

LHC NEWSLINE



**ADVOCATING FOR
AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

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The Pelican Brief: *Message from the LHC* *President*



Hello LHC Friends,

I want to start by saying how proud I am of our LHC family for stepping up for our residents and communities during the pandemic! While navigating all your personal trials and trying to keep your own families safe, you continued to provide quality housing for the most vulnerable populations in your communities.... Thank You!

As we come out of the pandemic, we will continue to work with vision, passion, and compassion. I look forward to the next year as we build on the momentum we built prior to the pandemic. Our conference attendance and enthusiasm were at record levels. I am encouraged by the many positive calls and words of support from so many of you over the last year.

We have some in our LHC family that lost loved ones since we last gathered, let's remember to keep them in our prayers and encourage them.

I am so excited to start getting back together for in person conferences and training, I am even more excited to be blessed with the privilege of working with such wonderful professionals to help expand and improve affordable housing in Louisiana.

So many of you have stepped up and challenged yourselves in new ways by taking on new roles in our organization, thank you!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Legislative Conference, our registration is already impressive, and I know we'll have a fun fellowship while visiting the Capital as always!

Continue to be great!

Bobby R. Collins, MBA, CPM, CMPO, CME

“Without a vision the people perish”



2021 - 2023 LHC Officers

Bobby R. Collins, *President*

Trina Sanders, *Senior Vice President*

Donna Pitre, *Vice President of Section 8*

Cheryl Farmer, *Vice President of Housing*

Clarence Robinson Jr., *Vice President of Professional Development*

J. Wesley Daniels Jr., *Vice President of Community Revitalization and Development Committee*

Tammy Richard, *Vice President of Member Services*

Willie Haynes, *Vice President of Commissioners*

Terri Touchet, *Secretary*

Erial Branch, *Treasurer*



Alexandria Housing Authority Nominated For Award

The Alexandria Housing Authority's Royal Cambridge Homes project was nominated for an award issued by the National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies (NALHFA) in the 2022 multifamily category.

From 2016 to 2021, the Alexandria Housing Authority (AHA) transitioned its entire portfolio from public housing to affordable housing using HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. Royal Cambridge Homes, LP represents one phase of this comprehensive transition. Comprised of three distinct affordable housing sites (Woodland Pointe, Cambridge Place, Royal Ridge) and 384 units for families, a \$54 million project.

The project included energy upgrades to HVAC, lighting and water conservation methods, new appliances, bathroom renovations, doors, windows, new lighting throughout, kitchen rehabilitation, and exterior and interior paint. These units required major renovations due to the significant damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. A large portion of the units at this site were left abandoned since 2005. Some units needed structural reconstruction in addition to the removal of trees which had grown through the units. All new appliances and updated flooring were installed.

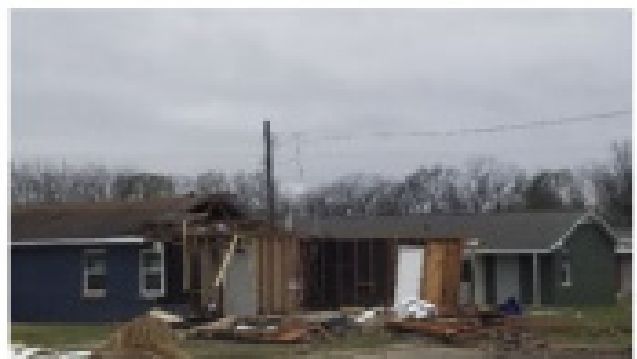
The collaborative effort of the Alexandria Housing Authority, the city, and local nonprofits has made the Royal Cambridge Homes project an anchor development and prime example of rehabilitation and disaster recovery efforts.

The before and after pictures are certainly testimonials to the impact the development has had on residents. Before the Royal project was

underway, the AHA had only 342 units of its 579 public housing units occupied in 2017. The current Royal is 98% occupied and has a healthy waitlist.

In addition to fully modernized units with energy efficient features, the rehabilitation added a new clubhouse with office space and private rooms for leasing, and community rooms for meetings and education. Lush landscaping, expansive green space, and enhanced playgrounds include a full-size soccer/football field, as well as a splash pad and rock-climbing wall. The community is conveniently situated near the newly built coliseum and entertainment center, hospitals, and transportation hubs.

The project was a previous finalist in the 2021 Affordable Housing Reader's Choice Award.



Although every affordable housing rehabilitation comes with its own set of challenges, this project was uniquely fraught by tax reform, three tornadoes, three hurricanes, two tropical storms, and COVID.

