

Union Parish Section 8 Housing Authority Participates in Housing America 2008 Campaign

Housing America Summit 2008 was held at the Union Parish Police Jury, hosted by the Union Parish Section 8 Housing Authority, on April 30, 2008 in Farmerville, Louisiana. The Housing America theme is “Working to Make Housing a National Priority”.

April was declared Housing America Month by a group of national professional organizations, as part of a year-long, national campaign to inform the public and decision makers of the critical need to address the nation’s housing and community development needs.

Numerous Speakers for the event were Jeffrey Everson, Regional Representative for Senator Mary L. Landrieu, Glenn Theis, Asst. Director of Ruston Housing Authority, Willie Davis, Town of Farmerville Mayor, and Sharon Dixson, Director of Section 8 in Union Parish. The event was attended by members of the Chamber of Commerce, Police Jury, Lions Club, Town Council, Town Mayors, Health Advocacy and upcoming election candidates. The governor, district senators and representatives were also invited but were in session and unable to attend.

Proclamations were received from Governor Bobby Jindal and Mayor Willie Davis acknowledging Housing America Month.

Points of interest were as follows: Public Housing FY2008 budget is the lowest budget since FY2001 by 1.2 billion; 15.6 million households pay more than half of their income for housing; there are nearly 750,000 homeless nationwide and up to 3.5 million who experience homelessness at some point throughout the year; minimum wage earners are unable to afford a one-bedroom home; working professionals are priced out of home ownership in the majority of metropolitan areas; 1.7 million (6.3 percent) of rural homes are considered substandard; and public housing is home of over 2 million people (40% are children) and currently receives federal funding at less than 82 percent of need.

Numerous questions were asked, as a round table discussion was held on how to make housing programs work for everyone involved. Mr. Everson assured the group that Senator Landrieu had the best interest of all parties in mind as she endeavors to achieve the funding goals of housing programs. In a faxed statement from U.S. Representative Rodney Alexander he said, *“Having the privilege to live in a safe, secure home is something many people take for granted. Fortunately, through the work of the Housing America 2008 campaign, affordable public housing is becoming more available to citizens in communities throughout our country and providing more families a chance to experience the pride and security a quality home provides.”*

Everyone left the summit with a clearer understanding of how the Section 8 and Public Housing program works and was excited about putting forth more effort to address the need for good, safe, decent affordable housing by recommitting themselves to meeting the affordable housing and community development needs of the community.