Building on a Commitment

Abundance (504) 949-1888
Main Office (504) 670-3300
Iberville (504) 529-1669
Guste Homes (504) 529-5339
B.W. Cooper (504) 681-0991
Fischer Homes (504) 210-8824
River Garden (504) 412-8216
Housing Choice Program (504) 670-3333

Residents, families reclaim Iberville

Iberville Community residents, New Orleans public housing officials, city leaders and business leaders headlined a civic pride event, ‘Reclaiming Our Community’, on Saturday, July 25, at the Marais Courtyard of the Iberville Community.

The event, designed to unite the Iberville Community in a spirit of hope and togetherness as residents and housing officials began planning the future of the site, featured spacewalks, snowballs, health screenings, food, games and information on programs offered by the Housing Authority of New Orleans.

“This was a tremendous day for us,” said HANO Board Chair Diane J. Johnson. “I was excited to see young, old and everyone in between come out to participate in reclaiming our homes. I believe the immense participation marked a major turning point in the Iberville Community.”

During the event, HANO residents and employees wore bright yellow shirts featuring the new Iberville motto ‘Our Home, Our Will, Iberville.’

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HANO Highlights: Short news clips from around the agency

The Russians are coming: In an effort to gain insight into creating and sustaining affordable housing, a group of Russian housing officials, right photo, met with Wayne Woods, HANO’s general counsel, and Judith Moran, chief operating officer for real estate development, on June 26 to learn how HANO undertook the massive rebuild after Hurricane Katrina.

The arrangement was made through the U.S. State Department to connect participants with government officials to learn about policy-making at the federal level on housing issues.

“It was very interesting,” Moran said. “The questions asked were very insightful.”

Client Services employee wins Mayor’s award: Iris Connerly, left photo, received a Mayor’s award and a bouquet of flowers for her birthday from the Resident Council Leaders. Connerly was “queen for a day” and treated to a lunch party.

New Resident Office and Mission Statement unveiled: HANO Resident Leaders and Executive Administrator Karen Cato-Turner cut the ribbon on May 20 to a new Resident Leader office on the third floor of HANO’s main building. The office features computer and Internet access, work space and telephones.

Families were treated to entertainment by the Shack Brown Drill Team and music by Q93’s DJ Wild Wayne. Seniors participated in diabetes and high blood pressure screenings, while children played games.

The event culminated a flurry of activities at the Iberville Community during the summer. HANO formed a committee of local experts, residents and community organizers to find the best way to better the neighborhood and hired a group of 35 residents to paint and clean the exteriors of the 70-year-old buildings.

Also, HANO staff members arrived the day before the July 25 event to clean out units, paint interiors and perform general landscaping work.

“We’re in this together,” Johnson said. “Gone are the days where our communities are separate and divided. What affects one of us affects us all.”

“This is such an exciting time to be here. This event really galvanized our community and our families.”

Rhonda Brown, left, Marie Roy, Joann Augillard and Angie Harper hand out T-shirts during the “Reclaiming Our Community” event.

Vikings player teaches value of reading

Chris Clark reads “The Cat in the Hat” to students at Crocker Elementary.

At more than 290 pounds, Minnesota Vikings’ Offensive Lineman Chris Clark is used to protecting quarterbacks from aggressive defenders. But in February, Clark protected the children at Crocker Elementary School from something far more fearsome — illiteracy.

Clark, whose family lived in the former Desire Housing Development, took time from his schedule as a Viking to come back to New Orleans and read the Dr. Seuss classic “The Cat in the Hat” to the second grade class at Crocker.

“I thought it would be a good idea because I thought about my experience as a kid,” Clark said. “I never had a chance to meet someone who made it from the same background as me. I never thought it was possible coming from New Orleans to go on and play professional sports.”

Before Clark read to the students, he explained why reading is important even after school ends. After reading, Clark asked the children to talk about their goals in life.

“Our playbook is basically the size of a medium-sized dictionary,” he added.

Clark decided on the trip to New Orleans as part of his Charitable Foundation, 3C, as a way to provide mentorship to young children. Clark also cited HANO’s former Chief Operating Officer of Real Estate Management Dorian Rawles as a huge influence in his life.

“It’s been a blessing,” Clark said. “I’ve been blessed to have that type of guidance. It helped me the man that I am today. I just want to repay the man the way he helped me.”

