THE TRANSFORMATION OF IBERVILLE

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Dear Readers;

Thank you for picking up a copy of the Fall Edition of the HANO Newsletter. Over the last six months the agency celebrated many milestones that our residents and stakeholders can attribute to hard work, dedication and a commitment to reviving HANO and its communities.

HANO employees were hard at work rebuilding the agency and accomplishing tasks focused on resident needs. We are converting public housing sites to more modern, mixed-income communities and are also offering home ownership opportunities.

We published the agency’s Recovery Work Plan Six Month Progress Report that captures administrative improvements, and adopted the Strategic Plan for Development based on extensive data collection, best practices research, and extensive public consultation. The Strategic Plan emphasizes how we intend to move forward in operating more efficiently and in addressing the need to provide more affordable housing.

We’re also kicking off an unprecedented journey with the largest and most complex development in HANO’s history. In participation with the City of New Orleans as co-applicant, we’ve secured $30.5 million in grant funding as part of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, to redevelop Iberville and transform the entire Iberville/Treme community.

HANO Security has been upgraded and is now the HANO Police Department under the direction of the agency’s first Chief of Police, Mitchell Dusset. Chief Dusset was essential in the passage of Senate Bill 78 authored by State Senator Edwin Murray and signed by Governor Bobby Jindal at the end of the 2011 Legislative Session.

In this issue, you will find stories of our youth that were also hard at work and play, a feature on Columbia Parc recognized as AHF Magazine’s Readers Choice, and the Housing Choice Voucher Program’s participation in the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.

These are just a few of our milestones, but the work is far from complete. We will continue to push forward in revitalizing this agency with the true commitment of putting our residents needs first, above all else.

David Gilmore
Administrative Receiver

CREATING COMMUNITIES. BUILDING TRUST.

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THE TRANSFORMATION OF IBERVILLE

HANO receives $30.5 million to redevelop Iberville

Nine months following the submission of an extensive application to HUD for a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative implementation grant, HANO and the City of New Orleans have been awarded $30.5 million to redevelop and transform the Iberville/Tremé community.

On September 1, community leaders joined HUD’s Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Sandra B. Henriquez, Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu, City Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer, a host of Louisiana State Legislators and HANO staff at the New Orleans Bio Innovation Center on Canal Street to announce the award and celebrate the kick-off of the Iberville/Tremé Transformation Plan.

New Orleans was one of five cities nationwide to receive the first-ever implementation grants awarded through President Barack Obama’s Choice Neighborhoods Initiative to revitalize the Iberville public housing development and increase investment in the greater Tremé neighborhood.

“We’ll win the future only if we can ensure that people in every community, even those living in our most troubled neighborhoods, have access to the American Dream,” said President Barack Obama. “With HUD’s Choice Neighborhoods grants, my Administration has brought local communities an innovative new tool to ensure that all families can access the quality affordable housing, safe streets, and good schools they need to compete in the 21st century economy.”

During the announcement, Administrative Receiver David Gilmore introduced members of the project’s Implementation Team led by HANO which includes officials from the City of New Orleans and Recovery School District; the Iberville Revitalization Company (IRC), a joint venture of HRI Properties and McCormack Baron Salazar; and the Iberville Resident Working Team, Urban Strategies, Inc. and HRI Community Resources. Community engagement consultants GCR & Associates, Clifton James, LLC, and Black Men of Labor will advise the Implementation Team on community input throughout the entire process.

“This is a great day for the housing authority, New Orleans, and the countless families who will benefit from the transformation this funding will bring to the Tremé community,” said Henriquez. “Choice Neighborhoods recognizes that we must link affordable housing with quality schools, public transportation, good jobs, and safe streets. This is the next generation of neighborhood revitalization that not only transforms distressed housing, but heals entire communities.”

The Transformation Plan covers redevelopment of more than 300 blocks within the boundaries of Rampart Street, Tulane Avenue, Broad Street, and St. Bernard Avenue and is estimated to cost approximately $660 million. It includes increased opportunities in education, health, job opportunities, businesses and entrepreneurship, workforce training, safety, retail, services, recreation, and quality of life. To kick start the project, the team submitted two applications to the state for Low Income Housing Tax Credits on August 29 to begin Phase I of the redevelopment of Iberville onsite housing, and the construction of Esplanade Delille, a 40-unit mixed-income project which will include ten replacement units.
The plan addresses three key components: housing, neighborhood, and people. The housing component presents an opportunity to redevelop public housing units providing one-for-one replacement in green, mixed-income, mixed-use communities with special needs and affordable housing opportunities. The plan describes how HANO will redevelop Iberville to include approximately 2,500 on and off-site mixed-income housing units, and will initiate the redevelopment of 13 housing and commercial centers in the community.

