

Housing Partnership sees progress ahead

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

PORTSMOUTH — The Housing Partnership, a nonprofit affordable housing development agency, hosted its annual gathering at the Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside Hotel on May 20.

The event featured keynote speaker Kathy Bogle Shields, Executive Director of New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (CDFFA), who spoke about the difficulties New Hampshire families face in hard economic times and the persistent need for affordable housing in the Seacoast.

Created in 1983, the Community Development Finance Authority supports affordable housing and economic development activities that benefit low and moderate income citizens in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire, through CDFFA, has been awarded \$19.6 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program is designed to help address foreclosure problems in certain neighborhoods in order to make them more stable, sustainable and competitive.

At the invitation of CDFFA, The Housing Partnership has submitted a proposal to purchase and rehabilitate properties in a Rochester neighborhood that has a high number of foreclosures. Utilizing NSP funds, the agency will work with the City of Rochester to identify, restore and rehabilitate foreclosed properties for eventual sale to first-time homebuyers. Work is expected to begin later this summer.

Jeff Gilbert, The Housing Partnership's Board President, credited the agency's new executive director, Marty Chapman, for his leadership and hard work in his former role as director of real estate for advancing the agency's housing development mission and for creating a "robust and exciting backlog of projects in the development pipeline", including projects slated for Rochester and Rye.

Gilbert announced "The Housing Partnership is back in the development business", referring to the agency's 41-unit affordable housing development currently under construction in Kennebunk Maine, the agency's first development in several years.

The celebration also highlighted the presentation of awards to Melvin Low of Rye for the Community Catalyst Award; Richard Burbine accepted the Make a Difference Donor Award for Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage; Kathy Bogle Shields accepted the Partnership Award for NHCDFFA; the Pro Bono Publico Award went to Drummond Woodsum & MacMahon of Portland Maine; Resident of the Year Award was presented to Joel Thibeau, Kelly Collins and their children, Emily and Tyler; Volunteer of the Year Award was given to Dennis Williams of HouseMaster Home Inspections for his work with the agency's first time home buyer education program.

For more information, visit www.housingpartnership.org.