

News Release



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Leading Tennessee Home

Inaugural Year of Awards People Helping People Earns Award for “Keeping People Dry”

NASHVILLE, October 26, 2010 – A newly formed cooperative has earned an award for repairing homes in a Columbia (Maury County) neighborhood. People Helping People Together has earned one of the first “Tennessee’s Best” awards from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA).

People Helping People Together’s goal is to repair one house at a time. The mission is to keep people warm, dry and safe. The method is partnering with churches, businesses, civic groups, and government agencies, including South Central TN Development District. The development district is the local administrator for THDA’s Emergency Repair grants for elderly homeowners. When the district learned of the group’s self-funded efforts, they introduced the THDA funding to broaden the impact. PHPT has repaired 13 houses and three houses are currently underway. Currently PHPT is working in the Eastside of Columbia that has been plagued with violence, drugs and crime. In this short time Columbia's Eastside has already "reversed" the "broken window syndrome." Columbia Mayor Dean Dickey said reports of theft in the area had dropped more than 40 percent and drug arrests were also down.



PHPT was announced as the winner in the Remarkable Achievement – Rural category of “Tennessee’s Best” at the 2010 Governor’s Housing Summit October 20. THDA established the awards to showcase effective efforts in the affordable housing arena.

“There’s a lot of great housing development being accomplished across our state that needs to be recognized, and probably copied so more of it can be accomplished,” said Ted R. Fellman,

executive director of THDA. “People Helping People together is a basic grassroots effort that is making a remarkable difference. We are proud to be a part of it.”

“Neighborhood watches have been formed, neighbors have joined together to partner with law enforcement and have taken back "their" community,” said Jan Kirk Wright, PHPT president. “People Helping People is not only repairing houses but changing lives. Eastside now has American flags flying, neighbors are safely walking the streets and sitting on their front porch swings.”

THDA will post the criteria for the 2011 Tennessee’s Best Awards in the spring of 2011.

THDA is a political subdivision of the State of Tennessee, established in 1973. THDA is the State’s housing finance agency, responsible for selling tax exempt mortgage revenue bonds to offer affordable mortgage funds to homebuyers of low and moderate incomes through local lenders, and to administer various housing programs targeted to households of very low-, low- and moderate-incomes.

THDA made its first mortgage in 1974. It has provided affordable fixed rate mortgages to over 101,000 households without using state tax dollars. The total contribution of the THDA-related activities to Tennessee’s economy in 2009 is estimated at \$836 million.

THDA issues between \$250 and \$300 million in mortgage revenue bonds annually for its first-time homebuyer program.

THDA created the Tennessee Housing Trust Fund in 2006, using state, THDA and locally-generated match to support programs for households of very-low income, elderly and special needs populations.

More information about THDA is available on-line at www.thda.org.



Picture left to right front row: Mike Marks, South Central TN Development District, Ted Fellman, Director of Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA), Jan Kirk Wright, President of People Helping People Together, Connie Hardin, Director People Helping People Together

2nd Row left to right. Annie Hardison, People Helping People Together, Paul Butts, First Farmers Merchants Bank, Jim Kitchen, Vice-President, People Helping People Together, Russ Adcox, Minister Maury Hills Church