



Review And Reform- Putting It In Perspective

In his first state budget proposal, Governor Elliot Spitzer included language calling for Review and Reform in the authorizing statement for the Rural and Neighborhood Preservation Programs. In the ensuing months, one of the most oft-asked questions has been “what does that mean? What is the administration looking for?”

In April, the Rural Housing Coalition began hosting a series of Peer-to-Peer workshops around the state* during which a portion of the agenda is devoted to the subject of Review and Reform.

In conversations with housing advocates, DHCR Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen has stated that all issues are on the table for discussion during the Review and Reform analysis. In order to process the initial 2007 contract year payments, DHCR was required to come up with a plan for conducting this analysis. The current plan is to have DHCR work with a small group of RPC leadership, along with the Rural Housing Coalition, to identify key issues that must inform any decisions regarding changes to the statute or regulations for the RPC program. This small group is expected to meet at several locations around the state over the

coming months to begin the process of deliberating on the relevant issues.

At recently-completed Peer to Peer trainings held in Mayville (Chautauqua County) and Mt. Morris (Livingston County), Blair Sebastian, Executive Director of the Rural Housing Coalition, noted that the pending discussion will be particularly complex, in part because there are essentially three different models of RPC programs in operation currently. There remain a small number of RPC’s that were initially modeled on the Neighborhood Preservation Program, and serve quite small geographies, such a village and one or two surrounding towns. There are also a number of RPC’s that provide housing services county-wide, or serve the rural areas of a county with a large municipality. And finally, there are a few RPC’s that serve multi-county areas. These different models make it difficult to make blanket statements about the value of services provided or how to modify the models if modification is ultimately needed.

Further complicating the discussion will be the fact that some RPC’s have developed a great deal of competency in particular sub-fields of the housing industry over the past 3 decades. Hopefully, the value of this expertise will be recognized and methods will be identified to share this capacity to the benefit of all communities that are in need.

A final issue that will be of paramount concern is that the housing market in New York State is not at all homogeneous. It was noted in the Peer to Peer trainings that New York’s housing market can easily be subdivided into 5 or 6 sub-markets. The high demand Hudson Valley market, for instance, has very little in common with the market in far western reaches of the state, where high vacancy rates are very common. Land use restrictions in the New York City Watershed, or the Adirondack Park, create a very different development environment than in the Finger Lakes or Leatherstocking Country.

Given the complexity of this issue, it will be important for all affected agencies to give careful consideration to their vision for the future of their communities, and share their concerns and ideas with participating advocates.

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* *The Peer to Peer Workshops will continue in May. See the article on Page 3, Col. 1 for the schedule of the remaining training sessions.*

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Rural Delivery

Rural Delivery is published by the New York State Rural Housing Coalition, Inc. a nonprofit membership organization. The Coalition is a statewide membership organization dedicated to strengthening and revitalizing rural New York by assisting housing and community development providers.

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Mark Stella
Max Samons
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Linda Staligas
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David Valachovic

Barbara Willis

Staff:

Blair Sebastian
Executive Director

Colin McKnight
Deputy Director

Anne Patnode
Operations Manager / Project Coordinator

John Grover
Supportive Housing Coordinator

For more information contact the Coalition at:
879 Madison Avenue, Albany, New York 12208
Tel: 518/458-8696 * Fax: 518/458-8896

E-mail: rho@ruralhousing.org
Web Site: www.ruralhousing.org



Bits and Pieces...

NLIHC Submits Testimony on FY08 HUD Spending

The National Low Income Housing Coalition submitted public witness testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies on April 16th. The testimony highlights NLIHC's priorities for FY08 HUD funding, which calls for adequate funding of all HUD programs. NLIHC's testimony can be found at www.nlihc.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=4106&id=61.

Anti-Predatory Mortgage Program Announced

Fannie Mae recently announced a new initiative called HomeStay. Under this program, Fannie Mae will work with its lender partners to help homeowners avoid immediate foreclosure through a range of workout solutions. Second, Fannie Mae plans to work with its lender partners to help homeowners make the transition to safer products. Fannie Mae will also work with its housing partners to help counsel future homeowners to avoid making the wrong mortgage choice in the first place. The announcement of this new initiative was made by Fannie Mae CEO Dan Mudd before a Congressional hearing on April 17th.

