A Step in the Right Direction

By Jack Kenny, Deputy Director

In the spirit of collaboration, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) is partnering with Oregon Habitat for Humanity affiliates to make the dream of homeownership a reality for low-income Oregonians. Bob Repine, OHCS Director and Betty Dominguez, Board President of Portland Habitat for Humanity and a Regional Field Representative for OHCS, are working together to create a solution that will best assist Habitat for Humanity and affiliates to accomplish this mutual goal of providing affordable housing to Oregonians.

continued on page 6 under Habitat

Court Cases Delay the Community Incentive Fund

By Christin Smith, Governor’s Community Development Office Liaison

Two lawsuits making their way to the Oregon Supreme Court are delaying lottery bond sales in Oregon. One result is that the Community Incentive Fund, which is funded with lottery bond proceeds, is on hold.

One of the lawsuits challenges the validity of the Oregon Lottery. The Marion County Circuit Court recently dismissed this case on the grounds that it violated the statute of limitations on filing such a challenge. The case is expected to be appealed. This latest ruling is considered favorable to the state. For this reason, a decision is expected shortly as to whether lottery bonds will be sold while the case is on appeal or delayed until the Oregon Supreme Court rules.

“Oregonians for Gambling Awareness” filed a complaint on July 24, 2001 in Marion County Circuit Court challenging the constitutionality of the 1984 initiative measure that amended the Oregon Constitution and established the Oregon State Lottery. The court recently ruled that the voter-approved initiative violated constitutional requirements. The court made a similar ruling in another case

continued on page 4 under Fund

The photos featured in this article are two of several Habitat for Humanity homes in Sisters, Oregon. The home above is pictured under construction.
Partner to Partner

Many recurring themes come to mind when I reminisce about the last several months—“Charting our Course,” “Making a Difference,” and my personal favorite, “Setting the Standard.”

It’s been a busy few months! We’ve been doing some housekeeping. We’re taking a hard look at our internal processes, determining whether they have been efficient, and placing tighter controls where necessary. We’ve also launched a planning effort to develop and implement a strategic plan for the 2001-03 biennium. We believe taking this look is important for the agency, and planning how we will utilize our resources and energy is definitely critical to the success of any agency.

We were pleased to hear that West Park Orchards received a national award for outstanding achievement in housing and community development. In 1998, the development of this project presented a challenge, not only to the Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation, but to OHCS’ architects.

Finance Staff Recognized for Excellence

For the fifth consecutive year, the Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) has presented the department, and specifically the Financial Services Division staff, with the prestigious Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (CAFR).

This award is presented to government agencies for the preparation of their comprehensive annual financial report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of government accounting and financial reporting, and represents a significant accomplishment for the department.

A second award, the Award of Financial Reporting Achievement, has also been presented to the Financial Management Division for their leadership in preparing the CAFR.

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
 Presented to Oregon Housing and Community Services Department For its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2000

Finance Staff Recognized for Excellence

Bob Repine, Director

Through some very creative thinking, and a unique approach in determining a design, this project presents a model for other communities in developing affordable housing.

We were very successful during the 2001 Legislative Session and subsequent Emergency Board in September. We have included highlights of additional successes in the articles contained in this issue.

Oregon Housing and Community Services’ mission is to reach out for opportunities to create partnerships that improve Oregonians’ lives and the quality of our communities.

State Housing Council
Daniel Robertson, Chair
Nancy Pope Schlangen, Vice Chair
Paul Colbert
Larry Medinger
Patricia Moos
Buz Ortiz
Judith Williams-Pitre

Executive Management Team
Bob Repine
Director
Jack Kenny
Deputy Director
Rick Crager
Chief Financial Officer

The ClearingHOUSE serves to increase awareness of the growing demand for affordable housing and self-sufficiency efforts for individuals within the state of Oregon.