The people component addresses the need for economic stability and self-sufficiency of residents and will provide programs to assist in academic and career advancement. This component also addresses the residents’ health, safety supportive services needs.

The neighborhood component builds on the need to invest in more economic development. The addition of retail and high quality support services will result in local job opportunities. The community engagement team will work to increase strategic partnerships with community groups, business leaders, property owners, institutions, and residents within the community. “Working on the Iberville/Tremé Choice Neighborhoods Initiatives application has been a moving experience for me,” said Gilmore. “I can’t imagine another city that deserves the grant more or will make better use of the benefits it will bring. I’m especially delighted at the opportunity this process has provided for HANO to reconnect with the City it serves and I’m proud of the partnerships we are forging with the administration, Iberville residents, the Recovery School District, the development team, the community at large, and so many other great organizations. The future holds so many good things for us and CNI will help us achieve them.”

HANO held four public meetings for Iberville residents, community stakeholders, and the general public to address their concerns and voice opinions on the neighborhood revitalization process. The Iberville Resident Working Team recently hosted meetings with the development’s current residents to answer questions regarding grant funding and the relocation process.

Future opportunities for community and resident participation, and dialogue in the shaping of the final Transformation Plan as well as in its implementation will be scheduled.
Photos from Father's Day events across the HANO communities
CELEBRATING FATHER’S DAY
Communities honor HANO fathers

In mid-June, families around the nation celebrated Father’s Day recognizing dads for their commitment and dedication in taking care of their families. As a part of the national program adopted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), HANO celebrated the fathers of New Orleans by partnering with several of the agency’s communities.

“We invited fathers from our HANO communities to bring their sons and daughters out for a great time,” said Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “Our community organizations understand the need to reconnect fathers with their kids, and HANO is committed to bringing families together by encouraging fathers to become better mentors.”

At the Fischer community, the program celebrated fatherhood and family and connected fathers to services in their neighborhood. The attendees participated in workshops, visited health educational vendor booths, enjoyed uplifting entertainment, and listened to inspirational words from a special guest speaker, Pastor Samuel R. Blakes of the New Home Family Worship Center. Kerry Parker, a former defensive back from Grambling State University and Canadian Football League player for seven years, attended the event and talked to the kids and their dads about the meaning of fatherhood.

The Iberville community held an outdoor seafood boil and picnic with hot dogs, hamburgers, and assorted snacks. Families listened and danced to music played by the guest DJ, and grandfathers competed in a horseshoe game.

The Father’s Day celebrations gave families a chance to thank all dads and express the need for them to bond with their kids and the rest of the community.

Father and Son compete in a family knowledge trivia game
TO PROTECT AND SERVE

New bill awards HANO officers authority of full police department

At the conclusion of this year’s Louisiana State Legislative Session in Baton Rouge, our elected officials voted to support a major change in the HANO administrative duties. On June 21, 2011 Senate Bill 78, authored by Senator Edwin Murray allowing HANO to establish its own police force, was signed into law by Governor Bobby Jindal. The bill was introduced to the senate in May.

HANO’s Chief of Police Mitchell Dusset, then head of security, says that the agency had been working diligently to accomplish this task for many years. “I have been here for 18 years and the establishment of our own police force has always been one of my goals,” said Chief Dusset.

His efforts were put on hold when a major storm hit New Orleans in August of 2005. After the onset of HANO’s redevelopment plans and the return of thousands of residents, Chief Dusset resurrected his proposal and sold the idea to Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “The administration supported this idea one hundred percent and authorized the drafting of a senate bill to get the ball rolling” said Dusset.

“The administration supported this idea one hundred percent and authorized the drafting of a senate bill to get the ball rolling,” said Chief Dusset. Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu, Representative Jared Brosset, and Sheriff Marlin Gusman supported the legislation and were instrumental in securing votes from the Louisiana State Legislature to ensure the passage of Senate Bill 78.

Chief Dusset believes that it is imperative to have a full Housing Authority Police Department over the status quo security staff. “The men and women who work with us are familiar with the citizens but our power was very limited. We did not have the authority to transport suspects, collect or process evidence, or write official police reports,” said Chief Dusset. “If we made an arrest, we would have to hold them at that location for approximately 10 to 15 minutes until city police arrived. The establishment of our own police force expedites the handling of similar situations,” said Chief Dusset.