Rural Housing Preservation Conference in Missouri

The Housing Assistance Council will hold a training conference on preserving rural housing May 30th-June 1st in St. Peters, MO. *Preserving Rural Rental Housing: A Practitioner's Conference* will include expert advice on putting together a preservation deal, resources for rural rental preservation and a tour of Rural Development Section 515 preservation sites. There are a limited number of scholarships for nonprofits available. More information and registration can be found here: www.ruralhome.org.

Federal and U.S. military employees can support the Rural Housing Coalition through the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). If you are a federal government or military employee and would like to donate through the CFC, please enter CFC code #9614 on your pledge card during the next fund drive.

Save The Dates!

The Rural Housing Coalition will sponsor a series of trainings for Rural Preservation Company Executive Directors, and key community partners at regional locations during May. These Peer-to-Peer trainings will focus on issues of regional significance. The trainings in Western New York and the Finger Lakes were held in April.

Upcoming trainings are on:

May 9th- 16 St. John Avenue (Hamilton House), in Binghamton. Hosted by Tony Fiala of SEPP, Inc., this training will focus on *Disaster Response One Year Later: Transforming Dollars Into Housing*.

May 10th- 300 Washington Street (Carriage House Hotel), in Watertown. Hosted by Matt Taylor of the Development Authority of the North Country, this training will focus on *New Construction Issues: Access to construction financing, finding qualified contractors, and other difficulties in completing new construction projects*.

May 16th- 289 Fair Street (Rural Ulster Preservation Co.), in Kingston. Hosted by Kevin O'Connor of RUPCo, this training will focus on *Land Use Laws including Fair Share Housing*, as well as issues related to *Foreclosures and Flipping*.

May 17th- 46 Flynn Avenue (Barnard Apartments), in Plattsburgh. Hosted by David Valachovic of Evergreen Townhouse Community, this training will focus on *Rental Rehabilitation and Finding the Resources for Quality Rehab*.

Each session will conclude with a discussion of the Review and Reform proposal for the RPC program. All trainings will begin at 10:00 AM and conclude by 4:00 PM. Lunch will be provided. For more information or directions, please call Colin McKnight at the Coalition at (518) 458-8696, ext. 14.

Update Your Insurance Coverage

Rural Preservation Companies now receiving annual contracts of \$87,000 will be required to increase the amount of fidelity coverage to reflect the new RPC contract amount. Proof of the increased coverage to \$43,500 must be sent to your regional representative before the next payment cycle, or checks will not be released.

Coalition Membership Year Begins

Membership renewal notices for the Rural Housing Coalition will be mailed out during the month of May. Your membership support is incredibly important, as it provides one of the very few sources of unrestricted operating income for the Coalition. At the April 26th Coalition Board of Directors meeting the Board voted to increase membership dues this year to \$300 for corporate members to help offset increased costs that can not be met through other sources. Individual and student membership rates will remain the same as last year.

The Coalition is also undertaking a membership campaign to broaden the base of support for the efforts and mission of revitalizing the rural communities of New York. A new Coalition membership brochure is now being printed, and all members of the Coalition can help with this effort by encouraging their community partners to also join the Coalition.

Please do your part in keeping the Coalition a vital force in rural community development in New York by returning your membership payment promptly after receiving the invoice. Together, we'll continue to make a huge difference in the lives of the rural residents of the Empire State.

Tax Exempt Bond Training Offered

Enterprise is pleased to announce the following training- Tax Exempt Bond Training – a Case Study Tuesday, May 15th, from 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM at 80 Fifth Avenue, 7th Floor, New York City. Have you wanted to know:

- How to restructure your project using tax exempt bonds and tax credits?
- Whether competitive 9% tax credits or bonds/4% tax credits are better for you?
- Whether to restructure an existing HUD Sec. 202 project using bonds?

This one-day workshop takes you through the basics of tax exempt bonds, and then takes you through an exercise in a team setting. You will act as the developer, bond issuer, credit enhancer and underwriter. By the end of the day, you will know more about what each party in a bond transaction does, and why. You can work on a 100% affordable case or a 50-30-20 mixed-income case. This workshop is intended for executive directors/ housing directors of nonprofits contemplating using bonds, senior staff of public housing authorities and nonprofit housing developers, and staff of banks and foundations funding housing initiatives. General familiarity with the low-income housing tax credit program is expected, and an understanding of basic housing finance is helpful. Bring a calculator with you. The workshop will be presented by Rich Liversidge, who has 14 years experience structuring and syndicating affordable housing projects for Enterprise/ NYC.

Registration is due no later than Friday, May 11th. Space is limited. To register, please email Enterprise NY Trainings at nyctrainings@enterprisecommunity.org. For more information, call (212) 284-7125.