The ClearingHOUSE is produced by:

Managing Editor

Staff Writers
Richard Bjelland.......................... 503.986.0983
Karen Clearwater ........................ 503.986.0968
Jon Call ......................................... 503.986.2041
Jack Kenny ................................... 503.986.2186
Lynn Partin .................................. 503.983.2281
Christin Smith ............................. 503.378.6892

Publication Layout and Design
Sandra Russell ............................. 503.986.2109

Photo on page 2 taken by OHCS employee, Frank Silkey. Images on page 6 were adapted and used with permission from arttoday.com.

For-profit and not-for-profit housing and community service organizations, agencies and related entities are encouraged to submit story ideas, photographs and news to: Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), PO Box 14508, Salem, OR 97309-0409. OHCS reserves the right to edit and/or use materials at its discretion. Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the information contained herein, the agency assumes no liability for errors in this publication.
Unique Approach Wins National Award

By Ruby Mason, Director, Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation

In July 1998, a cautious group of housing advocates stood on the site of the future West Park Orchards in The Dalles, Oregon with one goal in mind, to evaluate site problems and propose solutions to make the project, on a site thought to be unbuildable, feasible.

Although located in a quiet, residential neighborhood nearly perfect for seniors, the site presented one major drawback, a significant slope. The economic cost was compounded by the fact that leveling the site would require hauling 13,000 yards of fill to the site on a narrow one-way street that would cause significant noise and disturbance in the quiet, residential neighborhood.

Taking an innovative approach to the problem, Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation (CCHC), in conjunction with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), established a mini-design competition to find an innovative site plan and building that would work with the topography and be enhanced by the site, rather than diminished. The winning design, submitted by LaPelch Bergsund Architecture, provides a workable solution for the site that encourages socialization, allows seniors to age in place, and fits into the neighborhood without overshadowing it.

The design preserves the special qualities of the site that has been in continuous use as an orchard for 75 years by replanting ornamental fruit trees. The trees provide shade as well as a formal garden setting for the residents. Visitors and residents feel as if they are passing through a wonderful orchard to access the site.

“Wishing you were here,” a postcard-perfect setting in The Dalles.

An example of how the design addressed difficult site conditions.

The design maintains respect of the existing context of the surrounding neighborhood by subtle massing.

continued on page 5 Award

OHCS Celebrates Success at E-Board

On Thursday, September 6, and Friday, September 7, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) approached the Emergency Board on two issues which would fortify existing department programs.

The 2001 Legislative Session approved two key pieces of legislation that requires OHCS to increase its farmworker housing efforts. This reinforced the department’s involvement in farmworker housing over the past biennium. House Bill 3172 transferred the responsibility of the farmworker housing tax credit program from the Department of Consumer and Business Services to the department. In addition, the bill designated OHCS as the primary state agency for farmworker housing information and other duties.

House Bill 3173 provided an increase in tax credits for all approved farmworker housing developments during the calendar year. These increases of tax credit opportunities were enhanced through the legislation by extending the length of time that credits may be held from five to ten years, and allowed owners of tax credit projects to transfer a portion of the tax credit to an individual that contributed to the project through construction, manufacturing, installation or contribution of money. As a result of this legislative action, the Emergency Board approved the establishment of a staffing position to create and develop rules, processes, strategies and/or resources to effectively implement the farmworker housing programs.

The second request provides an opportunity for the department to increase current funding provided by Fannie Mae for its Predevelopment Loan Program from $1 million to $4 million. The current funds are used to provide low-interest loans to assist community partners in financing acquisition and other predevelopment costs associated with the development of affordable housing. The additional funds have more flexibility and could be used for other activities such as housing preservation, development of special needs housing, and community development activities.

The Emergency Board authorized the department to begin the process of applying for these funds.
Judith Williams-Pitre and Larry E. Medinger have been appointed by Governor John A. Kitzhaber to serve on the State Housing Council. Both will serve through June 30, 2005.

Ms. Williams-Pitre is the Deputy Executive Director for Housing Services and Community Relations at the Housing Authority of Portland. She has been with the Housing Authority since 1973, working in a variety of capacities. Ms. Williams-Pitre serves as the current President of the Cascade Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), Board Chair of the Black United Fund, Board Chair of the Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Board Member of the American Red Cross, and President of Evergreen Housing, Inc. “As a former resident in low income housing, I understand how critical safe, affordable housing is to stabilize and transform an individual’s life.” Ms. Williams-Pitre has been confirmed by the Senate. She will replace Monica Hardy, whose term expired June 30, 2001.

