

# Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia



December 2007



## Meil to Succeed Berge as A-NPDC Director

Chair Andrew Barbour announced that Elaine K. N. Meil has been appointed to replace Paul Berge as Executive Director effective January 1, 2008. Meil is currently the A-NPDC Director of Planning. Berge is retiring December 31, 2007.

Meil has worked for the A-NPDC for the past 4 years, first as Regional Planner and then as planning director since 2005. She holds a bachelors degree in geology from Virginia Tech and a masters in planning from Virginia



*Elaine Meil and Paul Berge*

Commonwealth University. Prior to joining the A-NPDC, she was a Hazard Mitigation Planner for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Berge was appointed as chief administrative officer of the A-NPDC in 1979. During his tenure, the Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation and the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority were established resulting in a sustained effort to improve housing and community development on the Eastern Shore for the past 27 years. The A-NPDC has also had important roles in local and regional planning, economic development, and infrastructure development during his tenure.

“We want to thank Paul for his leadership and significant contributions towards the improvement to our region, said Barbour. “And we welcome Elaine joining us as we carry on this tradition of progress into the future.”

## Affordable Housing Advocates Meet

Over 30 housing providers, community leaders and county and town officials met on November 17 to explore practical ways to increase community support for affordable workforce housing. Common concerns, such as a lack of citizen understanding, infrastructure, funding and zoning were discussed. Christine Lowrie, director of Housing Virginia,

a statewide housing advocacy organization, spoke to the group.

The advocacy group agreed to meet again in February 2008. Meanwhile, they will follow the progress of the comprehensive plan updates by both Accomack and Northampton Counties, gather additional data on income and housing, and prepare a plan for a financial literacy education program.



*Christine Lowrie addresses affordable housing advocacy group*

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# Eastern Shore Fair Housing Workshop

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On November 1, 2007, the Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation (A-NHRC) sponsored the Eastern Shore of Virginia Fair Housing Workshop, held at the Shore Bank Financial Headquarters, located at 25020 Shore Parkway in Onley. The workshop fea-

tured an informative and interactive three-hour seminar taught by “Mally” Dryden-Mason, Consumer Education Coordinator and Fair Housing Training Specialist from the Virginia Fair Housing Office. Issues covered included History of the Fair Housing Law, Exemptions and Amendments to the Fair



*Attendees at Eastern Shore Fair Housing Workshop*



*Instructor “Mally” Dryden-Mason*

Housing Law, The Protected and Unprotected Classes, Unlawful Housing Practices, Housing Covered by the Law, Advertising and Insurance under the Law, Occupancy Standards, Sexual Harassment, Reasonable Accommodations and Reasonable Modifications, Accessibility Guidelines, Discussion of Recent Case Law, and Rights and Responsibilities under the Fair Housing Law. Attendees received packets containing brochures including Virginia’s Fair Housing Law, an overview,” “What You Should Know About Hiring Contractors,” and “Fair Housing for People with Disabilities.” Included in the packets were Fair Housing posters and dry marker boards, notepads and erasers. Also available was information and brochures on the various programs administered by the A-NHRC, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, and the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority.

Attendees included real estate agents, landlords, local bankers, and A-NHRC staff. Individuals who completed the class received certificates of completion for the course, which satisfies the training requirement for fair housing certification established by the Virginia Fair Housing Board.

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## SECTION 8 PROGRAM HITS THE TOP

In August the Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Authority (A-NRHA) completed its annual Section 8 Management Assessment Program. The intent of this internal review is to monitor program operations and identify areas that may need attention in order to be in compliance with HUD’s regulations and procedures. There are 12 program areas that are examined as part of this process covering everything from admission via the waiting list, rent calculations, inspection standards and procedures and lease rate.

Last month the A-NRHA received its official rating of “High Performer” from HUD, scoring 96%.

Congratulations to the staff for bringing the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program from a “Troubled Agency” rating to “High Performer”.



*Section 8 Staff:  
Top: Josie James, Kat Edwards  
Seated: Bobbie Wert, “B.K.” Kurzbard*

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## HIP SERVICES COMPLETE FOR FY 2008

The Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority has been operating the Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) for a little over two years and we have seen the benefit to families it can provide. All of those who work with low-wealth families know how great the need for assistance is on the Shore. This program is a valuable tool for helping the families that we serve.

Unfortunately, this year due to budget cuts in all State agencies, we did not receive as much funding as in previous years. At the same time we have seen an increase in the number of requests for assistance through this program. Between July and November, we have provided assistance to 75 families who were in danger of becoming homeless. Sixty-nine (69) families received payments to bring them current in their rent and additional payments while receiving counseling aimed at helping them avoid problems in the fu-

ture. Six (6) families received payments to help them avoid foreclosure. These families also received continued support and counseling as they developed plans to help them avoid similar problems in the future.

As a result, we have expended all of the funds that we have for FY2008 and cannot accept any applications or referrals for direct assistance at this time. We intend to keep working with these families and others by providing counseling in budgeting, spending and saving plans, credit repair and other financial issues. Please feel free to continue to refer any families you think will benefit from these services.

Last year we were fortunate enough to receive additional funds in the late spring that were recaptured from unused allocations to other localities. We hope that this will be the case again in 2008. If we receive additional funding, we will announce we are again taking applications for HIP.



### How to Contact the A-NPDC

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