Housing Trust Fund In Contention In FHA Bill

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity held a hearing on April 19th on the Expanding American Homeownership Act of 2007, HR 1852, and related Federal Housing Administration (FHA) modernization issues. Subcommittee Chair Maxine Waters introduced HR 1852 on March 29th.

The bill is similar to FHA modernization legislation that passed the House in 2006 by a 415-7 vote (which was reintroduced on March 29 by Subcommittee Ranking Member Judy Biggert as HR 1752), but includes some important changes. The new bill would transfer some FHA proceeds, expected to be about \$300 million annually, generated by changes made to FHA's Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) program into an affordable housing trust fund. This maneuver is similar to language in the Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSE) reform bill, HR 1427. The GSE reform bill would transfer amounts going into its proposed affordable housing fund, expected to be about \$500 million annually, into a future affordable housing trust fund.

Ms. Biggert's bill (HR 1752) differs in some respects to Ms. Waters' bill (HR 1852) with regard to the administration of and eligibility for FHA mortgages. The largest difference between the two bills is the dedication of the

HECM mortgage proceeds to a future affordable housing fund.

Ms. Waters said that FHA modernization legislation is critical to bringing stability to the lending market and will give low and moderate income homeowners a viable alternative to the subprime lending market. Other members of the subcommittee and the hearing's witnesses agreed.

Ms. Biggert highlighted the addition to the legislation of the affordable housing fund language. "Using FHA funds to create a national housing trust fund is not the most appropriate use of funds...and threatens the solvency of the FHA and its ability to pay claims," Ms. Biggert said. "Removing the national housing trust fund provision will allow us to move forward with the bill and put it on the suspension calendar."

Representative Randy Neugebauer also questioned the affordable housing fund provision. "We need to keep the FHA actuarially sound," he said. "We are going down the road to another extortion from an organization for something else than the organization is supposed to do."

House Financial Services Committee Chair Barney Frank took issue with Mr. Neugebauer's use of the word "extortion." "The FHA is a federal agency," Mr. Frank said. "The notion that using surplus funds for housing is extortion is wrong." Mr. Frank said that during this Administration, FHA profits have been

placed into the general treasury and have been used for such things as the Iraq war and nuclear testing. "The notion that FHA funds can't be used for anything else is a new one," he said. Mr. Frank acknowledged that he and other Democrats supported a different bill in the last Congress. "Things are different now," he said. "If there are surpluses in FHA, as there have been in the last 12 years, the money should go to housing."

HUD FHA Commissioner and Assistant Secretary for Housing Brian Montgomery, when questioned by Ms. Waters on his position on a national housing trust fund, said he did not know enough about where the FHA money would go or how a trust fund would be structured. Mr. Montgomery said that there were other pressing needs at FHA that such funds could go to, such as better technology and higher paid staff. "I appreciate and am very sympathetic to the concept," he said. "There is a housing crisis in this country, particularly for elderly and disabled people."

Questioned by Representative Keith Ellison about housing needs, Mr. Montgomery said that there has been a housing shortage for many decades and that "there is a production problem relative to the need."

Ms. Waters told Mr. Montgomery that inclusion of the housing trust fund language is "very key to getting a bill out of this committee."

DHCR Offers Management and Occupancy Review Training

DHCR's Management Bureau will present a Workshop on the HUD 9834 Management and Occupancy Review (MOR), which will offer practical advice to Owners and Managing Agents on how they can best prepare their site(s) for the review. It is *essential* that the owners, agents, and managers who manage federally-assisted housing developments understand the requirements of HUD's Management and

Occupancy Review. Training in the audit process will enable federally-assisted developments to comply with HUD requirements, thereby assuring the continuation of their funding. This training will be presented by Linda Kedzierski, Federal Programs Coordinator, and Margaret Feml, Housing Management Assistant.

The training will include discussion of the specific steps that the Owners/

Managing Agents **must** take to expedite this process; and explanation of potential findings in the "condition, criteria, cause, effect, and corrective action" format.

This Workshop will take place at Seneca Towers in Rochester on May 8th. For more information or to register, visit www.dhcr.state.ny.us/general/training/HUD9834Training.htm.

Key SuperNOFA Deadlines Pending

The 2007 annual funding cycle for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) major funding programs is currently open, with most deadlines falling in May and June.