The passage of this bill expands officer efficiency and authority by allowing them to carry weapons, make arrests and collect evidence, draft police reports, and transport suspects to New Orleans Police Headquarters. Chief Dusset says that these changes are necessary and vital to keep residents safe. “The HANO families appreciate our work, and we will continue to practice public safety at its best,” said Chief Dusset.
The administration hopes to transition smoothly from the current on-site staff to a full police department within 18 to 24 months. The department is currently working on the next steps in the process which involve developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the new HANO Police Department and the New Orleans Police Department. The agreement would outline the structure of the new police department and its jurisdiction. It would also specify the type of cases that would be handled by HANO police. The department must also recruit and employ 12 additional officers and upgrade all equipment.

The bill also requires HANO officers to complete the same training courses as city police and sheriff deputies. All officers must be trained and certified through the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) course, which covers 360 hours of state mandated training.

With the recent increase in violence in the City of New Orleans HANO has vowed to secure its neighborhoods, and help residents feel safer in and around their homes. Chief Dusset says that this opportunity supports his overall goal of providing a more effective department and quality safety service to members of the community.

BACK TO SCHOOL

On Saturday, July 23 HANO partnered with Hammond’s Transportation and the Daughters of Charity Services to host the Everyone Deserves a Chance Foundation Back to School Giveaway. Public housing residents from all areas of the city were invited to the fun filled event held at HANO’s main office.

More than 500 kids received backpacks, writing materials, measuring rulers, and notebooks for the new school year. Food and beverages were also provided and kids were treated to a variety of healthy snacks and a snowball stand.

The Daughters of Charity provided free health and dental screenings to both children and adults during the event. Many participants received blood pressure check-ups and referrals to primary physicians. The Daughters of Charity staffers were on site to speak directly with families about medical concerns, and to offer advice on how to live a healthier lifestyle.

Entertainment was provided by local performers DJ Jubilee and upcoming artist Meezy. Both DJ Jubilee and Meezy talked with the kids about the importance of getting an education and staying focused on having a successful future.

The back to school giveaway ended with an exciting ticket raffle. The New Orleans Hornets donated several bicycles that were raffled off along with two $25 dollar gift cards. Certainly, the most exciting portion of the event was the Android Tablet raffle that was received by a very lucky and excited participant.
IT’S ALL ABOUT THE CONNECTION

HCC program launched

HANO residents can now access property information through the agency’s new program, Housing Choice Connect (HCC). The new online system was developed to allow Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) landlords to post available properties on-line and enable residents seeking a place to live to search the site.

Once residents looking for new homes are logged into the system, they can access a specialized tool, or search engine, to identify specific criteria such as zip code, neighborhood, bedroom size, lease amount and disability access. Users can also access a variety of search filters such as location and proximity to hospitals, schools, and public transportation to assist in choosing a neighborhood to live in.

Recently, HANO hosted the first in a series of open houses and training seminars to instruct participating tenants and landlords on how to effectively use the HCC program. During the seminar, landlords were trained to upload their property information and a photo of their rental unit into the system. The attendees participated in a question and answer session and were asked to complete a survey to inform HANO administrators of the seminar’s effectiveness. The Housing Authority will host similar training sessions monthly.

The HCC system is a more efficient alternative to previous search methods. Prior to the creation of the new program, more than 17,000 voucher holders would manually search through a spreadsheet provided by HANO to find an available property. This method only allowed searchers to research a property according to its address, bedroom size, and deposit information.

“HCC makes it easier for residents to find new homes that will work for their individual situation,” said Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “It’s also important that we make affordable housing accessible to as many people as possible, and this program connects the tenant directly to the landlord and what they can provide.”

For more information about the Housing Choice Connect program visit www.hano.org

COLUMBIA PARC
AHF READER’S CHOICE

Columbia Parc, located in Gentilly, was recently chosen as the winner of Affordable Housing Finance Magazine’s 2011 Readers’ Choice Award for the Nation’s Best Housing Developments in the Family Category. The community also received the award as overall Project of the Year among 35 project finalists across various categories.

AHF readers were asked to select a winner based on several key characteristics such as adding to the affordable housing stock, offering outstanding social services, and using cost-effective and innovative design.

“Providing quality affordable housing for New Orleans’ families is a top priority here at HANO, and we are excited that Affordable Housing Finance readers recognize this community’s success in achieving that goal,” said HANO Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “We’re excited that Columbia Parc is viewed as a great place to live and raise children, and will continue to work with Columbia Residential Inc. and the Bayou District Foundation to maintain this excellence.”

