



Newsletter Date:  
February 28, 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](mailto: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](mailto:brandy.cockrell@abileneha.org).

### REMINDER!

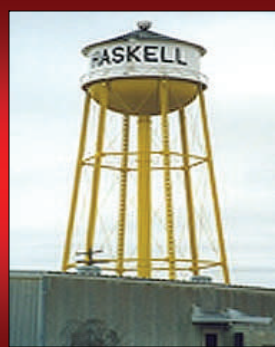
**Landlords:** are responsible for enforcing their lease & collecting the tenant's rental portion.

**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 & tenants are not allowed to change who pays for utilities without the approval of Abilene Housing Authority.



## January/February 2011: *Abilene Housing Authority Expands Its Housing Choice Voucher Program!*

### Program Growth: *Continuing Family Assistance!*

On December 20, 2010, HUD notified Abilene Housing Authority (AHA) that our request to acquire the Haskell Housing Authority's (HHA) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program had been approved! In early 2010, HHA asked AHA to consider acquiring their HCV program. HHA requested the acquisition due to low landlord involvement in their area. HHA currently has 19 families participating on their HCV program and a total of 37 vouchers. AHA has already leased -up the remaining 18 vouchers. AHA's program now consist of 1376 vouchers.

HHA requested the transition so the Haskell community would not lose program funding for their area. This allows the 19 families presently utilizing vouchers to continue utilizing their vouchers with HCV rental assistance. It also protects the landlords from losing long-term tenants.

AHA is proud to be able to work with HHA to continue servicing families currently benefiting from the HCV program!



### Housing Choice Voucher Program: *High Performer!!*

The Abilene Housing Authority's (AHA) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program was notified by HUD on January 20, 2011 that its HCV program was once again rated as a "High Performer" program for the third year in a row! HUD rates Housing Authorities across the country in key performance areas. The assessment is called the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP). SEMAP rates Public Housing Authorities (PHA's) across the country in 14 key areas to assess how well HCV programs are being administered in relation to HUD guidelines.

Gene Reed, AHA Executive Director, would like to thank the HCV staff for their hard work and dedication to administering the program according to HUD guidelines! Gene would also like to thank all HCV program participants and landlords for participating in the program! Its takes all three parties to form a winning program!  
***Safe and Affordable housing is an integral part of every family's success!  
Way-To-Go HCV Team!!!***



*(HCV Team Pictured Above!)*

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### 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](mailto:paul.falade@abileneha.org)

*"Accept challenges, so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory."*

*George S. Patton*



### Abilene Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Assisting families to achieve financial self-sufficiency. For more information about this program contact **Brandy Cockrell** at 325-676-6385 ext. 6389 or email her at [brandy.cockrell@abileneha.org](mailto:brandy.cockrell@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](http://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!



## HUD-VASH Summit: *Breaking Down Barriers!*

On February 11, 2011, HUD Fort Worth Regional Office invited Abilene Housing Authority and other housing authorities from around the State to the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) "Summit" regarding housing Homeless Veterans. The purpose of the "Summit" was to have an interactive exchange of ideas and to learn what is taking place across the State with the HUD-VASH Program. The agenda offered PHA's & VAMC's an opportunity to discuss issues, barriers and successes. VASH Partners had an opportunity to share their best practices and lessons learned.

The "Summit" was a positive and productive session! AHA was able to make contact with other

program coordinators from across the state that will enable more communication and process sharing!



(pictured from left to right):

- Angela Hunt**, Mental Health Social Worker, Big Spring VAMC
- Darrell Jordan**, HUD-VASH Coordinator, Big Spring VAMC
- Regenia Hawkins**, Director of Public Housing, HUD Fort Worth
- Gene Reed**, Executive Director, Abilene Housing Authority

## New Employee: *Rosalind Willis!*

Please join the Abilene Housing Authority in welcoming Rosalind Willis, Resident Services Coordinator! Rosalind joined the Public Housing team in February 1, 2011. She brings a wealth of experience in program development. Her main task will be to continue to find value-added programs and to coordinate the programs that we currently offer to Public Housing residents.

Rosalind has a background in teaching, public speaking and coordinating events. Rosalind is also an ordained Minister!

Please join the Abilene Housing Authority in welcoming Rosalind Willis!