Key program deadlines are:
 Housing Counseling- May 17th
 Lead Based Paint Control- May 18th
 Healthy Homes Demonstration- May 18th
 Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED)- May 23rd
 Section 811 Housing for the Disabled- May 24th
 Section 202 Housing for the Elderly- May 25th
 Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration- May 30th
 Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA)- May 31st
 Assisted Living Conversion for Eligible Multi-family Projects- June 7th
 Service Coordinators in Multi-family Housing- June 8th
 Continuum of Care- June 8th
 Self Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP)- June 13th

All applications, with the exception of the Continuum of Care program,

must be submitted electronically. CofC is the only program for which paper applications will be accepted.

In order to apply electronically, you must be registered. HUD has prepared a *Step by Step: Your Guide to Registration Brochure* to assist you in the process of registering for the first time and the process of renewing current registration. The *Find/Apply Brochure* provides further assistance to find and apply for grants. HUD has also prepared a *Desktop Users Guide* for submitting Electronic Grant Applications. This Guide provides detailed step-by-step screen shots of the Grants.gov registration, and the Find/Apply process.

Due to the mandatory on-line submission, each funding opportunity will be posted on Grants.gov. Applicants must download both the Application Instructions and the Application Package. The Instructions Download is a zipped file containing .pdf, doc, and excel files that are not available in the Application Package Download.

For more information, visit HUD's website at www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/fundsavail.cfm#avail.

Article Notes

'Predator Schools' On The Rise

A recent article in *The Examiner* (www.examiner.com) focused on training offered by Whitney Information Network to learn how to "benefit from the current foreclosure boom". The article quotes a NY Times report on a Whitney class, where the instructor encouraged prospective investors to keep "an ear out for death, divorce, job loss, any kind of despair." 'Situations', she whispered with a grin, 'that tend to create motivated sellers. One must approach them gently. It's important to appear positive, to look as though you care about someone's situation, and it's absolutely essential that you not care'. If this isn't the perfect definition of 'predatory', we can't imagine what is.

The writer found numerous other websites offering similar training after a simple Google search. Housing counselors need to be forewarned that this kind of training is going on, and that investors are eagerly paying money to be trained this way.

Resident Services Improve Financial Performance of Affordable Family Properties

A study released this month from Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. and Mercy Housing, Inc. shows that low income family housing developments yield higher financial returns to property owners when they provide resident services. An analysis of 36 Mercy Housing properties found that those offering resident services saved \$225 per unit in FY05 and \$356 per unit in FY06 by reducing property vacancy losses, legal fees and bad debts.

On vacancy loss per unit, properties with resident services out-performed those without resident services by 24% in 2005 and 42% in 2006. On legal fees per unit, properties with resi-

dent services out-performed those without resident services by 40% in 2005 and 76% in 2006. On bad debt per unit, properties with resident services out-performed those without resident services by 44% in 2005 and 17% in 2006. These results are similar to an unpublished 2005 study by the Pennsylvania HFA, which found that properties with resident services had lower legal expenses, bad debt and unit turnover.

Resident services encompass a diverse range of programs, including education and job training, health services, financial development and community engagement. Eighty of Mercy Housing's 129 properties currently provide such

programs through paid, professional staff. The median income of families in these properties is higher by 4% to 24% than in those without resident services.

The study contains cautions that these findings are not definitive and are limited in several respects. Recommendations for future research include longer-term analysis comparing properties with and without resident services within the same market, and standardized data collection on specific operational costs such as security and maintenance.

The study is available from www.practitionerresources.org/cache/documents/645/64551.pdf.

Community Action Conference Slated

Registration is now open for the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)/New York State Weatherization Directors' Association (NYSWDA) Annual Conference and Awards Dinner to be held in Poughkeepsie, NY June 11-13, 2007. To obtain a PDF copy of the conference brochure, visit: www.nyscaaonline.org/PDFs/Events/2007JuneBrochure.pdf. For online registration, please go to: http://www.nyscaaonline.org/Events/Events_FeaturedEvents.aspx.

NYSCAA's Membership Development Committee and the NYSCAA/NYSWDA staff have put together a complement of training, policy discussions, and networking opportunities designed to meet the expectations and needs of chief executives, board members, senior management staff, program directors, and key fiscal staff. Topics and session design have been developed based on previous conference feedback and member requests over the past year.

Professional development sessions are offered in areas such as bylaws, organizational assessment, succession planning, strengthening your weatherization program, and personnel policies. Policy discussions will focus on living wage issues, immigration, and the potential for a *Statewide Commission on Poverty*.

