



Central Administration Office
16 N. Court St., P.O. Box 470
Bowling Green, Mo., 63334



In the News

September-October 2022.....Volume 10, Issue 5

Annual Meeting is a success

NECAC held its Annual Meeting and Installation of Officers and Directors Dinner on Oct. 25.

President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page gave an update on significant progress made during the year and offered praise to board members, staff and volunteers.

“This is a reminder that while we may be discussing items that are historical, we aren’t here tonight to dwell on our past accomplishments, but to prepare with anticipation for event – and, yep, perhaps some challenges – that lie ahead in this new fiscal year,” Page told the audience. “But we should celebrate our victories as we prepare for that future, and I look forward to us facing that next year together.”

Page noted the retirements in the last

year of former President and CEO Don Patrick after more than 36 years and former Deputy Director for Community Services Programs Janice Robinson, who was with the agency for 50 years.

Page said he was grateful for Patrick’s “mentorship and the board’s confidence in me as his successor” while thanking Robinson for her efforts “on behalf of the impoverished in our community.”

Mike Bridgins of St. Charles County was re-installed as board chairman, with Glenn Eagan of Shelby County as vice-chairman. Trustees are Troy Dawkins of Shelby County, Lowell Jackson of Ralls County and Curtissa Kerr-Hunter of Lincoln County. Bridgins paid tribute to Jane Dorlac of Montgomery County and D. Randall Cone of Pike County, who

Please see Annual Meeting, Page 2



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer
Charles McCann addressed the NECAC Annual Meeting Oct. 25, discussing the history of Community Action and its role today.

Statewide task force is proposed at housing summit

Missouri State Rep. Louis Riggs has announced plans to organize a statewide task force that will look at ways to meet housing needs.

Riggs spoke during the Tri-State Housing Summit on Sept. 8 in Hannibal. The annual event brings together stakeholders from Missouri, Illinois and Iowa to discuss housing options.

The Hannibal Republican said that the issue is broader than housing, tying in to economic and workforce development.

“We take an approach in Jefferson City to try and figure out what the statewide solution looks like, and we really haven’t had that full-throated conversation quite yet,” he said. “I’d like to be able to take the ideas from here today and incorporate those, talk to some folks and see what that would look like.”

Riggs said cooperative efforts he’s been a part of – such as a weekly group of people from the northeast and northwest part of the

Please see Task Force, Page 2



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer

More national acclaim

NECAC and top representatives of federal and state weatherization programs on Oct. 19 highlighted a successful partnership that is bringing \$300,000 of upgrades at agency apartment complexes in Wright City and Warrenton. The keynote speaker was Dr. Henry C. McKoy Jr., Director of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of State and Community Energy Programs in Washington, D.C. McKoy called the partnership the “embodiment” of efforts to improve people’s standard of living and one that “we take pride in.” Also pictured are NECAC’s Carla Potts, Missouri Division of Energy Director Craig Redmon and ICAST National Business Development Manager Gene Cattani. Please see story, Page 3.

Annual Meeting offers highlights and looks ahead

Continued from Page 1



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer
NECAC President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page delivers his annual report.

Hannibal.

MONROE COUNTY: Mike Whelan of rural Stoutsville, Jessica Chase of Paris and Maxine Jones of Holliday.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY: Dave Teeter of Montgomery City and Richard Veinot of High Hill.

PIKE COUNTY: Tommy Wallace of Louisiana, Lori Smith of rural Middletown and Curt Mitchell of Clarksville.

RALLS COUNTY: John Lake of Center and Janet Hoyt of New London.

RANDOLPH COUNTY: John Truesdell of Huntsville and Lorna Miles of Moberly.

ST. CHARLES COUNTY: Mary Hutchison of St. Charles and Diane Hileman of St. Peters.

SHELBY COUNTY: Melissa Killen of Leonard.

WARREN COUNTY: Fred Vahle of Warrenton and Lisa Key of Wright City.

who passed in the last year.

The guest speaker was Community Action pioneer Charles McCann of St. Joseph, former director of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) with the Missouri Department of Social Services and a Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) with the National Community Action Partnership.

McCann performed the installation ceremony and spoke about the history and values of Community Action.

“We need to protect our values,” he said. “And, because we want the Community Action movement to thrive in the future, we want to preserve the values. Preserve them by holding them close to you, making them part of you – part of who you are – and feeling passionate about them.”

Also sworn in were the following Directors:

LEWIS COUNTY: Travis Fler of Lewistown and Phil Darnell and Paul Kinney of Canton.

LINCOLN COUNTY: Matt Bass and Jere Burkemper of Troy.