As the readers’ choice, Columbia Parc will be highlighted in the November/December issue of the magazine and will be honored at The 2011 Affordable Housing Developers’ Summit in November.
HONORING A HANO RESIDENT LEADER

Boardroom re-named after Mrs. Helen Washington Lang

In honor of a well-known community activist for public housing, HANO rededicated the agency’s boardroom during a special meeting last Spring. HANO’s Administrative Receiver and Chairman of the Board of Commissions David Gilmore adopted Resolution 2011-08 officially renaming it the Helen W. Lang Memorial Boardroom.

During the renaming ceremony, an array of friends, family and community members paid respect to Mrs. Lang and shared moving stories of her life and her many contributions to the City. HANO presented a carved plaque during the event, which was placed on the wall of the boardroom commemorating the event.

Helen Beatrice Washington Lang was remembered for her charming manner and passion for providing safe and respectable public housing for her peers. Lang was a resident of the St. Bernard public housing development as a young woman and was very active in the fight for the rights of public housing residents during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. She was a strong activist for projecting the concerns of residents and was instrumental in the implementation of developing community centers at public housing sites.

As a social worker, Lang encouraged the members of her community to vote, and pursue an education. When HANO was approved for a new federal program that would offer public housing residents off-site housing opportunities known as Section 8, Lang decided that voucher recipients also needed a resident council. This led to the formation of the nation’s first Section 8 Resident Council in 1994.

After leaving New Orleans because of Hurricane Katrina, Lang vowed to return and continue the work of reinventing public housing, which she had been very involved in for the past decade. Even though she remained in Baton Rouge, Lang often traveled to New Orleans and was almost always present at HANO’s monthly board meetings pushing for adequate housing for displaced residents.

“She was always a do-er,” said Lillie Walker Woodfork, HANO resident council leader and friend to Lang. “I am a registered voter today because of Mrs. Lang, and I’m always running to this or that meeting because of Mrs. Lang.”
This summer, students across New Orleans enjoyed time off from their usual rigorous schedules and participated in fun, recreational activities. Under the direction of Administrative Receiver David Gilmore and the Department of Client Services, the agency hosted its Annual Summer Youth Enrichment Program for hundreds of kids and young adults living in HANO communities.

The Summer Youth Enrichment Program provides disadvantaged kids ages 6 through 17 with academic instruction and several recreational activities. The agency partnered with Boys & Girls Club of S. E. Louisiana, Desire Street Ministries, RESPECT, Inc., and The Kedila Family Learning Center to administer the program focused on cultural enrichment offering arts and crafts courses, swimming, and educational field trips.

The summer enrichment program participants were residents of the Iberville, Estates, Fischer and River Gardens communities.

HANO also hosted an eight-week Summer Employment Program in partnership with various job sites ranging from community organizations, government agencies, and corporate establishments. Over 100 young adults between the ages of 14 through 21 were given the opportunity to work in a field of their choice and gain specific career and life skills. The employment program focused on mastering social, job readiness, and educational skills. The educational component included a field trip to the Louisiana State Capitol Building, and seminars that were held each Friday during the program.

At the end of the summer session, HANO hosted the Second Annual End of Summer Banquet celebrating and acknowledging their accomplishments. The event featured guest speakers Commissioner James Carter and Musician Glen David Andrew. Carter and Andrew, both natives of New Orleans, offered words of encouragement, stories from their youth, and enlightened accounts of their individual roads to success. Attendees also witnessed an astonishing performance by youth participant Ariel Sherman filled with praise and worship through mime dancing.
Summer Employment Program participants enjoy the End of Summer Banquet
COMING HOME
Three HANO residents have a change of heart

Three years after Hurricane Katrina, the reconstruction of the public housing complexes known as The Big Four -- B.W. Cooper, C.J. Peete (now Harmony Oaks), Faubourg Lafitte, and St. Bernard (now Columbia Parc) -- was incomprehensible considering the significant barriers involved. With considerable public opposition from former residents of the Big Four who initially opposed the destruction of the original buildings, HANO faced the challenge of redeveloping quality and self-sustaining public housing. The vocal opposition stemmed from the powerful connections associated with the buildings that former residents once called home and the belief that the original residents would not be allowed to return.

Now, more than three years later, the reconstruction of the Big Four is almost complete. This ongoing progress is creating a gradual change in the mindset of residents who were once adamant in their opposition to the change.

Annie Nelson recently returned to New Orleans from Houston, Texas after five years of displacement. Nelson was a resident of the Lafitte housing development for more than half of her life. “I’ve live here for more than forty years,” said Nelson.

