



Volume 4, Issue 4

ABILENE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Newsletter Date:
August 16, 2011

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Special Points of Interest:

HCV Tenants & LL's: We are still searching for two tenants. All landlord spots are filled on our HCV Advisory Committee. If you are interested, contact **Brandy Cockrell @ 325-676-6385 ext. 6389** or at brandy.cockrell@abileneha.org.

Landlords: Rent increases should be submitted to AHA 60-90 days prior to your tenant's recertification date. If you are unaware of these dates, contact **Brandy Cockrell @ 325-676-6385 ext. 6389** or email her at: brandy.cockrell@abileneha.org.

REMINDER!

Landlords: are responsible for enforcing their lease & collecting the tenant's rental portion.

Tenants: are responsible for paying their portion of the rent to the landlord by the date agreed upon in the lease.

Landlords: it is illegal to charge Housing Choice Voucher participants more in rent than you charge your open market tenants.

Tenants: removing the battery from a smoke detector is a safety risk. In addition, check to make sure that your smoke detectors are working properly. If not, bring it to your landlord's attention immediately.

Landlords & Tenants: landlords &/or tenants are not allowed to change who pays for utilities without the approval of Abilene Housing Authority.



August 2011:
In July, HUD Awarded the Abilene Housing Authority 25 Additional HUD-VASH Vouchers!

Homeless Veteran Program: *More Housing Vouchers!*

Through all the Federal Budget Cuts in 2011, Congress continued to fund the HUD-VASH program! AHA was notified on July 20, 2011 that we were awarded 25 additional HUD-VASH vouchers. The additional 25 vouchers takes our total number of HUD-VASH vouchers to 95. Presently, we have 52 homeless veterans housed on the program.

The program is administered through a joint-effort between the Big Spring VAMC & AHA. Presently the Big Spring VAMC has two HUD-VASH Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW's) and with the addition of 25 new vouchers the VAMC will be able to add two new LCSW's to facilitate case management services for Veterans throughout their service territory.

AHA's normal service territory encompasses 19 counties. Through this program AHA is responsible for servicing vouchers for all counties in the Big Spring VAMC service territory which ranges from Big Spring, TX to Abilene.

AHA is proud to be able to assist additional military Veterans in need of housing!

If you need additional information concerning this program please contact **Angela Hunt** (Big Spring VAMC - 800-472-1365) or **Brandy Cockrell** (AHA - 325-676-6385 ext. 6389).



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VASH = Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing





Direct Deposit Payments

Landlords: Do you know about our Direct Deposit program? It allows for your Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) to be electronically deposited into your bank account on the first business day of the month! Not only does it give you quicker access to your money, but it is also more cost-effective for the AHA. The process to get set-up is quick and easy. For more information on "Direct Deposit" contact **Paul Falade** (CFO) at 325-676-6385 ext. 5320 or email him at paul.falade@abileneha.org.

As of July 1, 2011 Direct Deposit is mandatory for all landlords.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Abilene Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Assisting families to achieve financial self-sufficiency. For more information about this program contact **Tim Evans** at 325-676-6385 ext. 5326 or email him at Tim.Evans@abileneha.org.

Interested in Applying? *Online Application*

AHA has online applications for interested applicants on its website. When you access our website at (www.abileneha.org) click on the second tab and follow the easy-to-use process. You can choose from the Public Housing Waiting Lists and/or the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List. Once you complete the online application you are automatically placed on the Waiting List(s) of your choice!



Roof Replacements: *Deegan & Riviera Apt. Complexes!*

Earlier this year Abilene experienced its worst hail storm in a number of years. During the storm two of our Public Housing complexes (Deegan - elderly complex & Riviera) sustained significant damage from the baseball sized hail. Our insurance company will completely replace the roofs at both sites.

Public Housing residents **will not** be required to relocate during the renovations.

Over the next month AHA plans to procure a contractor to complete work at these sites. If you are an interested contractor please continue to watch the Abilene Reporter Newspaper for our Public Notice and watch our website at www.abileneha.org (under the Business Opportunities section).



Deegan Place Apartment Complex



Riviera Apartment Complex

Riviera Apartment Complex: *New Boiler System!*

In July 2011, AHA purchased a new boiler system for the Riviera Apartment Complex. During routine maintenance checks, AHA maintenance staff identified pinhole leaks in the old system. Customers never lost service because of the pinhole leaks.





"The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."

Babe Ruth

HUD-VASH PROGRAM

The HUD-VASH program is designed to assist Homeless Veterans find counseling through the VAMC and housing with rental assistance provided by AHA. 52 families have been housed so far!



Collaborative Sidewalk Project: Rebecca Lane!