MACON COUNTY: Clarence Walker, Jean Jones and Mickey Shipp of Macon.

MARION COUNTY: Larry Welch, Jim Miller and Roy Hark of

Task Force proposed to look at Missouri housing needs

Continued from Page 1

state during COVID – proves that success can be achieved.

“I’d like to be able to take that sense of community and basically take that out for a statewide conversation on issues like that,” he said. “Other parts of the state have similar issues, but they’re not identical. In order for us to do some policy changes, some budget changes, we need to have that type of input from stakeholders like you.”

Riggs said he wants to “translate into policy” ideas generated by the task force and “hopefully some appropriations” to fund the programs.

NECAC Deputy Director for Housing Development Programs Carla Potts, who organized the summit, looks forward to the task force’s work to address what she called a “housing crisis.”

“This is our opportunity,” Potts said. “If not now, when? If not us, who? We must say ‘This is the need’ and ‘here is how we’re going to address it. We must work together to make sure more people have safe, affordable housing.’”

Other summit speakers agreed that regionalism is the key to success.

“There is such an underserved portion of our communities that require people to come forward like yourselves,” said Hannibal Mayor James Hark. “I’ve always been a proponent of what is good for Hannibal is good for our region, what is good for the region is good for Hannibal.”



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer
Missouri State Rep. Louis Riggs addresses the Tri-State Housing Summit.

“Second only to food, shelter lies as the most basic of human needs,” said NECAC President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page. “Yet, we have yet to attain this need for all of our citizenry. We have each, separately, realized that the housing problem is bigger than we (pointing to chest) are, but I remain steadfast and convinced that it is not bigger than WE (pointing to audience) are.”

The summit featured two speakers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Region VII Administrator Deke Clayborn and St. Louis Field Office Director James Heard.

“Housing is critical,” Clayborn said. “It’s where everything starts. Whatever you are going to do, it starts with the

home.”

“You need to be making a whole lot of noise right now,” Heard advised. “You need to be talking about your needs. You need to be talking about what you want, and then bring it to the federal government and say ‘Can I do that?’”

Kyle Wilkens was on his first tour of the state as new Missouri Director of USDA Rural Development. The agency does “a lot of good things,” Wilkens said. “Housing may be the most important one. If you don’t have people in houses in rural communities, you don’t have a rural community and that’s just it. It’s infrastructure. There’s no reason to have anything else if you don’t have anybody there in houses.”

Hannibal resident Alison Ross drew applause for telling of her struggles to get back on her feet after life setbacks. Ross is a substitute teacher and is earning a degree to become a full-time educator.

“Thank you for providing us with a safe place to live, and continue the work you do for us,” she urged.

Those who attended later broke into groups to develop housing ideas. The annual event is hosted by NECAC, the Two Rivers Regional Council of Quincy, Ill., and the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission of Burlington. NECAC organized the first summit in 2005. It grew from the Tri-State Development Summit covering 35 counties in the three states.

Partnership pays off with work at two complexes

Continued from Page 1

NECAC is showcasing how additional funding for weatherization means that public and private partnerships are more important than ever in tackling Missouri's housing renovation needs.

NECAC and top representatives of federal and state weatherization programs on Oct. 19 highlighted a successful partnership that is bringing \$300,000 of upgrades at agency apartment complexes in Wright City and Warrenton.

Work that includes new heating and cooling systems, windows and flooring is being done with funding from the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act. As a part of the work, ICAST (International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology) will provide environmental renovations such as removing contaminants and hazards.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Henry C. McKoy Jr., Director of the Department of Energy's Office of State and Community Energy Programs in Washington, D.C. McKoy called the partnership the "embodiment" of efforts to improve people's standard of living and one that "we take pride in."

"When you weatherize a home, not only do you make it warmer in the wintertime and the fall and you make it cooler in the summer, but you also address issues of air quality, so people can live healthier lives," said McKoy, who added that any "small amount you can take off of somebody's energy bill makes a world of difference."

McKoy also praised NECAC for being a catalyst in bringing together partners with the goal of making an impact with the investment of dollars. "It's just impressive work by any measure, any means, that's being done," he said. "So, we are incredibly honored to be an in-



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer
Weatherization Specialist Andy Mackey installs a window at the Wright City Apartments. The project was highlighted Oct. 19 as an example of a NECAC partnership with federal and state agencies and the private sector.

vestment partner."

McKoy said the federal government's goal is to weatherize 500,000 homes nationwide over a decade, with \$77.2 million of initial Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding targeted for Missouri. NECAC's share will be about \$4.5 million to do projects at 500 homes in 12 counties.

"You all are part of a bigger work, but you're also leading the way in... leveraging resources," he said.