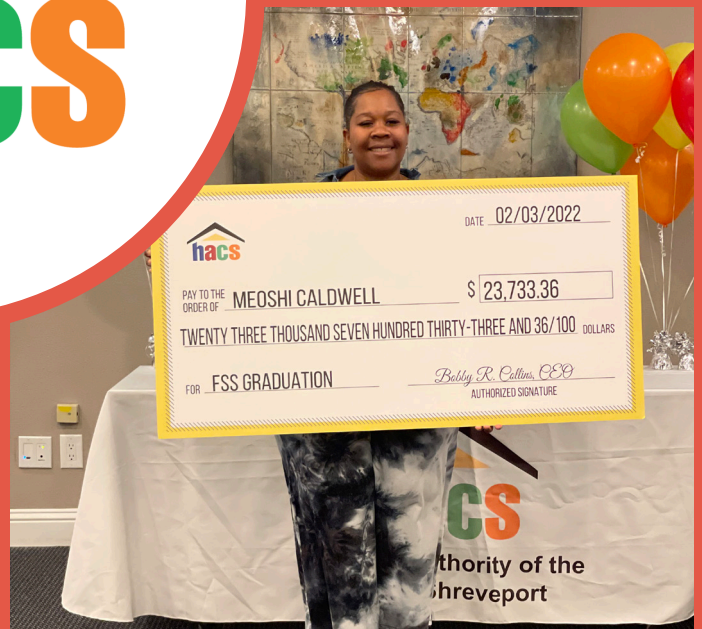




“ After losing my previous place to hurricane Laura, moving to Woodland Pointe has been so nice. Everyone here has been so kind to me and my kids. It is a quiet and nice place; I really like everything about it. The application process was very easy, and they were able to place us right away, and I thank God for that.- Woodland Pointe Resident ”



FSS Graduates



The Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport would like to congratulate our recent Family Self-Sufficiency program graduates. Throughout the program, the graduates set and achieved personalized goals. In addition to accomplishing their goals, the graduates collectively earned over \$65,000 in escrow. We are proud of our graduates and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

Alexandria Housing Authority Start

The Alexandria Housing Authority has been given many reasons to celebrate Royal Cambridge Family Homes. It is the most recent addition to their portfolio of affordable housing conversions, and the most challenging to date. Fortunately, the activities and accolades involving the new community start the new year with positive momentum for the AHA.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

After four long years, the Alexandria Housing Authority officially announced the completion of the \$50 million affordable housing development with a ribbon cutting ceremony in July of 2021. Royal Cambridge Homes was a large undertaking, encompassing rehabilitating 669 aging or declining units across nine sites. Some of the structures needed upgrading, some needed complete rehailing, and some required new construction. Now, all the units have been transformed into modernized, energy efficient, high-quality affordable homes currently known as Woodland Pointe, Cambridge Place, and Royal Ridge.



In addition to living spaces, the development produced a new clubhouse with office space, community rooms, a gym, and enhanced outdoor amenities like a playground, soccer/football field, splash pad and rock-climbing wall. Although the scattered sites could be challenging at times for construction, having new living spaces interspersed throughout the surrounding existing neighborhoods was a beneficial improvement overall. The project also created more than 817 construction jobs and 14 permanent positions in the community.

What made the completion of this development particularly exceptional was the number of challenges faced by the AHA and their development partners: BGC Advantage, Rapides Finance Authority, CREA, Louisiana Housing Corporation, Citi Community Capital, HUD, Wilmington Trust, and the Police Jury. Begun in 2017 under the direction of AHA Executive Director Joseph P. Page, the team ended up facing more than the usual challenges of a low-income rehabilitation development. "This project was fraught by tax reform, three tornadoes, three hurricanes, two tropical storms, and COVID," said Holly Knight, CEO of BGC Advantage. "We are thankful for the faith that the Alexandria Housing Authority placed in us throughout the conversion process."

Although Executive Director Page retired from the Alexandria Housing Authority in 2020, he was able to celebrate his efforts at the ribbon cutting with the Royal Cambridge partners and residents. Current AHA Executive Director Stephan Fontenot praised the completion of Page's life's work by saying, "His vision for creating a safe place for the residents he so loved to gather, to connect, and thrive made this work possible. His influence will be felt by the people who call this place home for generations to come."

By Donna Kimura, Christine Serlin

ACCOLADES

Almost immediately after the long-awaited ribbon cutting, the Royal Cambridge development was announced to be an Affordable Housing Finance Reader's Choice Award Finalist for 2021. There were 123 entries from 18 states and the District of Columbia that were selected based on "innovation, impact, and creative problem-solving." The 2020-2021 finalists were also recognized for overcoming the additional challenges of working during the pandemic. Royal Cambridge was one of 36 finalists chosen for their uniqueness; how they address the housing needs of families, the elderly, the formerly homeless, and those with special needs; and the creative ways they utilized or improved existing structures in their developments.





ACTIVITIES

The Alexandria Housing Authority was also able to invite residents to one of first of many outreach programs, which are included in the \$100 million investment in the Royal Cambridge Family Homes development. In collaboration with BGC Advantage, Congregational Security, Inc, Soul Reborn, and Good Life Living Group, the AHA held a 2020-2021 Back-To-School event for the families of Royal Cambridge in August. The event included various booths and activities geared to promote enrichment for the mind, body, and soul of both the students and their families. From local programs encouraging physical activity and fitness to presentations on healthy eating and mindfulness, the day's events showcased the new Joseph P Page Recreation Area and the endless possibilities for future programs benefitting the residents of the Royal Cambridge community. The Royal Cambridge Family Homes is a welcome addition to the Alexandria Housing Authority development portfolio, which also includes Bayou Gardens, Magnolia Crossing, and Harmony Gardens. The positive momentum from their latest endeavor is a great beginning to 2022 for the AHA as they continue their mission to provide affordable housing, quality of life opportunities, and building safe communities, one family at a time.

