

Rivergate Commons Completed

Habitat homes energy efficient, affordable

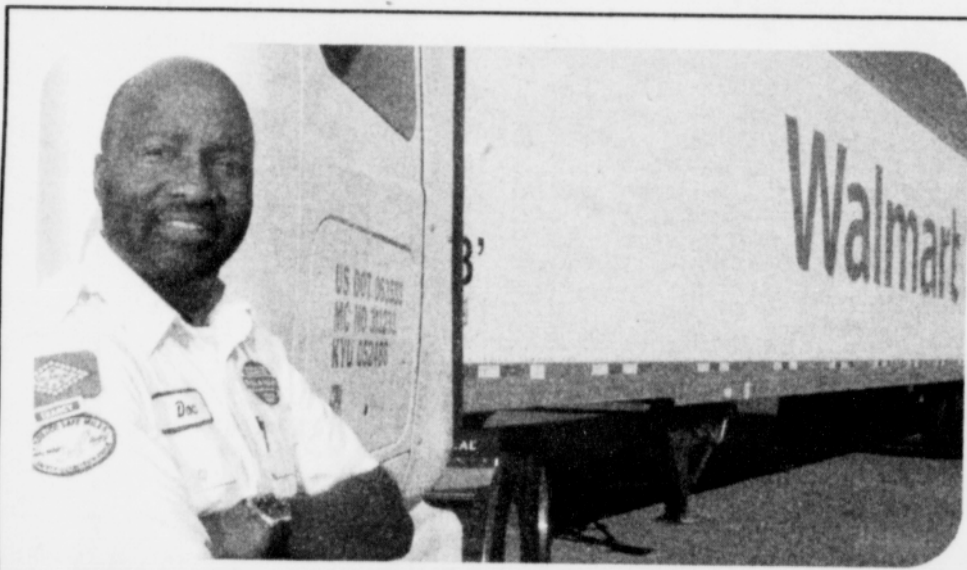
The City of Portland, Portland General Electric and the Homebuilders of Metropolitan Portland are celebrating a partnership that helped usher in the construction of six energy-efficient, all-electric row houses built by Habitat for Humanity through the City of Portland's Energy Efficiency Home Pilot (PEEHP).

The affordable homes, called Rivergate Commons on North Olin Avenue in the St. Johns neighbor-

hood, have been built to be 15 and 30 percent more efficient than the 2008 Oregon Energy Code.

Habitat will sell these homes with 1 percent down and a 0 percent interest mortgage to six pre-selected, qualified buyers earning between 30 and 60 percent of the median Portland income, or about \$21,000 to \$43,000 for a family of four.

"This outcome is a direct result of the contributions of our private sector partners, who have taken a leadership role in bridging the gap between efficiency and affordability in residential construction," said Paul Scarlett, director of Portland's Bureau of Development Services.




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Habitat for Humanity volunteers and families gather for a kick-off event for the construction of Rivergate Commons in north Portland last summer. Photo from Blue Collar Interactive agency website.

PGE served several roles in the creation and construction of the homes including acting as a technical adviser in providing design re-

view and technology direction to greatly increase the efficiency and comfort of each home.

Rivergate Commons represents

the fourth PEEHP grant award. Previous awards have funded efficiency measures in eight single family homes and row houses.

Helping Families Hardest Hit

continued ▲ *from front*

said Multnomah County Commissioner Deborah Kafoury. "Short-term rent assistance is the wisest investment we can make for families in our community who are struggling to make ends meet."

Looking at results for the entire program, 77 percent of the families helped were living in houses or apartments, but were at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Many cited job loss or reduced hours at work as the

primary reasons why they were at risk for eviction.

Half of those served were in families with children, and 44 percent of all people served were children. Although the Short Term Rent Assistance program allows assistance for up to 24 months, the average length of assistance was under three months.

Overall, 80 percent of households receiving short-term rent assistance were still in housing six months after this assistance ended, officials said.

"Though this stimulus funding

has clearly helped, there is still more need right now than we have resources to address. More than 2,500 people sleep in emergency shelters or on our streets every night," says Margaret Van Vliet, director, Portland Housing Bureau.

While federal funding for the program ends in June, City of Portland, Multnomah County, and HAP budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year prioritize short-term rent assistance in an effort to keep the program running at its current levels.

A Foundation to Flourish, Build On

continued ▲ *from front*

reach is spread through pay-envelope inserts, posting flyers in break-rooms, and at employee meetings.

As many as 70 employees of the market have learned about the ins and outs of homeownership by attending the information sessions.

Employees learn about homeownership and gain access to homes they can afford to buy—with monthly payments not much more than (and often less than) what they were paying in rent.

The employer gains employees who are stable and rooted in our community. The community experiences economic growth and neighborhood stability when more families own their own homes.

"An important part of financial Independence is home ownership. New Seasons Market is very happy with our partnership with Proud Ground," said New Seasons Market

Human Resource Director Rick Howell. "We're thrilled that we have been happy to connect so many of our staff with Proud Ground's homeownership program."

Holder also has great praise for Proud Ground and the support provided.

"It is a hand up, not a hand out," she explains. "I felt like I learned something in the process. Proud Ground was as interested in my success in becoming a homeowner as I was!" she said.

Stability and success are great, but one of Holder's favorite things about being in her home isn't inside at all.

"I love to garden," she says. "I like knowing I can plant a biannual and know I will be around to see it bloom."

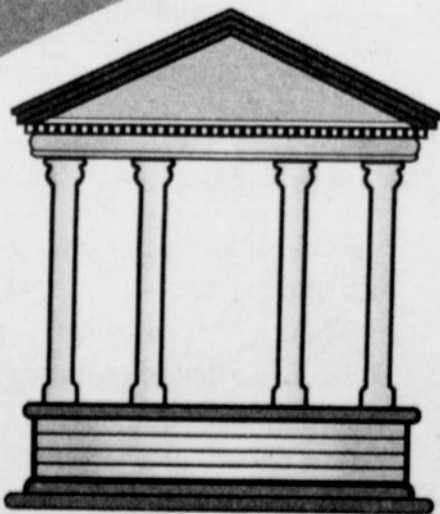
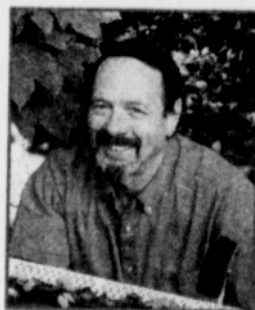
For more information, visit the website, proudground.org.

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