Missouri Division of Energy Director Craig Redmon called the project an example of a good use of taxpayer dollars that were being spent "very frugally and wisely" as a reinvestment in housing.

"We think this is a good marriage of a lot of different agencies that can come together and get a lot of good things done for the people of Missouri," Redmon said. "So, we're extremely pleased to be

a part of that."

NECAC President and Chief Executive Officer Dan Page said a higher standard of living for apartment residents will result from the teamwork.

"We come together today to share in a common victory, because we celebrate the work that is being done and has been done in these apartment complexes," Page said. "And victories should be accomplished — they should be celebrated. We do not consider this a NECAC project, but recognize it as the partnership that it truly is."

NECAC Board Chairman Mike Bridgins said he once lived in a complex similar to Wright City Apartments.

"I want to talk about what you're really bringing, because, yes, you're saving (people) money on energy, yes, you're doing all those things, but you're giving people hope," Bridgins said. "They're not plugging windows for drafts, they're not thinking nobody really cares. So, I appreciate it."

ICAST National Business Development Manager Gene Cattani said his company has seen the healthier homes effort growing.

"We work across the country, but this has been a very unique experience for us — working in a team like this," Cattani said. "Rarely do we have an opportunity to bring multiple agencies together, as we did here, to offer a comprehensive solution to healthier and more efficient homes."

McKoy's visit was the second time this year that NECAC's weatherization program has been nationally recognized.

The agency drew praise in July from the U.S. Department of Labor for a job training apprenticeship program it developed.



Employee Spotlight:

Wasson steps up to take over CSGB efforts

Kayla Wasson was a bit surprised when told about her new role at NECAC. County Services Programs Director Linda Fritz planned to retire, and Wasson succeeded her.

Though Community Services Programs make up only about five percent of the agency's \$26 million budget, a wide variety of short-term and long-range assistance is provided to those in need.

"I'm looking forward to helping NECAC grow and assisting clients with additional programs," said Wasson, a Lincoln County native who joined NECAC as Fritz's assistant on Aug. 7, 2017. "I have big shoes to fill, but Linda has trained me well and I know I can handle whatever comes along."

Fritz felt much the same when promoted last year upon the retirement of Janice Robinson, who had been with NECAC for 50 years. "What she was doing was enormous," Fritz said of Robinson.

Fritz joined NECAC on May 14, 2007, as emergency services coordinator. The Arkansas native was promoted to director in 2015, overseeing client services and staff in the agency's 12 counties. "It's been a ride — a challenging ride — but an enjoyable one," Fritz said. "Helping people is what we're here for, and we always try to meet that goal."

Wasson hopes clients will continue reaching out to NECAC when they need help. "People are in survival mode," she said. "People are in crisis. They don't know where to turn. We want to educate them about what NECAC offers."



By Brent Engel, Public Relations Officer
Kayla Wasson, left, and Linda Fritz share a laugh.



Central Administration Office
16 N. Court St., P.O. Box 470
Bowling Green, Mo., 63334



NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage Paid
St. Charles, MO
Permit # 486



Mike Bridgins,
Chairman of
the Board



Dan Page,
President &
CEO



Return Service Requested



By Linda Fritz and Brent Engel

Meat-ing a need

NECAC offered free meat and diapers to income-qualifying clients hit hard by rising prices and inflation. Funding came from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Pictured at top are NECAC's Kayla Wasson and Desiree Antoniou. At right are Stephanie Dunker and Crystal Bliss unloading meat.



Major part of utility assistance season begins

The utility assistance season is under way, with applications from the elderly and disabled starting Oct. 1 and all others on Nov. 1.

NECAC assisted about 9,000 households last year, and expects the number to increase this winter due to inflation and escalating costs.

LIHEAP offers a one-time payment to income-qualifying households depending upon the type of utility they use. The maximum benefit for propane-heated homes is \$990. It's

\$652 for natural gas, \$636 for electricity and \$438 for wood. ECIP may be used by income-qualifying household through September 2023, with a maximum of up to \$1,600.

NECAC is accepting utility assistance applications online or in person at its service centers.

The monthly income limit for a one-person household is \$2,370. For a four-person residence, it's \$4,558. Additional amounts are available upon request.

New at NECAC



Amanda Smith
Administrative
Assistant



Samantha McCurdy
Administrative
Assistant



Brenden Henderson
Weatherization
Specialist



Clinton Stewart
Weatherization
Specialist



Marcy Burlison
Energy Assistance
Counselor



Tracy Collins
Housing Assistance
Counselor



Stacy Charlton
Housing Assistance
Counselor



Julie Prouhet
Family Self-Sufficiency
Coordinator