*“Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”*

*Joshua J. Marine*

**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. 39 Families have been housed so far!



**ROSS Grant: *Application Submitted!***

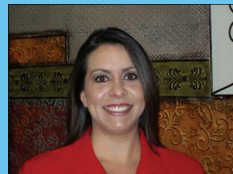
On February 22, 2011, AHA submitted its grant application for the **ROSS (Resident Opportunity & Self-Sufficiency) Grant!** The purpose of the ROSS Grant is to provide grants to PHA’s for the provision of a Service Coordinator to coordinate supportive services and other activities designed to help Public Housing residents attain economic and housing self-sufficiency. This program works to promote the development of local strategies to coordinate the use of assistance under the Public Housing program with public and private resources, for supportive services and resident empowerment activities. These services should enable participating families to increase earned income, reduce or eliminate the need for welfare assistance, make progress toward achieving economic independence and housing self-sufficiency, or, in the case of elderly or disabled residents, help improve living conditions and enable residents to age-in-place. The Service Coordinator ensures that program participants are linked to the supportive services they need to achieve self-sufficiency or remain independent.



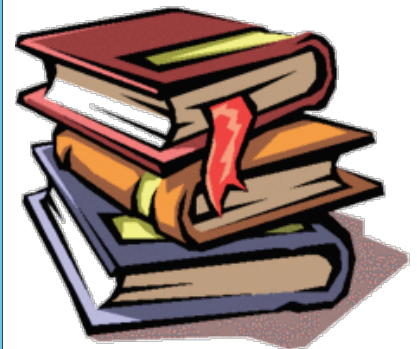
**Continued Training for Staff: *Increasing our Knowledge!***



**Paul Falade (CFO)** attended PHA Annual Financial Reporting Training in December 2010.



**Brandy Cockrell (HCV Mngr.)** attended HCV Executive Management Training in February 2011.



**HUD ARRA Fund Review: *Passing Grade!***

On December 27, 2010, HUD notified Abilene Housing Authority that the review conducted on the completed Expenditure Activity & Expenditure Submission Requirements (ESRR) forms, including the expenditure activity & supporting documentation for the drawdown for the Recovery Act Annual Statement, received **no deficiencies!**





*“Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don't recognize them.”*

*Ann Landers*

### ARRA UPDATE:

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



**INSPIRATIONAL!**

### Job Opportunities: *Always Seeking Go-Getters!*

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

#### Compliance/Procurement Coordinator & Housing Counselor/Inspector

Interested candidates can submit Compliance/Procurement resumes to Gene Reed & HC/Inspector resumes to Brandy Cockrell. (visit our website @ [www.abilencha.org](http://www.abilencha.org) for a detailed job description).

**Gene's Contact Info:**

[gene.reed@abilencha.org](mailto:gene.reed@abilencha.org)  
534 Cypress St., Suite 200  
Abilene, TX 79601

**Brandy's Contact Info:**

[brandy.cockrell@abilencha.org](mailto:brandy.cockrell@abilencha.org)  
534 Cypress St., Suite 200  
Abilene, TX 79601



### Vendor Appreciation Awards: *Keys to Success!*

Semi-annually, AHA selects vendors that have worked for the Housing Authority and have shown that they value quality service and workmanship. Our partnership with these vendors enable AHA to provide a quality service/product to our residents and to the community! AHA's two award recipients for the second half of 2010 are listed below:

**Premier Lawn & Landscaping**

4425 Crawford Dr.  
Abilene, TX 79602

**Briercroft, Inc.**

4333 Crawford Dr.  
Abilene, TX 79602



**(pictured from left to right):**  
Gene Reed (AHA Executive Director)  
Casey Longmire (Premier Owner)  
Brandy Cockrell (AHA HCV Manager)



**(pictured from left to right):**  
Gene Reed (AHA Executive Director)  
Tina Cargile (Briercroft, Inc.)  
Michael Dickenson (Briercroft Co-Owner)  
Brandy Cockrell (AHA HCV Manager)

### 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 Brandy Cockrell at 325-676-6385 ext. 6389 or email her at [brandy.cockrell@abilencha.org](mailto:brandy.cockrell@abilencha.org).





**AHA — Providing Homes for Families**

# ABILENE HOUSING AUTHORITY

534 Cypress Street  
Suite #200  
Abilene, TX 79601

Phone: 325-676-6385  
Fax: 325-676-6375

Customer Service Email Address:  
[helpdesk@abileneha.org](mailto: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](mailto:larryholmes@aol.com)

Vanessa Faz - **Vice-Chair** - [vfaz@ffin.com](mailto:vfaz@ffin.com)

Kiddy Boswell - **Secretary** - [ksbabor@swbell.net](mailto:ksbabor@swbell.net)

Mica Jones - **Board Commissioner** - [semica.jones@gmail.com](mailto:semica.jones@gmail.com)

