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## TOP STORY

### PHFA honors its top-11 home loan lending partners

The agency held its annual homeownership program awards ceremony in early March at its Harrisburg office to honor its leading lenders for the past year. These lenders assist homebuyers throughout the state in the application, processing, and closing of PHFA loans. PHFA then purchases the loans from the loan originators and services them for the life of the loan.

Out of approximately 150 lending partners, Howard Hanna Financial Services was recognized as the top loan originator for 2011 with 469 home loans. The other 10 top lenders for the past year, listed in order of most loans processed, are: Gateway Funding Diversified Mortgage Services and Huntingdon Valley Bank (tied for second), Jersey Shore State Bank, West Penn Financial Service Center, Boulevard Mortgage Company of PA, Sovereign Bank, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Mortgage America, Allegheny Mortgage Corp., and Fulton Mortgage Company.

Some lenders were honored with special recognition awards, including: Huntington Valley Bank for the most Keystone Assistance loans and most loans to minority homebuyers; Jersey Shore State Bank for the most new construction loans, the most HOMEstead loans, and the best quality post-closing submissions; Howard Hanna Financial Services for being the top QuikClose lender; Allegheny Mortgage Corp. for the best quality underwriting submissions; Presidential Bank for being the number one new lender; and Select Mortgage for the top third-party originator category.



The 2011 Homeownership Awards event gets underway (left photo), as Homeownership Division Director Kate Newton welcome attendees and thanks them for their support of PHFA lending programs. Howard Hanna Financial Services took the top award for most PHFA home loans closed in the past year (right photo) and were presented by Kate Newton with a framed certificate to recognize their achievement.

## **WWW.PAHOUSINGSEARCH.COM**

### **PHFA taps into the power of the online housing locator to help Swissvale residents**

In early February, PHFA reached out to local government officials offering assistance to residents of an 18-unit Swissvale apartment building who had been given 30-day eviction notices due to reported hazardous conditions in the structure. Swissvale is a borough east of Pittsburgh. The agency responded by developing a customized report that local assistance providers could use to help the displaced renters find affordable apartments nearby. PHFA's report was produced using the online apartment locator available at [www.PaHousingSearch.com](http://www.PaHousingSearch.com). This Web tool helps people find rental units in Pennsylvania with amenities and features of most interest to them, and there is no cost to use it. Landlords also can enter apartment listings at no charge.

PaHousingSearch.com was launched a year ago and now receives at least 30,000 visits monthly from people doing apartment searches or landlords entering listings. It is funded by four state agencies: the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Public Welfare, the Department of Community and Economic Development and PHFA.

## **COMMONWEALTH CORNERSTONE GROUP**

### **CCG helps fund transformation of important Civil War building into new Gettysburg museum**

Commonwealth Cornerstone Group (CCG) has completed a \$14.45 million New Markets Tax Credit financing transaction that will help fund the restoration and conversion of 180-year-old Schmucker Hall in Gettysburg into the town's newest Civil War museum. The building, which is easily recognized by its distinctive green cupola, is a four-story structure on the campus of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Sitting atop Seminary Ridge, Schmucker Hall's cupola was employed as a lookout tower during the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. The building also was used as a battlefield hospital.

The restored building will become the Seminary Ridge Museum with exhibits depicting the first day of the battle of Gettysburg, as well as medical practices, religious life, and African-American culture during the Civil War.



**Renovations have already begun to create the new Seminary Ridge Museum in Gettysburg. Photo courtesy of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.**

This project is expected to provide a welcome boost to the local economy. It will generate \$23 million in local commerce during the 15-month construction period, plus an additional \$5 million annually in new tourism spending. Project sponsors believe the annual tourism boost will be felt almost immediately as the planned July 2013 opening date coincides with the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. The project is expected to provide significant direct and indirect job creation, as well. It's anticipated that 150 construction positions will be supported during the restoration, a staff of 13 will be hired to operate the museum once it opens, and 30 jobs are expected to be created at other area businesses due to increased tourist traffic.

The restoration project is a joint venture of the seminary and the Adams County Historical Society. CCG, which is providing the New Markets Tax Credit funding, was created in 2004 by PHFA to serve as a nonprofit community development entity. A public fundraising appeal will be announced soon to supplement funding from CCG and other groups with additional needed support.