Before signing with the Vikings, Clark was a three-year starter on the University of Southern Mississippi offensive line and finished his senior year with the most starts of any offensive lineman on the team, holding his job for 39 straight games. He was named 2007 first-team All-Conference USA by the coaches and second-team by the media his senior season as the Golden Eagles set a season record for total offense and had their second straight season with 2,000 rushing yards as a team. Clark was a four-year letter winner at McDonogh 35 High School and named All-District after his senior season. Even with all of his athletic accolades, Clark and Rawles consider his status as an honor student one of his greatest achievements.

Lafitte community begins with groundbreaking

Lafitte Resident Council President Emelda Paul has lived all over the country since Hurricane Katrina — Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and in homes and apartments. Now she is looking forward to one more move. to her ‘New Jerusalem.’

Paul took the microphone along with U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, city leaders and housing officials and dubbed the new Lafitte site as “a promised land” for all of those who have waited for construction to begin on the $400 million project that will redevelop the former Lafitte public housing community.

The Aug. 27 event marked the start of construction on the first phase of Lafitte that will include 134 on-site affordable rental units and 47 on-site affordable homeownership units. When finished, the $400 million project will offer a mix of 1,500 affordable and market-rate units.

“This is a great day for New Orleans, its residents and the Housing Authority of New Orleans,” HANO Board Chair Diane J. Johnson said. “This is a good example of how HANO is working in partnership with our developers and clients to provide quality, affordable housing to the people who need it. The new Lafitte Community will be a great addition to the city.”

HUD and HANO selected Providence and Enterprise, two nonprofits, to plan and develop a new community on and around the grounds of the former Lafitte public housing development, a 275-acre site off Lafitte and Orleans avenues near downtown New Orleans.

The new Lafitte Community will be constructed around existing schools, emphasizing education as the bedrock of the development and restoring the historical street grid that was eliminated when the original public housing complex was built.

Apartments and homeownership units will be designed to blend in with neighboring communities. Homeowner and rental units will be dispersed throughout the site; builders will use high-quality architectural and construction standards.

All housing, both rental and homeownership will be visually indistinguishable — creating a stable, mixed-income community that also is a safe, attractive place to live.

“Today marks another milestone in the rebirth of the city since Hurricane Katrina,” HANO Executive Administrator Karen Cato-Turner said.

“The new Lafitte Community is going to be a beautiful development that will make New Orleans proud, help revitalize a longtime, vital neighborhood and, more importantly, help provide an incredibly important and vital service to low-income residents.”

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HANO homeownership program paces the U.S.

Troya Holton, left photo, stands in front of her newly purchased home in Algiers. Holton bought her home through HANO’s Homeownership Program. She closed on the home in June. Nicole Barnes, far left in bottom photo, watches as Darlene Owens signs papers making her the 110th person to purchase a home through the HANO homeownership program. Also pictured below are Audrey Williams and Real Estate Agent Jennie Rolf.

HANO’s program ranks among the top homeownership programs run by public housing authorities across the country. Helping people receive the American Dream never gets old. It invigorates us as a department when we see families moving into their homes and knowing we were a part of that process,” said Nicole Barnes HANO’s vice president of homeownership.

“I found out about the homeownership program that HANO had,” Holton said. “And I was going to do everything in my power to get in it. It hasn’t really hit me yet that I’m a homeowner. But it’s a big difference, a tremendous difference.”

Holton, 45, overcome with emotion, quickly jumped in the final pieces of paperwork and received the keys to her new home.

“Helping people receive the American Dream never gets old. It invigorates us as a department when we see families moving into their homes and knowing we were a part of that process,” said Nicole Barnes HANO’s vice president of homeownership.

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— Nicole Barnes
HANO’s vice president of homeownership

Hornets’ Stojakovic holds court in Iberville

More than a dozen ball players waited impatiently to christen the new basketball court in the heart of the Iberville Community right before New Orleans Hornets small forward Peja Stojakovic cut the ceremonial ribbon Jan. 29.

Stojakovic posed for pictures and spoke about the importance of giving back to the community on a court that he funded through his Peja Stojakovic Children’s Foundation.