Prior to the reconstruction of the Big Four, Nelson intensely opposed the changes. Nelson added, “I originally felt that the old structures were still strong and could have been saved.” Since her return, Nelson is singing an entirely different tune. “The new apartments are beautiful and more efficient, and the neighborhood is peaceful and secure”, said Nelson. She is also excited to report that her neighborhood has its same charm as it did before the hurricane. “My neighbors came over to greet me when they heard that I had returned. I feel so blessed,” concluded Nelson.

The Faubourg Lafitte reopened as a mixed-income community in 2009. Natascha Williams was also a resident of that community for three years before the redevelopment project began. She believed that the original buildings were fair, and was content with the living conditions during that time. “I did not have any problems with housing before the storm,” said Williams. “The apartments were comfortable and reliable.” Along with other residents, Williams protested the destruction of the old units, but is amazed and pleased by the changes and the development of her new neighborhood. “The new apartments are no longer infested with roaches and the maintenance staff is more efficient and responsive,” said Williams. She also praised the new security staff saying, “My family feels safer because of the addition of on-site security.” The HANO Police Department provides security 12 hours a day to each community.

Williams is also happy to find that her neighborhood hasn’t changed completely. “We still have family and neighborhood
gatherings, and activities for the kids to enjoy,” said Williams. When asked about her adjustment to the new neighborhood, Williams credited her family and stable housing as a source of inspiration. “Adjusting was hard at first but my family and my new home has made it easier,” said Williams.

Mary Johnson, a 5-year resident of Lafitte prior to Hurricane Katrina, found a sense of home in the original buildings. “It was my home and I was devastated by the destruction that occurred after the storm,” said Johnson, who had relocated to Houston, Texas. She returned to New Orleans a year ago and was temporarily relocated in the Iberville housing development. After a lengthy stay in the Iberville apartments, Johnson moved back into the newly reconstructed Faubourg Lafitte homes.

While Johnson was initially reluctant to accept the changes, her opinion soon changed. “I have adjusted well with no problems at all and the homes are beautiful,” she gushed about her new surroundings. She also compliments the efficiency of the new structures and is very pleased with the new amenities that include bigger kitchens, modern appliances, beautiful patios, and on site security. “I feel much better about living here and feel that the old buildings were not destroyed in vain. Finally, we were allowed to come home and start a new life in complete comfort.” These resident testimonies illustrate that changes are rapidly becoming a welcome improvement.

With modernized appliances, and an expanded community with playgrounds, swimming pools and community centers, residents feel that their quality of life has greatly improved. The new regulations allow residents the choice of purchasing an affordable home, an option that was unavailable in the past. Finally, neighborhoods are becoming more diverse with the addition of new mixed-income homes. HANO’s residents feel that this is an unmistakable mark of progress.

HOUSING U.S. VETERANS

In August, HANO began distributing 100 housing vouchers with an estimated value of $930,000 to homeless veterans aiding in a national call to offer clinical assistance to the men and women who serve our country.

HANO partnered with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), United States Department of Veterans Administration (VA), and Southeast Louisiana Health Care System to participate in the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. This is the national agency’s third year in supporting the housing and service needs of homeless veterans across America.

As a part of the HUD-VASH program veterans will receive case management and clinical services provided by the Veterans Administration and the Southeast Louisiana Health Care System.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to assist those who have given so much to our country,” said Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “New Orleans has a substantial homeless population and this agency will offer any support available to give citizens safe, quality affordable housing.”

The HUD-VASH program is designed to assist homeless veterans in locating permanent housing through HUD’s rental assistance program and connects them with services at the VA’s medical centers in the community. The eligible veterans will be identified by the VA and referred to HANO to determine their final income eligibility and to assist in locating suitable housing.

HANO’s Housing Choice Voucher Department assisted the program partners in locating and contacting the veterans in need. Veterans participating in the HUD-VASH program usually contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward the rental rate of their new home.
**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

- **Main Office**  (504) 670-3300  
- **Harmony Oaks**  (504) 894-8828  
- **The Estates**  (504) 940-3060  
- **Iberville**  (504) 529-1591  
- **Faubourg Lafitte**  (504) 821-6687  
- **Guste Homes**  (504) 529-3392  
- **B.W. Cooper**  (504) 821-5151  
- **Fischer Homes**  (504) 210-8824  
- **River Gardens**  (504) 412-8216  
- **Columbia Parc**  (504) 284-4769  
- **Scattered Sites**  (504) 529-1591  

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