Larry E. Medinger has also received Senate confirmation. Mr. Medinger is the owner of Medinger Construction Company, Inc., in Ashland Oregon. As a homebuilder/developer, Mr. Medinger serves on various boards and commissions and currently is a Chair and member of the Housing Commission for the City of Ashland, a board member of the Oregon Building Industry Association, and Co-Chair of the EPA Task Force on Clean Air in the Rogue Valley as well as many other affiliations. In 1988 and 1991, Mr. Medinger was recognized as the ‘Homebuilder of the Year’ by the Jackson County Homebuilding Association. Mr. Medinger replaces Peter Tarzian.

Nancy Pope Schlangen will step in as the Vice Chair of the Council. Ms. Pope Schlangen is the former Commissioner of Deschutes County. As the Commissioner, Ms. Pope-Schlangen addressed critical issues including homeless and supportive issues for homeless families. She is a key advocate on affordable housing issues and has been involved with many community task forces and not-for-profit organizations. She has been a member of the Council since July 1, 1998.

The State Housing Council develops policies to stimulate and increase the supply of affordable housing for lower income individuals and families in Oregon. The Council advises the Governor, Legislature, state agencies and local governments on actions that may affect the cost or supply of housing, and adopts rules necessary for the administration and enforcement of OHCS’ housing related statutes.

**Fund continued from page 1**


The rulings refer to the “single subject” rule. The Oregon Constitution requires each amendment be voted on separately. The court said the initiatives violated the single subject rule. In this way, the two cases are linked and are being closely monitored.

The term limits case is currently on a “fast track” to the Oregon Supreme Court. The court expects to rule by the end of the year. However, the lottery challenge is not fast-tracked and a Supreme Court decision is not expected until early next year.

If either term limits or the lottery authorization is found to be unconstitutional, the state will have to reassess its ability to sell lottery bonds as the state would no longer be authorized to operate the lottery. In any case the Incentive Fund will be on hold until these issues are resolved.

To have your name placed on the Incentive Fund mailing list to receive updates on the fund, please contact Sarah Dornon at 503.986.2054 or at Sarah.Dornon@hcs.state.or.us.
Farmworker Housing Receives a Boost in 2001 Session

By Lynn Partin, Legislative Liaison

Oregon’s 71st Legislative Assembly passed several bills significantly improving OHCS’s ability to improve the lives of farmworkers in the state. The bills incorporated most of the recommendations of the Interim Farmworker Housing Task Force established by the 1999 Legislature. A broad cross-section of people and organizations with an interest in the topic participated in the Task Force’s proceedings: legislators from both chambers and both parties, growers, farmworkers and farmworker advocates, the faith community, housing developers, state agencies, and others. Despite the diversity of the Task Force members, all of its 18 recommendations were unanimous. This fact was of tremendous importance to achieving goals that had to some extent been left lying on the legislative table for 50 years.

Specifically, the Legislature passed the following farmworker housing bills: HB 3171, making it easier for developers to site farmworker housing; HB 3172, establishing OHCS as the primary state agency for farmworker housing information, assigning it a critical coordinating role in that context, and transferring administration of the farmworker housing development tax credit to OHCS from OR-OSHA; HB 3173, eliminating the sunsets on and substantially enhancing both the developer and lender farmworker housing tax credits; and HB 3573, appropriating to OHCS civil penalties imposed by OR-OSHA for failure to register farmworker labor camps. These funds will be used to develop farmworker housing for low and very low income farmworkers around the state.

At a signing ceremony celebrating these legislative victories, Governor Kitzhaber acknowledged the critical importance of farmworkers to Oregon’s economy and communities. Given their contributions, he said, the “plight of the circumstances under which they have lived is a disgrace to the state of Oregon. This package goes a long way toward rectifying the problems.”