Board training and facilitated chief executive board roundtables will offer candid, focused conversation on issues of governance and personnel. Program director roundtables and other peer-to-peer formal and informal networking opportunities will provide venues for information sharing as will discussions with weatherization-sector leaders. And new this year, an *Advanced Fiscal Institute* will be offered (for a slightly higher fee) that will provide fiscal di-

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Hearing Held on Disaster Housing

On April 24th, the Senate Homeland Security Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery, chaired by Senator Mary Landrieu, held a hearing titled, "Beyond Trailers, Part I: Creating a More Flexible, Efficient, and Cost-Effective Federal Disaster Housing Program."

Sheila Crowley, President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, testified. Other witnesses were: David Garratt, Acting Director of Recovery Efforts, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); Robert Hebert, Director of Hurricane Recovery, Charlotte County, Florida; William J. Croft, Director of Response and Recovery, The Shaw Group; Matthew Jadacki, Inspector General of Hurricane Katrina Oversight, Department of Homeland Security; Gil H. Jamieson, Deputy Director of Gulf Coast Recovery at FEMA; and Major General John R. D'Araujo, Primary Selection Official, Alternative Housing Pilot Project.

"The storms of the 2005 hurricane season brought about perhaps the greatest housing challenge faced in this country's history," Senator Landrieu said in her opening statement. She noted "significant problems" with the management of FEMA's trailer program, including difficulty locating sites for multi-trailer parks for large groups of disaster victims, problems maintaining the parks, issues with utility hook ups and, as in Arkansas, problems with FEMA's storage of thousands of unused trailers.

Mr. Garratt responded to some of the criticism of FEMA's housing programs. "It is important to note that FEMA's housing assistance programs and authorities were not designed to provide long-term housing solutions, but rather to provide eligible victims with temporary accommodations while they pursue a permanent housing solution," he said. When asked by Senator Landrieu what is his greatest frustration in running FEMA's housing assistance

programs for people displaced by the 2005 hurricanes, Mr. Garratt said unlike most disasters where people are able to move back into their pre-storm homes relatively quickly, these households "still can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, and we're unable to shine that light for them. It's going to be a long time before people are able to reach self-sufficiency."

Senator Landrieu asked Mr. Garratt whether he agreed that offering households in FEMA housing assistance programs the option of a Section 8 voucher might provide that very "light at the end of the tunnel." He said that FEMA is working closely with HUD to "see what options there are to potentially move closer to a voucher direction." He said that FEMA and HUD would submit documents of their shared recommendations to the committee in the "very near future." Two days later FEMA, HUD and the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding announced changes to FEMA's temporary housing assistance programs.

Ms. Crowley agreed with Senator Landrieu that there are many advantages to transferring households in FEMA housing assistance programs to HUD's Section 8 voucher program, including that the voucher program is less expensive than FEMA's rental assistance program, locally administered by people knowledgeable about their local housing markets and has long established rules, regulations and procedures that are known or knowable to all, unlike the FEMA program.

"Section 8 vouchers are a real option and I think we should pursue it as a solution," Senator Landrieu said. She noted, however, her concern of local markets becoming "Section 8 heavy." She said, "Everything needs to be done in a balanced way to make sure we have mixed income communities." She also said that she thinks vouchers should be

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Disaster Housing Hearings, Cont'

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used as a way to transition people to homeownership. "In Louisiana, everyone aspires to be a homeowner," she said.

The second half of the hearing focused on the \$400 million Alternative Housing Pilot Program funding Katrina Cottages throughout the Gulf. Senator Landrieu said that, although the money should have been split between the hardest hit areas of the Gulf Coast states, 70% of the funds, or \$275 million, went to Mississippi. "I believe FEMA failed miserably in effectively utilizing this \$400 million. ... FEMA created a program that was flawed from the start," she said.

Panelists from FEMA and DHS defended the process they used for selecting the final participants in the alternative housing pilot program, stating that they carried out their responsibility in accordance with established grant-making procedures to the best of their abilities. Landrieu responded by saying, "What you've chosen to do is mass produce one proposal, instead of trying several different innovative solutions as you were supposed to do. Since future disaster housing response is tied to that one proposal that you chose, we'd all better hope that it's a good one." She said there will be additional hearings to continue exploring the mistakes being made with the Alternative Housing Pilot Program.