In August 2011, the City of Abilene, in collaboration with Abilene Housing Authority and a Community Group completed a sidewalk and handicap accessible curb project on Rebecca Lane (between Bruce St. & Ridgemont Dr.)! Now residents and kids in the neighborhood have a beautiful, new sidewalk that provides for safe access to & from the strip mall. AHA was proud to be a part of a collaborative effort to increase pedestrian safety in the City of Abilene!



Public Housing Success Story: Judge Mathis, Grew Up In Detroit, Michigan's Public Housing Apartment Complexes!

Judge Mathis is a national figure known for his advocacy campaigns for equal justice. His inspirational life story of a street youth who rose from jail to Judge has provided hope to millions who watch him on the award-winning television court show Judge Mathis each day. In addition, his weekly newspaper column brings social and political insight to readers throughout the country.

Judge Mathis's public service career began in college where he led Free South Africa and voter registration campaigns on campus. After graduating from college in 1983, he joined the staff of Detroit City councilman Clyde Cleveland and continued to work as an advocate for equal justice with Reverend Jesse Jackson's PUSH Excel, where he currently serves as Chairman, and also a national board member of the NAACP and the Morehouse School of Medicine.

In his efforts to reach out to youth and ex-offenders both in and outside of the courtroom, Judge Mathis opened a community center in his hometown of Detroit and has assisted thousands of youth with his non-profit agency Young Adults Asserting Themselves (Y.A.A.T.), an agency that provides career, business start-up and job opportunities, as well as job training and college enrollment assistance.

In honor of his years of work and commitment to his hometown of Detroit, the city honored Mathis by naming one of the streets, Mathis Avenue, after him. The street is part of a new housing development, which replaced the housing projects he grew up in.

Judge Mathis has received numerous awards and keys to the city from government officials and is the recipient of Honorary Doctorates from both Florida A&M University and Eastern Michigan University. He has been recognized for his efforts by numerous newspapers, magazines and television networks. He has appeared on such shows as The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The Today Show, Larry King Live, and The Ellen DeGeneres Show. He currently provides legal and community assistance on his website, www.askjudgemathis.com.

(article from Judge Mathis' website)



(Gene Reed & Judge Mathis pictured above at the 2011 NAHRO Summer Conference)





"If the wind will not serve, take the oars."

Latin Proverb

ARRA UPDATE:

AHA expended 100% of its \$391,884 ARRA Grant award in 2010!



Lighting the way.

Job Opportunities: Always Seeking Go-Getters!



Abilene Housing Authority (AHA) has the following job opening (s):

Public Housing Program - Housing Counselor

Housing Choice Voucher Program - Housing Specialist

Visit our website @ www.abileneha.org for the detailed job description.

New Employee: Isabel Erikson!



In August 2011, Isabel Erikson joined the AHA TEAM as the new Executive Assistant! Isabel brings over 10 years of Administrative Assistant and Management experience to AHA. Isabel also brings a strong computer skill-set and is bilingual (speaks fluent English & Spanish).



Please join AHA in welcoming Isabel Erikson! If you need to contact Isabel you can reach her at:

isabel.erikson@abileneha.org or at 325-676-6385 ext. 6379

AHA Website: Promoting Business Opportunities!

Businesses interested in working with AHA are invited to visit our website. AHA added the "Business Opportunities" section to its website in 2009 to offer a variety of procurement information to the public. In addition to providing printable versions of current RFP's, IFB's and RFQ's, this section of the website provides information on becoming a vendor, contracting requirements, cooperative purchasing affiliations, Minority Business Enterprises and Women's Business Enterprises (MBE/WBE's), and Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968.

Section 3 is a policy for providing preference to low and very low-income residents of the community and the businesses that employ these persons; without consideration of race or gender. AHA has included a model plan on its website for businesses to follow.

For more information concerning business opportunities and Section 3, please contact Cynthia Rodriguez at (325)676-6385 ext. 6332 or email her at cynthia.rodriguez@abileneha.org.





AHA — Providing Homes for Families

ABILENE HOUSING AUTHORITY

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Abilene, TX 79601

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Fax: 325-676-6375

Customer Service Email Address:
helpdesk@abileneha.org



Mission Statement:

The Housing Authority's mission is to service the housing needs of low-income families in the Authority's jurisdiction in order to enhance self-sufficiency and promote community quality of life and economic viability.

Vision Statement:

We will be recognized as a leading authority in moderate and low-income community development activities in West Texas.

We're on the web: <http://www.abileneha.org>

AHA Board of Commissioners - Contact Email Addresses:

Larry Holmes - **Chair** - larryholmes@aol.com

Vanessa Faz - **Vice-Chair** - vfaz@ffin.com

Kiddy Boswell - **Secretary** - kiddyboswell@sbcglobal.net

Mica Jones - **Board Commissioner** - semica.jones@gmail.com

David Mukire - **Resident Commissioner** - dmukire@ymail.com

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Gene Reed - **Executive Director** - gene.reed@abileneha.org