Echoing these sentiments, OHCS Director Bob Repine emphasizes the Department’s commitment to tackle the challenge of meeting currently huge unmet needs for safe, decent and affordable farmworker housing head-on. “Working in a collaborative and inclusive manner,” he says, “we will demonstrate to our partners that farmworker issues are important to us, and that we are restructuring to address those in a more formidable way” than in the past.

Award continued from page 3

gestures that break down the scale of the buildings. The units are configured into three building footprints that relate to the scale of larger single-family homes in the neighborhood. Each of the three unit groupings is oriented so that the narrow dimension is perpendicular to the slope direction, thus minimizing the need for massive excavations.

The site design provides a variety of outdoor settings and spaces for the residents to use and enjoy. The garden apartments face a commons area with privacy screening and an intimate garden setting. The community space is at the heart of the informal outdoor space, providing an on-site amenity for gatherings and socializing.

The residential units are designed for maximum livability. The one and two bedroom units are designed to provide a “privacy gradient” which is appropriate for a home environment. The front entry is a well-defined foyer that creates a graceful transition from the outdoor spaces to indoor spaces. All rooms have access to natural light except for the kitchen and bathroom, and take advantage of views of the Columbia River.

The hard work in finding a workable design solution for the project paid off—not only did senior residents benefit from needed supportive housing—the project has been recognized nationally by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). During NAHRO’s recent National Conference and Exhibition in Nashville, Tennessee, CCHC Director Ruby Mason was presented the 2001 NAHRO Award of Excellence for outstanding achievement in housing and community development programs nationwide.

“NAHRO is proud to extend recognition to these agencies that use creativity and innovation to develop programs with an ongoing commitment to excellence,” said NAHRO President Karen Thoresen. “Agencies like Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation are accomplishing remarkable levels of service for their communities and their residents. They are setting up programs and standards that can be duplicated by other agencies around the country.”
In line with its mission to seek opportunities to improve the lives of Oregonians, OHCS has undertaken a new project, the development of an economic wellbeing simulation model. Several years ago, the Oregon Progress Board partnered with Oregon State University and Ohio State University to develop the poverty model. In exhibiting a strong interest in continuing work on the model, the Governor’s Office and the Oregon Progress Board has requested that OHCS continue work on the development of a dynamic Economic Wellbeing Simulation Model Emerges

By Richard Bjelland, State Housing Analyst

In line with its mission to seek opportunities to improve the lives of Oregonians, OHCS has undertaken a new project, the development of an economic wellbeing simulation model. Several years ago, the Oregon Progress Board partnered with Oregon State University and Ohio State University to develop the poverty model. In exhibiting a strong interest in continuing work on the model, the Governor’s Office and the Oregon Progress Board has requested that OHCS continue work on the development of a dynamic model to stimulate the impact of policy changes on poverty.

As part of the process, a Model Steering Committee has been formed composed of members of various state agencies who may have an impact on the factors affecting poverty in Oregon. In this role, the Steering Committee will provide guidance to staff in further development of the model.

The current model has four key modules: demographics, households, industries and labor. Other modules that have been recommended include employment, education, health, housing, social services, tax laws, energy and transportation. Current work involves updating the demographic module with Census 2000 data, refining the household types to be used in the model, and obtaining likely ranges of values to be used in those variables that will be represented by a probability distribution.

For more information on the model, contact Richard Bjelland at 503.986.0983, or Richard.Bjelland@hcs.state.or.us.

Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit organization, seeks to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat combines volunteer labor with fund raising to construct new or rehabilitate existing single-family homes for families meeting certain criteria, including a willingness to invest significant hours of “sweat equity.” There are three areas in which assistance will be provided to Habitat affiliates: 1) OHCS will provide grant funds for paying system development charges (SDC’s); 2) OHCS will make predevelopment loans to Habitat affiliates at interest rates of zero percent with a two percent loan fee; and 3) OHCS will purchase up to 20 Habitat mortgage loans at a zero percent interest rate.