RECOGNITION IN LAKE PROVIDENCE

Lake Providence, LA - East Carroll Parish Police Jury Section 8 Housing celebrated the completion of the Lakeshore Family Homes, LP with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. The parish's first new construction development effort in decades has culminated in 45 new, affordable rental townhomes. The ceremony took place on Monday, March 21st, 2022, near the Lakeshore Homes Leasing Office.

The well-appointed development offers low-income families 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom townhomes. The units feature energy efficient appliances, including washers, dryers, ranges, refrigerators, and dishwashers, plus Energy Star-rated HVAC and windows. The site amenities consist of covered parking, a computer center, and a fitness room. Residents can enjoy outdoor amenities such as a tennis court, walking trail, and playground with a picnic area with fixed grills. Lakeshore Family Homes is a subsidized redevelopment effort that provides affordable homes and quality of life improvement programs to support physical, financial, and mental health. "Time Magazine once called Lake Providence the poorest place in America, but today we are rich in hope. Lakeshore Family Homes represents the beginning of new prosperity for this community," said Jackie Folks, Executive Director of East Carroll Parish Police Jury Section 8 Housing. "With our new affordable housing options and new jobs from Epic Piping, we are thrilled to witness this era of new growth. Thank you to all of the city and parish officials and our partners at BGC Advantage for bringing this vision to fruition."



The Leesville Housing Authority would like to "Thank" The Leesville Police Department for participating in the Annual Holiday "Cookies and Coco" with Santa Event.

Leesville Police Officers stopped by the Leesville Housing Authority on December 23, 2021 to participate in the Annual "Cookies and Coco" with Santa Event. Officers read stories to the youth, assisted children with decorating cookies, assisted and played musical chairs, helped youth with writing letters to Santa, assisted with the "Pin the nose on the Reindeer game and help serve refreshments. Officers answered questions from the youth about aspects of being a police officer, officers gladly answered some very intriguing questions. We sincerely appreciate Leesville Police Department for their support with this event and all they do for the community throughout the year.



Upcoming Events

May 24th

LHC Annual Legislative Conference

Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center
Baton Rouge, LA.

May 26th - 27th

Commissioner's Fundamentals Workshop

Louisiana Housing Corporation Baton Rouge, LA.

June 27th - 30th

SW NAHRO Annual Conference

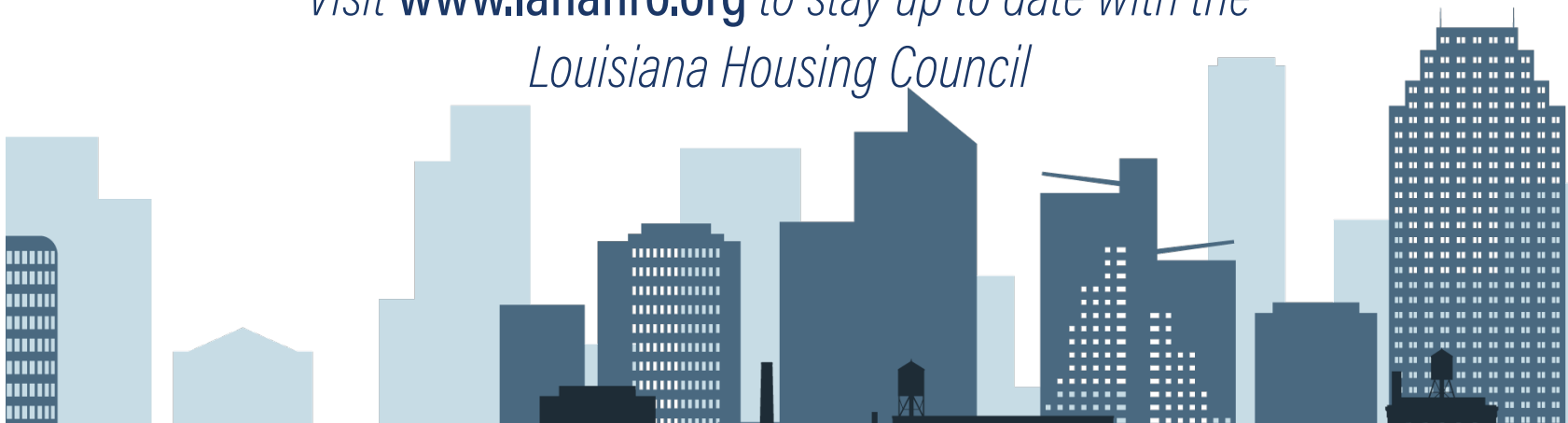
Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center
Baton Rouge, LA.

July 11th - 14th

LHC Maintenance Workshop

L'auberge Casino Resort
Lake Charles, LA.

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Louisiana Housing Council



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