NYSCAA Conference, Cont'

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rectors and staff access to a high-quality training opportunity. Member meetings of both organizations and the election of new board members and officers will complement the event

The Annual Dinner and Awards Celebration will be a highlight of the Conference with both NYSCAA and

Legislation Introduced to Authorize Programs

On April 20th, Representative Rubén Hinojosa introduced three bills that would formally authorize programs that, until the current fiscal year, ran under an informal appropriations process. The bills were referred to the Committee on Financial Services.

The first bill is HR1982, the Rural Housing and Economic Development Improvement Act of 2007. The Rural Housing and Economic Development Improvement program at HUD provides assistance to Indian tribes, state housing finance agencies, state community or economic development agencies, local nonprofit organizations and community development corporations in rural areas to support housing and economic development. The bill has four additional cosponsors: Representatives Barney Frank, Emanuel Cleaver, Bennie Thompson and Rick Renzi. Mr. Hinojosa is chair of the Congressional Rural Housing Caucus, and Mr. Renzi is the Republican vice-chair of the caucus.

The other two bills would authorize funding for two nonprofit agencies that have traditionally received annual federal appropriations to carry out housing work. These bills would officially authorize funding for the Housing Assistance Council and the National Council of La Raza, allowing the appropriations committees to fund these programs in FY08.

In FY07, these organizations did not

receive HUD funding because they are not officially authorized expenditures and the FY07 spending resolution only considered funding for authorized programs. While this kept much of the "pork" out of the FY07 spending resolution, these programs that have historically received funding for legitimate housing programs were left unfunded.

HR 1990 would authorize funding for the Housing Assistance Council to be used to develop the ability and capacity of community-based housing development organizations to undertake community development and affordable housing projects and programs in rural areas. The bill would call for \$10 million in FY08 and \$15 million annually for FY09 through FY14. Cosponsors are Mr. Frank, Representative Maxine Waters and Mr. Renzi.

HR 1999 would authorize funding for the National Council of La Raza and the Raza Development Fund for the purpose of providing technical and financial assistance to local nonprofit organizations to undertake community development and affordable housing projects and programs serving low and moderate income households, particularly through organizations located in neighborhoods with substantial populations of income-disadvantaged households of Hispanic origin. The bill would call for \$5 million for FY08 and \$10 million for each fiscal year thereafter. Mr. Renzi is an additional cosponsor.

Hallock Named Deputy

DHCR Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen has named Gary Hallock as the new Deputy Commissioner for Community Development. Gary had previously worked for the Division as Assistant Director of the Albany Regional Office. Most recently, he worked for the Albany Housing Authority. We welcome Gary to his new position!

NYSWDA giving awards this year and a special commemoration of NYSCAA's 20th Anniversary will be noted. The deadline for nominations is Friday, May 4th. Nomination instructions and forms can be found at <http://www.nyscaaonline.org/2007JuneAwards/Index.htm>.

New Executive

Director Training

The Craftsman Inn in Fayetteville, NY will be the site for a full day training for new Executive Directors of Rural Preservation Companies on May 8th. Over the past 2 years, a dozen RPCs across the state have hired new Executive Directors. This training will provide an opportunity to make sure that these rural community development leaders have the information and resources for success.

The training will run from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Topics to be covered include compliance with DHCR requirements for the RPC contract, available resources and guidance, general non-profit management issues, and preventing burnout.

For more information, contact Anne Patnode at the Coalition at (518) 458-8696, ext 15.

USDA Announces NOFA

On April 26th, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the availability of \$52.5 million in loans and grants to construct off-farm housing and help low- and very-low-income homeowners make needed repairs.

USDA plans to make available \$31.9 million for Section 514 farm labor housing loans and approximately \$10.5 million for Section 516 farm labor housing grants. Requests for aid may not exceed \$3 million combined for loans and grants. Grants may not exceed 90 percent of total development costs. Applicants for farm labor housing aid may include requests for Section 521 Rental Assistance and operating assistance.

In addition to the farm labor hous-

ing assistance, the Department plans to distribute \$10.1 million to help finance rural housing repairs through the Section 533 Housing Preservation Grant program. Non-profit organizations and public agencies may apply for grants to help homeowners make repairs. The funds also may be used to help owners of multi-family and cooperative housing complexes make repairs if they agree to make the units available to low- and very-low-income households.

Applications for farm labor housing assistance as well for housing preservation grant aid are due June 18th. Applications may be obtained by contacting the USDA Rural Development State Office at 441 South Salina St, Suite 357, Syracuse, NY 13202, or by calling (315) 477-6400.

Visit our website at www.ruralhousing.org