

# ECOWISE

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- » **Going Green: Intelligent Investments for Public Housing**  
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA)  
April 12-13  
Boston, MA  
<http://bit.ly/e3jp4W>
- » **National Association of Home Builders National Green Building Conference and Expo**  
May 1-3, 2011  
Salt Lake City, UT  
<http://bit.ly/hEwmv>
- » **Southeast PIH Network Energy Conference**  
May 24-26, 2011  
Orange Beach, AL  
<http://1.usa.gov/g5YRvw>

## Public Housing Agency Earns First LEED® Platinum Certification

With the completion of the last phase of its HOPE VI redevelopment program, the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) in Washington State became the first public housing authority (PHA) to earn a LEED for Homes Platinum certification. Houses that receive a LEED certification undergo a rigorous ratings process through the U.S. Green Building Council for attention to sustainability and energy conservation. Certification levels include silver, gold, and, the highest, platinum.

The Phase III rental units in the Salishan community were finished in December of last year. These 90 units are at least 30 percent more energy efficient than an average home. "Operating costs for heating and air conditioning will be lower," said Roberta Schur, Project Manager for the Salishan community. "Also, the resident will live in a cleaner environment. Having carpeting only on the stairs, for instance, will cut down on allergies."

Before moving in, residents receive an orientation about the features in the homes that enable residents to operate their homes in the most economical, energy efficient, and safe way possible. Energy efficiency starts in the walls: these are insulated by a "blow in blanket system." This recycled material is 18 percent more energy efficient than commonly used insulation and windows are triple-paned with a built-in air vent.

The units have a hybrid heating system: it contains a heat pump and electric resistant baseboard heaters. Since the heat pump is 3 times more efficient than the baseboard heaters and sized for each home, the heat pump is more than enough to heat and cool the home throughout the year, even on the coldest day. The bedroom baseboard heaters are there as an added heat source if needed.

Energy Star and energy efficient appliances, products, and lighting are used throughout the homes. This includes energy efficient light bulbs, low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, washing machines, refrigerators, bathroom exhaust fans, and a whole house fan for ventilation.

To help residents better understand the energy they use and the savings available through these new features, Tacoma Power has installed its Gateway 'Smart Meter.' The meter has an easy-to-read digital display. Residents can see their real-time energy usage on-line and the power company can send messages directly to the meter and get a usage reading for billing. The new units are a big hit: "...the residents love their new units, particularly the hardwood floors," says Ms. Schur. "The residents find the units very easy to clean and appreciate the amenities." THA's experience in LEED certification is an inspiration for other PHAs with sustainable building ambitions.

For further information on THA's LEED units, go to:  
[http://www.tacomahousing.org/Salishan/salishan\\_seven.html](http://www.tacomahousing.org/Salishan/salishan_seven.html)

## HUD and CLPHA Sponsor Conference to Help PHAs Go Green

Economic budget constraints and aging housing portfolios make it critical that PHAs have access to the best information about sustainable housing projects. HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) and CLPHA are sponsoring the conference "Going Green: Intelligent Investments for Public Housing" to provide an informative discussion of this topic. The conference will be held on April 12 and 13, 2011, at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston, MA. There is no cost for the conference.

Participants will join other members of the affordable housing, sustainable building, and energy efficiency industries to discuss how the concepts and practices of sustainability can become part of the norm in the daily management of public housing. The overall goal is to adopt practices that reduce costs while improving residents' lives and helping the environment. Opportunities to network and dialogue with HUD officials are also built in. Deputy Director Ron Simms will deliver the keynote speech.

The conference agenda covers topics including PIH policy briefings; resident health; working with residents toward utility savings; how-to sessions on using energy performance contracts (EPCs), Section 3, and Capital Fund for funding energy conservation projects. Additionally, it will address best practices in materials, maintenance, and water conservation; getting the most from energy audits; and power purchasing agreements. One session will focus on implementing energy efficient and environmentally sound building in areas affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

On the second and final day of the conference HUD will offer the "HUD Forum on Energy Performance Contracting: Discussion Series," a specialized separate track for PHAs, housing industry groups, and the energy industry. These sessions continue a discussion series begun in 2009 to improve the timeliness, consistency, and transparency of EPCs and gather feedback to assist HUD in developing EPC guidance. The forum will also include roundtable discussion groups focused on topics including:

- Streamlining the Process
- Measurement and Verification (M&V) Requirements
- Removing Barriers to EPCs
- Section 3 Compliance

The conference is geared toward public housing agencies, their staff, and resident associations but is open to all. Register and find out more at:

<http://bit.ly/e3jp4W>

## Resident's Corner | Living with Asbestos

Asbestos is a mineral fiber. In the past, it was often used in building products, such as insulation, tiles, siding, and plaster. Asbestos is now well recognized as a health hazard. It has been found to cause lung cancer and other fatal illnesses. The substance has been banned from new building materials since 1978; however, asbestos fibers may still be present in old products in your home.

If you think asbestos may be in your home, don't panic! Typically, the best course of action is to leave asbestos material that is in good condition undisturbed. It will generally not release asbestos fibers – and there is no danger unless fibers are released and inhaled into the lungs.

If your home is having major renovation and was built before 1978, you should talk to your housing authority. It is likely that you should not be in the house during renovation.

Unfortunately, there is no way to identify asbestos fibers with the naked eye. A professional must be called to take samples so they can be examined under a special microscope. If you suspect there is asbestos in your home, simply call your housing manager who should arrange for an inspection if appropriate.

Common products that might contain asbestos, and conditions that may release fibers, include:

**Steam pipes, boilers, and furnace ducts** that were insulated with an asbestos blanket or asbestos paper tape. These materials may emit asbestos fibers if damaged, repaired, or removed improperly. **Door gaskets** in furnaces, wood stoves, and coal stoves. Worn seals can release asbestos fibers during use.

**Floor tiles** (made of vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and rubber), the **backing on vinyl sheet flooring**, and the **adhesives** used for installing floor tile. Sanding tiles or scraping or sanding the backing of sheet flooring during removal may release asbestos fibers.

**Cement sheet, millboard, and paper** used as insulation around furnaces and woodburning stoves. Repairing or removing appliances, as well as cutting, tearing, sanding, drilling, or sawing insulation, may release fibers.

**Door gaskets** in furnaces, wood stoves, and coal stoves. Worn seals can release asbestos fibers during use.

**Soundproofing or decorative material** sprayed on walls and ceilings. Loose, crumbly, or water-damaged material may release fibers – as will sanding, drilling, or scraping the material.

**Patching, joint compounds, and textured paints** for walls and ceilings. Sanding, scraping, or drilling these surfaces may release asbestos.

**Cement roofing, shingles, and siding.** These products may release asbestos fibers if sawed, drilled, or cut.

To learn more, you can also call your regional or State Environmental Protection Agency asbestos contact, which is listed here: <http://1.usa.gov/aR2vPZ>

## Contact Us:

### Public and Indian Housing Information Resource Center (PIH IRC)

2614 Chapel Lake Drive  
Gambrills, MD 21054

**Toll free number:** 1-800-955-2232

**Fax number:** 1-443-302-2084

**E-mail:** [pihirc@firstpic.org](mailto:pihirc@firstpic.org) (Put "EcoWise" in subject line)

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