System development charges are assessed by local governments to recover the costs for extending water and sewer lines, sidewalks, and certain other neighborhood improvements related to the construction of new housing. OHCS has committed a total of $500,000 within the Housing Development Account for this purpose, allowing up to $5,000 per site. These grants get families into their homes sooner than would be possible otherwise.

As available building land becomes scarce and its price increases, Habitat affiliates often need to act quickly to acquire lots when an opportunity presents itself. However, most affiliates do not have significant capital funds on hand and fund raising takes time. Through OHCS’s Predevelopment Loan Program, affiliates are provided with funds to purchase the land. In addition, the favorable financing terms keep interest costs low during the fund raising efforts that are necessary to repay the loan. Sharlene Weed, Executive Director of the Sisters’ Habitat for Humanity, says “This is a huge break-through for us; there is a great need. This will allow us to keep building through the next year.” She also stated that due to this program they were able to purchase properties that would have otherwise been lost to them.

After a family moves into a completed Habitat home, they make monthly mortgage payments to the affiliate. In this way, the affiliate recovers its investment over several years. Through the OHCS Single Family Loan Program, Repine has committed $1,200,000 in zero percent rate funds to purchase 20 home loans made to very-low income Habitat for Humanity families. By selling the loans to OHCS, twenty different affiliates will immediately have the funds they need to build more homes and help more families achieve their dreams of home ownership. For certain affiliates, receiving these funds allows them to quickly begin construction of new homes for low-income Oregonians.

Habitat has a demonstrated record of making homeownership possible for low-income Oregonians willing to help themselves. In offering this unique financing package, OHCS is proud to partner with Habitat in this effort.
Imagine a cozy warm home which uses 15 percent less energy than the typical new home. Imagine the smile on your face when you get your first home’s energy bill and it’s less than the small rental you just left. Imagine a home that was built using recycled building products, low emission adhesives and paints, and energy efficient appliances. The days of dreaming about homes like these are over...HOST Development, Portland General Electric’s Earth Advantage Program and Oregon Housing and Community Services are working together to turn this green building fantasy into a homebuilding reality.

Those of you waiting on the green building sidelines may be wondering...”What is green building?” ‘Green building’ is the adoption of new ways of building homes that reduce their short and long term environmental impact. The term refers to the philosophy of environmentally sensitive building practices, also known as ‘sustainable construction.’ Once an obscure public policy concept, ‘green building’ practices are becoming mainstream and widely adopted by the homebuilding industry.

Portland General Electric (PGE) and HOST Development are leading the way in mass marketing the green building movement. Earlier this year PGE launched the state’s largest green building initiative, the Earth Advantage Program. Earth Advantage homes are designed to use less energy, improve air quality, and protect the environment. The program does not just set the standards, but is supported by a team of inspectors who visit the homes while under construction to ensure the work gets done right. Once the home is completed, the PGE inspectors do a blower door test to measure how energy tight the home is. To pass, the home must not only meet local building code, but exceed it by 15 percent! The PGE Earth Advantage team offers technical support to assist developers delving into green building for the first time.

While PGE’s Earth Advantage Program sets a green building standard, PGE also partners with homebuilders such as HOST Development, a Portland-based non-profit homebuilder, to construct the homes. One of the best examples of the Earth Advantage program in action is HOST’s Charleston Place subdivision (pictured above and below), located off Columbia Boulevard in north Portland. Over the next two years, HOST will build all of the 100 Earth Advantage homes in the subdivision, making it one of the state’s largest examples of green building in action.

The HOST homes will be first-time homebuyer friendly as well. The Charleston Place homes are one and two story detached homes affordably priced to sell to low and moderate first-time homebuyers. Prices start at $114,950 and HOST will provide down payment assistance to certain qualified buyers. To further address the affordability of the homes, OHCS has committed $1,000,000 in 5.95 percent loan funds through the Residential Loan Program to help low-income families make their first home an Earth Advantage home.

As a result of this successful partnership, PGE, HOST and OHCS are transforming green building from a vague notion into a lean, mean green building machine.

