordable housing. This workshop was developed through TEDC's Rural Affairs Committee, based on feedback from rural communities on the severe lack of affordable

housing. Because of this situation, rural communities are often deprived of potential tax base development and the growth of community leadership. Workshop presentation topics will include: community organization models for housing programs; determining community housing wants and needs; formulas for determining local housing and affordability; comparisons of new subdivision developments; and strategies to attract builders.

Case studies will be included in the presentation, and resource materials will be available. Registration is \$45, and the sessions will be limited to the first 100 participants. Contact the Texas Economic Development Council at 512/480-8432 for more information.

### Calendar of Events

#### September

##### September 10, 1999

TDHCA Board Meeting  
507 Sabine, 4th Floor  
Austin, Texas

##### September 14-16, 1999

Texas Affiliation of Affordable Housing Providers, Second Annual Conference at the Driskill Hotel, Austin. Call 512/474-5911 for more information.

#### October

##### October 8, 1999

TDHCA Board Meeting  
507 Sabine, 4th Floor  
Austin, Texas

##### October 12-15, 1999

Rural Rental Housing Association of Texas, 21st Annual Convention & Trade

Show at the Doubletree Hotel, Austin. Call 254/778-6111 for information.

##### October 12-13, 1999

TDHCA Compliance Training Workshops for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC), RTC/FDIC Affordable Housing Disposition Program (AHDP) and HOME Investment Partnership Act (HOME).

**RTC:** Tues., October 12

**LIHTC:** Wed., October 13

**Tax-Exempt Bond:** Tues., Nov. 9

Workshops are no charge, but seating is limited each session. Attendees must register with the Department prior to the session. Please contact Charlotte Cox, TDHCA Compliance Division, at (800) 643-8204 (in Texas) or (512) 475-3292 for more information.

### Briefly...

#### Local home center helps colonia residents

By Yolanda Lara, Webb County Self-Help Center

Residents of Webb County colonias who lack running water and sewer connections confront many barriers in their attempt to improve their living conditions at home. To help address this problem, TDHCA's Webb County Self Help Center—which is operated by the Department's Office of Colonia Initiatives—established a local partnership with Dr. Ike's Home Center as an innovative way to help residents get much-needed building materials. The Webb County Self-Help center lends tools and provides instructional repair books to help residents improve their homes. Dr. Ike's has also sponsored several events at the Self Help Center for colonia communities. It's these types of local partnership efforts that are improving the living conditions in the colonias.

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