



Outstanding Advocate: Don Alexander, Crossville Housing Authority

To advance the voice of affordable housing in Tennessee, Don Alexander, executive director for the Crossville Housing Authority, formed a small state-wide group of organizational leaders. These efforts ultimately laid the foundation for the Tennessee Statewide Affordable Housing Coalition. He then served a three-year term as the chair of the Coalition and was instrumental in the initial success of the Coalition. His leadership was critical in forming the structure that will grow the effort throughout all of Tennessee.

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Remarkable Achievement – Urban: East River Place Apartments

The East River Place Apartments is one of the premier Low Income Housing Tax Credit developments in Tennessee. The developer, Michael Hampton of Hampton Properties, wanted to make a difference for a chosen community. He chose East Nashville. In the most recent rush to respond to the demand for high-end luxury apartments and condominiums in and around city centers, many developers made plans to provide housing within walking distance of trendy shops, restaurants, government offices, and other businesses in downtowns all across the country. Low- to-moderate-income working families desiring quality affordable housing were left out of this mix. All too often these families continue to become rapidly priced out of the core neighborhoods.

In Nashville, the situation was no different. The local housing authority had renovated an affordable community and a few tax credit developments were built, but the existing supply of affordable housing was not sufficient to meet the demand in East Nashville. At the same time, despite being surrounded by a mix of small businesses, older single-family homes, churches, a highly sought-out magnet school, and a clear view of the downtown Nashville skyline, the two parcels along North 8th and Ramsey Streets, once occupied by the Silverdene Apartments, had become the blight of a neighborhood. The community was anxious for the absentee landlord to do something about the nearly vacant troubled property.

Hampton wanted to do something about the lack of affordable housing in East Nashville. He had grown up in Nashville and knew the neighborhoods of the city from his childhood. He, too, believed that East Nashville was a great place to live. Undaunted by the fact that he had never developed a low-income housing tax credit property before, he set out to prove his belief in this neighborhood. His vision for those two parcels at North 8th and Ramsey Streets began with the demolition of Silverdene Apartments and ended with the rise of East River Place, six three-story buildings with spacious two- and three-bedroom units. The economic downturn of the past few years has halted the development and sales of several nearby luxury apartments in the desirable downtown districts. However, the construction of East River Place continued, and the first buildings were placed in service in October 2009. In fact, all of the 89 units were completed ahead of schedule and within budget and earned LEED certification for energy efficiency. The \$13 million dollar development was leveraged with a mixture LIHTC funds, American Reinvestment Recovery Act Section 1602 funding, private financing and HOME Grant funding.

The development offers granite countertops, nine-foot ceilings, stainless steel appliances, gated parking, eco-friendly designs, bicycle racks, covered bike parking and other numerous amenities. Now those two parcels along North 8th and Ramsey Streets are home to families who can eat, work, and play in East Nashville, just two miles from downtown and within walking distance of some of those trendy shops and restaurants, not to mention LP Field, home of Hampton's beloved Tennessee Titans.

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Remarkable Achievement – Rural: People Helping People Together

A group formed to help rehabilitate homes in east Columbia has received state aid in addition to local support. Jim Kitchen, a local businessman who helped start People Helping People, said First Farmers and Merchants Bank has donated \$30,000 to repair homes in the area. Maury Hills Church is donating an additional \$3,000 to the project. Eleven houses are approved. The group has already helped restore four houses and work has begun on another nine. Tennessee Housing Development Agency Housing Trust Funds will match local donated funds for home owners of low-income.

The South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance determines who qualifies for the THDA funds. If home owners don't qualify for the THDA funds, People Helping People looks for other funding. The group has spent an average of \$9,000 to repair each home to date.

Since forming the group in 2009, the response of Columbia residents and businesses has been great. Ace Hardware has donated mailboxes for the homes. Others have donated materials and time to help repair the homes. People Helping People works with area churches to clean up east-side homes as part of Columbia's overall effort to revitalize the area.

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Excellence in Partnership – Carpenters’ Helpers

Kingsport Alliance for Home Revitalization (KAHR) is a partnership initiated by the City of Kingsport Community Development Department and Carpenters’ Helpers. Its goal is to maximize the efforts of the Community to repair/rehab homes that are owner-occupied by low-income elderly and disabled persons. The partnership consists of Carpenters’ Helpers (from First Broad St. United Methodist Church), Appalachian Service Project, Homeschool Ministries, First TN Development District, City of Kingsport Community Development, Kingsport Police Department and Kingsport Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

The partnership was formed to address a back-log of request for assistance from low-income homeowners who needed home repairs to be able to continue living in their homes. The City of Kingsport allocated \$90,000 from the City General Fund and from the Community Development Block Grant Fund in the amount of \$125,000. The City and CDBG funds were able to leverage funding through FTDD and THDA Emergency Repair Program, part of the Housing Trust Fund. Carpenters’ Helpers, ASP and HSM provided labor and materials as well. The results of the first year were 78 homes repaired or rehabilitated. This compared to the previous year of 16 homes which were funded primarily with CDBG funds. The backlog of requests for assistance was addressed by the repairs of the 78 homes.

The driving force behind the completion of many of the homes was the Carpenters’ Helpers program led by Danny Howe. They not only provide volunteers to do the repairs they saw to many other needs of the families.

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Best in Innovation: Providence Pointe, Clarksville

Under the direction of the Clarksville Office of Housing and Community Development, the leadership of Associate Professor David Fox from the UT – Knoxville School of Architecture and Design, Clarksville architects at Clark and Associates, Architects, students have created home designs that save energy, are friendly to the environment and safe for the neighborhood. Clark and Associates directed the students' work, then selected five designs, which are being built in three to four phases with six to seven homes constructed in each phase. Construction cost is being funded through the City's CDBG and HOME grants from HUD.

The designs incorporate elements of the National Crime Prevention Institute's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design program. CPTED concepts reduce criminal behavior and encourage neighbors to keep an eye out for each other. The design concepts include four strategic areas: natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, natural access control and target hardening. Natural surveillance features make would-be intruders easily observable from parking areas and building entrances. They include placing doors and windows where residents can view streets, parking lots and alleyways, and adding pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, adequate nighttime lighting and front porches that encourage residents to sit outdoors.

Territorial reinforcement concepts use landscaping, pavement designs and gateway treatments to create a visual boundary at property lines that give residents a sense of territorial control and potential offenders a lack of perceived control. Natural access control denies access to potential crime targets and creates a perception of risk for latent offenders by designing streets, sidewalks, and entryways that clearly indicate public routes and discourage access to private areas. Target hardening elements prohibit entry from unwelcome intruders by way of locks on windows, dead bolts on doors and inside door hinges on exterior doors.

"Providence Pointe is an example of what we can accomplish with successful public/private partnerships," said Clarksville Mayor Johnny Piper. "It involved putting minds, hands and feet to our responsibility of ensuring all residents have safe and affordable housing."

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