“This basketball court is the result of our group effort. Without the individuals and business community that support my fundraising events, the New Orleans Housing Authority, the support from the New Orleans Hornets and our partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, all this would not have been possible. Our goal is to provide the kids with a chance to learn respect, structure, teamwork — all through the game of basketball and staying off the streets,” Stojakovic said at the court dedication.

Stojakovic used athletics as a way to escape poverty and provide a better life for his family. But more importantly he spoke about doing the right things in life and working hard to achieve your goals.

“This is awesome for our families and kids,” said Eddie Scott, HANO’s client services director. “It not only gives our kids a great court on which to play basketball but it also shows that someone who is a world class athlete really cares about them.”

This is the first ‘Courts For Kids’ project to be completed with proceeds from the inaugural Peja’s Charitabowl held in March 2008. The mission of the ‘Courts For Kids’ project is to install new basketball courts, refurbish existing ones and distribute basketball equipment in economically disadvantaged areas around the world. The Iberville Community in New Orleans was identified as the project implemented in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Louisiana. The club also received 15 new Spalding basketballs and an NBA replica basketball rack.

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FALL 2009

Hornets’ Stojakovic holds court in Iberville

Peja Stojakovic speaks at the Iberville Community about the importance of sports for children. Stojakovic built a basketball court in the Iberville Community with the help of the Housing Authority of New Orleans.
Federal funds stimulate housing and services

Crime cameras in Iberville, 100 new units in Fischer and repairs to the Gaste community are just a few of the Housing Authority of New Orleans’ initiatives planned throughout the city thanks to a $34.576 million Capital Fund Grant Program from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for us to expedite our redevelopment projects,” said HANO Executive Administrator Karen Cato-Turner. “These additional funds will go to creating a better community for our families, not just in one concentrated area, but in several neighborhoods throughout the city.”

The ARRA funds, part of the federal government stimulus package, can be used to develop, finance, and modernize public housing. In accordance with HUD requirements, HANO received Board approval of the Capital Fund Annual Statement which specifies the activities that will be undertaken with the ARRA funding.

Before allocating the funds, however, HANO officials and Resident Leaders met to discuss the most pressing concerns for HANO families.

ARRA PROJECTS

- **Iberville** – $3.5 million for site improvements, unit repairs, demolition of structurally unsound Iberville Community Building, installation of security cameras and management office repairs.
- **Gaste** – $1.5 million for Highrise and Lowrise buildings and unit repairs and the development of 18 public housing units.
- **Fischer** – $6.7 million for development of Fischer IV, which includes 104 rental and homeownership units and associated architectural and engineering services, repairs to Senior Community Building, installation of security cameras, site improvements and unit repairs.
- **Scattered Sites** – $99 million for site improvements, unit repairs and associated architectural and engineering services.
- **Mazant Royal** – $2.5 million for development of 18 units and associated infrastructure.
- **HANO-wide** – $476,051 for architectural and engineering services for Modernization and Development activities and physical needs assessments.

The structurally unsound Iberville Community Center, left, was demolished using ARRA funds. Workers, below, salvage bricks from the building.

HANO celebrates Homeownership Month

The Real Estate Training Program, top left, photo, took place June 24 in the HANO Board Room. Real estate agents learned about requirements to participate in HANO’s homeownership program.

Real Estate Development Chief Judith Moran organized a breakfast, top right, photo, to celebrate the Homeownership Department’s hard work and achievements in June.

The Homeownership staff, bottom left, photo, also sponsored a reunion for all homeowners who purchased their homes through HANO’s Family Self-Sufficiency program. The meeting took place June 27 in the HANO Board Room and allowed families to discuss challenges and support each other.
New homes in Central City to energize community

Another neighborhood is closer to revitalization after housing officials joined city leaders, developers and Central City residents June 23 to break ground on two new homes.

The homes, at 2001 and 2005 Magnolia St. just off Claiborne Avenue, are the first phase of 50 single-family homes that will be built and marketed for sale to former residents of the Fischer and C.J. Peele public housing communities.

They also represent the continued redevelopment of Central City and the former C.J. Peele public housing site – now known as Harmony Oaks and which will feature 460 mixed-income rental units.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HANO and New Orleans leaders joined developers and residents in near-record heat at the vacant site of what eventually will be two new homes.