## FINANCIAL EDUCATION

### PHFA expands efforts to boost financial literacy across Pennsylvania

With the hiring of financial education officer Holly Chase, PHFA is making a stronger commitment to the financial literacy of consumers around the state, as well as to the agency's own employees. Chase will be working with a wide variety of groups – including housing counselors, housing service coordinators, and community educators – to expand their understanding of personal finance issues so they, in turn, can better serve the agency's housing customers. Using a variety of informational tools and training programs, she will provide these groups with up-to-date materials and training techniques for keeping their presentations relevant and engaging. Be watching for more information about these financial literacy offerings in the months ahead. Chase can be reached through PHFA's Homeownership Hotline at 1.800.822.1174.



Holly Chase, CPF<sup>®</sup>, is the new financial education officer at PHFA.

## HOUSING SERVICES

### Registration now open for 2012 Housing Services Conference

Even if you don't work in the housing services field, if you have an interest in affordable housing you should consider attending this year's Housing Services Conference June 25-27 in Pittsburgh. The event is well known for its outstanding keynote speakers, wide variety of housing-related seminars, and ample opportunities for professional networking. This year's conference features four keynote addresses and 34 breakout sessions. A small sampling of the topics to be addressed includes:

- Round tables for property managers at Section 8 and tax credit developments
- Time management
- Energy conservation
- South Side neighborhood tour
- Effective resident councils
- Providing valued customer service
- Tenant/landlord relationships
- Affirmative fair housing marketing
- Gateway Clipper river cruise

Register by May 4 to qualify for the early registration fee of only \$250.

### Common Threads Quilt produced by residents of PHFA-funded multifamily buildings goes on display in Harrisburg office

In 2011, PHFA added a special opportunity during its Housing Services Conference to engage residents, management and service professionals in the multifamily buildings it helps fund by asking them to make quilt squares for what became known as the Common Thread Quilts. Participation in the project exceeded expectations as 162 quilt squares were submitted by 43 different organizations representing 53 multifamily rental housing properties. The 162 squares were then transformed into three beautiful quilts that were unveiled during last year's conference in State College.

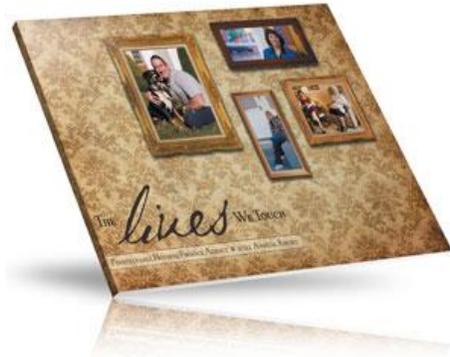
One of these quilts is now on display near the elevators on the ground floor of the PHFA office in Harrisburg. A major attraction of these quilts is the fact that the individual squares tell the stories of the seniors, people with disabilities, and families who reside in affordable multifamily rental housing statewide that is financed, in part, by PHFA. A second quilt is on display in PHFA's Pittsburgh office. It's anticipated that the third quilt will be displayed at the agency's satellite office in Norristown.



## INFORMATION RESOURCES

### PHFA's 2011 annual report is now available on the Web

The agency has posted its annual report for the 2011 fiscal year on its Web site. In addition to data documenting PHFA's financial performance, the report includes stories about some of the people helped during the last year by the agency's various programs to expand affordable housing in Pennsylvania. The theme of the annual report is "The Lives We Touch." To view the annual report online, please [click here](#). For those people without easy Internet access, a small number of paper copies are available by calling Scott Elliott at 717.780.3916.



### Agency's marketing campaign includes Harrisburg Senators' ballpark

It can be challenging to reach Pennsylvanians statewide to inform them about PHFA's affordable housing programs. With this in mind, the agency is always looking for novel and cost effective ways to promote its offerings. One such example is a billboard recently displayed under the scoreboard at Metro Bank Park, home to the minor league Harrisburg Senators. A new design for 2012 for PHFA's ballpark billboard will keep the agency in front of central Pennsylvania baseball fans all season long.



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**Tom Corbett, Governor • Brian A. Hudson Sr., Executive Director & CEO**

To receive an e-mail notice when a new issue of PHFA Developments is posted, or for comments and questions, please write Scott Elliott at [selliott@phfa.org](mailto:selliott@phfa.org)

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