For more information about HOST Development, PGE’s Earth Advantage Program or the Residential Loan Program visit www.hostdevelopment.com, www.earthadvantage.com, or www.hcs.state.or.us.
OHCS Provides Scholarships for Students to Attend College

Two students were selected to receive scholarships through the 2000-01 George Puentes Jr. Memorial Scholarship to attend Chemeketa Community College thanks to OHCS. The department provided a sponsorship to the Scholarships for Latinos (SOL) program in the amount of $5,200. Each winner receives a scholarship worth up to $2,500 for full tuition, books and fees.

This is the third year for the agency to participate in this program. “SOL presents a great opportunity for the department to become involved on a personal level, and improve the life of a student who might otherwise not have the opportunity to further their education,” says Bob Repine, Director of Oregon Housing and Community Services. “If every student who participates in the program is able to touch another person’s life due to the opportunities we were able to provide, then that is success.”

Two students were selected as recipients of the funds from OHCS: George Columba from Salem, Oregon is currently working in the health care arena and is attending Chemeketa’s nursing program while raising two daughters. Alicia Garcia, Mt. Angel, Oregon, is a 2000 graduate of John F. Kennedy High School. She will focus on business and stockbrokerage studies.

The George Puentes, Jr. Memorial Scholarship, targets Latino students who are bilingual and committed to a 4-year professional degree or a nursing/EMT certification. The student must attend Chemeketa on a full-time basis and agree to perform 50 hours of service to the community during the school year. The scholarship is renewable for a second year at Chemeketa provided the student has met all of the requirements and has maintained a 3.0 GPA.

CDBG Housing Rehab Program Revamped

By Karen Clearwater, Housing Resources Section Assistant Manager

When Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDDD) decided to reorganize, it was agreed that the Housing Rehabilitation Program funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds could better serve Oregonians by being located in and run by OHCS. In January 2001, this program was transferred to the department from OECDDD by way of an interagency agreement. Since then, we have been researching ways in which we can make the program more successful and get “more bang for our buck.”

The program, which was started in the early 1980’s by OECDDD, provides grants to cities and counties in Oregon that do not receive federal funds directly from HUD. These grants allow cities and counties to partner with non-profits or housing authorities to run housing rehabilitation programs in their communities. In having these funds available to assist owners in rehabilitating their existing housing, this program improves the lives of low income Oregonians by keeping them in their homes longer and benefits the community by improving their affordable housing stock.

To qualify for these funds, a home must be either owner-occupied with the owner at or below 80 percent of area median income or owners of no more than two units of rental housing whose tenants’ incomes are at or below 80 percent of area median income.

The department currently holds 12 contracts with various cities and counties who are members of or are creating a revolving loan fund. These twelve contracts totaling $5,365,500, serve 240 low-income households (or 600 persons) with an average loan amount of $15,000 per house. When funds are granted to a city or county, they must work with a local non-profit to join or create a regional revolving loan fund. This revolving loan fund is developed with a minimum of three municipalities that agree to pool the repayment dollars. If an eligible non-profit is the subgrantee and runs the rehabilitation program, the non-profit will also be the lender and the recipient of loan repayments. The CDBG fund will lose all federal requirements and the non-profit can then work with the municipalities to use the repayment monies to address different housing needs or continue to run a housing rehabilitation program. This revolving loan structure helps to create a larger loan pool to sustain housing rehabilitation programs and allow funds to become more flexible in order to meet other regional housing needs.

For further information on the CDBG Program, contact Karen Clearwater at 503.986.0968 or Karen.Clearwater@hcs.state.or.us.◆
Commission for Voluntary Action and Service Joins Department

With the passage of HB 2265 during the 2001 Legislative Session, the Oregon Commission for Voluntary Action and Service was permanently placed under the umbrella of Oregon Housing and Community Services. We spoke with Bob Repine, Director of OHCS, and asked for his comments on this action.

First of all, what does the Commission do?

Repine: The program brochure reads, “the Commission provides AmeriCorps funding to communities across Oregon through a citizen-led grant making process.” I believe their services are more than that, and are critical to the state. The Commission provides the tools for communities to help themselves by providing training and technical assistance to volunteer organizations and community programs to solve local problems.