‘The Central City neighborhood connects the Central Business District to the Garden District and uptown to Mid-City,’ said HANO Executive Administrator Karen Cato-Turner.

‘It is a vital neighborhood that will assist in the recovery of New Orleans.’

‘It is the last remaining, full-scale, public housing complex still operating in New Orleans. The Iberville Community has 615 occupied apartments and is home to more than 1,300 residents.’

HANO is currently redeveloping other public housing properties in New Orleans.

‘HANO is excited that stakeholders from such diverse backgrounds are giving their valuable time to help prepare recommendations for the future of the Iberville Community,’ said HANO Executive Administrator Karen Cato-Turner.

‘The Iberville Community is an indelible part of the history of New Orleans,’ Turner said. ‘This is an opportunity to seriously up grade the quality of life for the residents in that community.’

Residents, locals to advise on future of Iberville

Iberville leaders, city business leaders and others have agreed to serve as members of the Iberville Advisory Committee and help plan the future of the historic public housing site.

Committee members met informally for the first time June 25. Staff from the Housing Authority of New Orleans briefed the panel on Iberville and plans for immediate improvements. Committee members also took a short tour of the site.

‘This is a great opportunity for us to help plan the future of the Iberville Community,’ said Iberville Resident Council President Kim Piper – one of three residents on the committee. ‘It’s especially important for residents like myself to be a part of the planning.’

Committee members took no action at their first meeting. The committee hopes to have recommendations ready to present to HANO no later than December 2009.

The Iberville Community was built in 1940 and, today, is the last remaining, full-scale public housing complex still operating in New Orleans. The Iberville Community has 615 occupied apartments and is home to more than 1,300 residents.

The Central City neighborhood connects the Central Business District to the Garden District and uptown to Mid-City.”

‘It is a vital neighborhood that will assist in the recovery of New Orleans. This redevelopment will benefit the residents of Central City and act as a catalyst for the rebirth of the city’.

‘Families interested in buying one of the homes should contact the HANO homeownership office at (504) 670-3428 or the NONDC at (504) 524-1919.

Besides the two new homes and Harmony Oaks – which expects to welcome its first renters in October – other projects ongoing in and around the Central City neighborhood include the following:

■ Other nonprofit developers are expected to offer more than 350 additional rental and homeownership units.

■ Commercial revitalization is expected to happen along Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard and Claiborne Avenue.

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Muscles tense and beads of sweat collect on the brows of the competition as they watch Ashley and Kari Fleming approach the podium.

While many debaters present their topic as one to persuade, the Fleming girls deliver a eulogy of sorts to their competition as they weave effortlessly through the subtleties of the issues.

Viewed as the most dominant teens that Speech and Debate Coach Don Broussard has ever coached, the two Edna L. Karr students have won either first or second place in local, state and national competitions throughout high school.

“I have never seen anyone with such a strong desire to succeed,” Broussard said. “They have an intensity that is uncoachable.”

The two teens have received scholarship offers from every corner of the country. The latest offer is from Emory University.

“They have always been competitive,” said their mother, Maize Fleming, who is a Housing Authority of New Orleans client. “They are so competitive about everything.”

But even with natural talent, the girls have developed their skills through hours of practice and a voracious appetite for reading about current events.

“They debate everything,” Maize said. “They watch policy hearings and presidential debates. They read anything that has to do with a current event.”

This year the Flemings were invited to the National Debate Competition in New York with the Karr Debate team coming off of their first place victory at the Louisiana Regional Debate Championship.

“I am very proud of them.” Maize said. “I hope they are able to go to college.”

“I have never seen anyone with such a strong desire to succeed. They have an intensity that is uncoachable.”

- Don Broussard
Karr High School Debate Coach
HANO reached out and partnered with residents for a July 25 event entitled “Reclaiming Our Community” at the Iberville Community. Prior to the event HANO employees volunteered to help clean up the grounds and interior units; HANO and the Urban League of New Orleans partnered to employ 35 residents to paint and beautify the community.

The work culminated with a civic pride event featuring Q93’s DJ Wild Wayne, members of the Iberville Peace Keepers, drill team and many others.

The event was designed to foster belief and a sense of togetherness in the Iberville Community. During the event, children played on spacewalks, played games and ate snowballs while others heard inspirational words, danced to music or played with family and friends.