PRESS RELEASE

SENATE DESIGNATES HOUSING AWARENESS DAY IN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Representatives of the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) gathered at the State Capitol on February 23, 2016 to celebrate Housing Awareness Day as designated by Pennsylvania Senate Resolution No. 290, sponsored by Senator Rob Teplitz.

The event was held to raise awareness of the continuing challenge of ending veteran homelessness and to promote the positive impact of, as well as the ongoing demand for, additional affordable housing and related services for Pennsylvania’s senior citizens, disabled persons, the working poor and low-income families with children.

Pennsylvania provides in excess of 200,000 subsidized, assisted or affordable rental dwelling units within its boundaries, funded through various Federal and State programs. But there is a continued and growing demand for more subsidized, assisted and affordable housing, which also serves to improve the socio-economic climate within Pennsylvania by benefitting not only the residents of the housing, but also their neighbors, local business, employers and their communities as a whole.

Cheryl Johns, PAHRA President and Executive Director of Altoona Housing Authority, stressed that we must continue to raise public awareness regarding housing needs in Pennsylvania.

Ben Laudermilch, Executive Director of Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, introduced Tom Baker, a formerly homeless disabled Vietnam Veteran of the U.S. Navy. Tom spent numerous years in shelters or on the streets, battling alcohol dependency and other medical issues. He is now very thankful to be living in a stable housing environment, receiving appropriate medical treatment and other supportive services.

Dale Gravett, Executive Director of Chester County Housing Authority, related the efforts of that agency, which is located in the wealthiest county in PA per capita, to end veteran homelessness in their area through a campaign to house 100 homeless veterans in 100 days. The Authority not only achieved, but surpassed that goal and continues to rise to the challenge through development of affordable housing for homeless or at-risk veterans.

PAHRA and its members will continue to advocate for adequate funding to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have a safe, secure, affordable, accessible place to call home, especially those who have served our country.