AmeriCorps Pledge
I will get things done for America,
to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.
I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.
Faced with apathy, I will take action.
Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.
Faced with adversity, I will persevere.
I will carry this commitment with me
this year and beyond.
I am an AmeriCorps member...
and I am going to get things done.

There are over 22 AmeriCorps programs operating in Oregon at this time. Members can become involved in many different activities around the state. Projects range from restoring streams to building low-income housing, from tutoring children to working in tandem with police departments to support their community policing programs. For example, the Forest Grove School District assigns members to schools through-

What is Happening with School-to-Work?

By Krissa Caldwell, State School-to-Work Program Manager

Editor’s Note: Krissa Caldwell (formerly of OHCS) is the State School-to-Work Program Manager. OHCS has taken a lead role in supporting school-to-work efforts.

Large numbers of students are coming to state agencies for work-based learning experiences. We’ve known this for quite some time, but we really haven’t had a good idea about the actual number. The School-to-Work/Career-Related Learning Program surveyed all state employees across Oregon last year and found that over 50,000 students interacted with state employees in educational experiences in agency worksites, classrooms, and in the field!

Oregon Housing and Community Service employees are among these numbers. In fact, OHCS employee involvement in school-to-work activities has been evident in several areas:

• Staff were involved in the Salem-area Job Interview Fair for Youth (one of the major contributors)
• Planned and hosted events for Take Our Kids to Work Day (26 students participated)
• Visited Parrish Middle School on Baked Potato Fridays for career-related conversations and presentations to classes.
• Provided numerous internships, job shadows and school-to-work job experiences
• Provided support to students to attend the Greater Oregon Academy for Leadership & Service (GOALS), a three-week summer program for high school students to provide leadership and community service skills.

• Provided scholarships to 2 students to participate in the Scholarships for Latinos (SOL) program.
• Attended the School-to-Work Summit.

The State’s School-to-Work/Career-Related Learning Program provides resources, training and support to state employees as they work with students in the workplace, in classrooms and in the field. It is through the efforts of employees, such as those found in Oregon Housing and Community Services, who have voluntarily participated with students, that are really making education relevant for today’s youth!
OHCS Launches Strategic Planning Effort

Under the leadership of OHCS Director, Bob Repine, the department and its partners have made a commitment to improve the lives of Oregonians and the quality of our communities. To this end, OHCS has launched a planning process to develop and implement a 2001-03 Strategic Plan.

Over the last several months, the department developed nine overarching goals. These goals are the top priorities for the department to accomplish over the current biennium. The number of goals was limited with the understanding that the ongoing program delivery and administration was critical to our mission. The importance of performing these daily responsibilities is in no way diminished by the identification or implementation of the nine overarching goals.

Director Repine emphasizes that “strategic planning is not a unique process to the department. We usually go through a planning process to determine priorities for each biennium. However, we haven’t completed a process this intense for several years.” Deputy Director Jack Kenny added “We placed particular emphasis on making our goals tangible and measurable. We will be able to point to results achieved.”

At this time, teams are in the process of developing detailed work plans for each of the goals. Each work plan will include timelines with interim goals that are measurable and verifiable. Teams will make quarterly reports on their progress towards achieving the goals to the Director. In this way, course corrections or plan modifications can be made as necessary.

Is there specific staff assigned to operate the program?

Repine: At this time, three staff positions administer the daily operation of the program. Kathleen Joy has served as the Executive Director of the Commission since February 1998. The AmeriCorps Program Officer, Patricia Bollin, and Office Manager, Marlene Howard provide support. Office space is provided in the AT&T Building at 1600 SW Market Street, Suite 850 in Portland.

In addition to staffing, a Commission consisting of up to 25 members are appointed by the Governor and meet quarterly to oversee the AmeriCorps activities.

Do you have any final comments?

Repine: Yes. AmeriCorps is a win, win situation for both communities and Americorps members. Communities receive the services to meet specific and unidentifiable needs within their area. Members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience and receive awards that can be used for education. We welcome the Commission within OHCS and look forward to the opportunities generated by this move.

Editor’s Note: For more information, contact the Commission at 503.725.5903 or toll-free at 888.353.4483.
Focus on Staff

Welcome

Peter Anderson, Loan Closer, Housing Finance Section.
Nick Barwig, Technology Support Specialist, Information Systems.
Jenae Bjelland, CSBG and Continuum of Care Coordinator, Community Services Section.
Patricia Bollin, AmeriCorps Program Officer, Oregon Commission for Voluntary Action and Service.
Ufemia Castaneda, Contracts Project Coordinator, Financial Operations.
Christine Cruz, Public Service Representative, Church Street Office.
Tino (Constantino) Fabros, Homeless Programs Coordinator, Community Services Section.
Marlene Howard, Office Manager, Oregon Commission for Voluntary Action and Service.
Kathleen Joy, Executive Director, Oregon Commission for Voluntary Action and Service.
Jai (Jenese) Maddox, Administrative Specialist, Energy Unit.
Michael Reed, Secretary, Financial Operations.
Kathryn Simpson, Grants Specialist, Financial Operations.

Promoted

Cecilia Lyons, Project Specialist, Community Services Section.
Karen Seery, Grant Accountant, Financial Operations.

New Work Assignments

Suzanne Harris, Web Designer, Information Systems.
Peggy Watson, Cashier, Financial Services.

Celebrating Service

Mary Gentry, 5 years of state service, Secretary, Community Services Section.

Farewell

Allison Brandt, Asset & Property Manager, Asset & Property Management Division.
Greg Parker, Loan Officer, Housing Finance Section.
Roseanne Ward, Debt Officer, Debt Management Section.

In Remembrance

Housing advocates lost a friend and ally in August when Jerry Bieberle passed away after an extended illness. Jerry worked for the citizens of Oregon in various capacities, the latest as an advocate for affordable housing. He will be missed.

OHCS Fast Facts

On any given night, an average of 8,840 Oregonians are homeless and seeking assistance; 37 percent of which are children under the age of 17. Of those seeking assistance, more than 2,000 are turned away, including about 800 children. (Source: Homelessness in Oregon, OHCS)
The 2002 Oregon Housing Conference will be in Eugene, Oregon on April 24 and 25, 2002. For more information, contact 503.986.2012.

Residential Loan Program “Oregon State Bond Loan”
Current interest rate (effective 9/24/01): 5.95%

Have You Visited Us Lately?

On-line visitors have many options in touring our site. In addition to learning more about the programs offered through OHCS, visitors can find out about upcoming events, what’s current within the department or access a photo library of housing developed using OHCS funds. Take a self-guided tour today at www.hcs.state.or.us.
Taking the spirit of partnership one step further, Oregon Housing and Community Services will join with the Oregon Downtown Development Association (ODDA) to present the 2002 Oregon Housing Conference & Downtown Solutions Conference on Wednesday, April 24 through Friday, April 26, 2002.

The Oregon Housing Conference starts off with workshops during the morning on Wednesday, April 24, and ends at noon on Thursday, April 25. At that time, the Oregon Downtown Development Association Conference will kick-off during its Opening Luncheon.

In past years, Oregon’s housing partners and community organizations have ‘Set the Standard’ in the nation by improving the way of life for Oregonians. And, this year will be no different. During the Opening Luncheon on Wednesday, April 24, the Department will be recognizing these individuals who have gone that extra mile to provide affordable housing opportunities for lower income Oregonians. Nomination forms will be mailed out in early January 2002—so watch your mailbox!

The conference will provide a variety of opportunities, both for the department, conference attendees and sponsors. According to Bob Repine, “The joint conference will provide attendees more opportunity to attend workshops that address a multitude of issues affecting affordable housing and downtown development throughout Oregon. ODDA was chosen as a conference partner because our Community Incentive Fund focuses on reinvesting in the redevelopment of downtown areas in communities statewide.”

We hope to see you there!