

CHAMPIONS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING RECOGNIZED

BISMARCK – The North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA) recently recognized six housing partners as Champions of Affordable Housing at the annual Statewide Housing Conference.

“NDHFA has helped more than 25,000 first-time homebuyers realize their dreams of owning a home and has developed 3,700 rental units using the Low Income Housing Tax Credit,” said Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem who presented the awards on behalf of the Industrial Commission. “All this was accomplished through partnerships with lenders, the real estate community, housing developers and property managers. Without these partners, NDHFA would not have realized a single first-time homebuyer loan or assisted a single multi-family development.”

Receiving Lender Awards were **Dakota Community Bank** with locations in eight communities in central and southwestern North Dakota, **First International Bank & Trust** located in nine North Dakota communities, **Capital Credit Union** of Bismarck, and **CountryBank USA** of Cando and Devils Lake. The four lenders accounted for 23 percent of NDHFA’s first-time homebuyer loans, 21 percent of down payment assistance loans and 43 percent of down payment and closing cost assistance grants in 2003.

The Lender Award is based on participation in the NDHFA’s homeownership programs and on participation in locally sponsored affordable housing projects and events.

The **Selkirk Circle Twin Homes**, developed by the non-profit Eastern Dakota Housing Alliance, received the Housing Production Award, which recognizes the development, preservation of or conversion to affordable housing, innovative construction or financing techniques, responses to the unique needs of special populations, or the ability to provide information to the public about affordable housing opportunities.

Located in Grand Forks, Selkirk Circle Twin Homes are the first ENERGY STAR homes in North Dakota.

Paul Rechlin of Bismarck was presented the Leadership Award in recognition of his more 25 years of experience in community development and affordable housing. Rechlin has been executive director of the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council since 1984. In 1995, he took on the additional duties of executive director of Lewis and Clark CommunityWorks, which was established as a separate non-profit organization by the council to address housing issues.

“The Champion of Affordable Housing awards program began in 1995 with annual presentations to lenders and real estate agents based primarily on loan production within NDHFA Home Mortgage Finance programs,” said Pat S. Fricke, NDHFA executive director. “Leadership and housing production awards were added in 2001.” Real estate awards are presented at the industry’s annual conference in September.

The Industrial Commission of North Dakota, consisting of Governor John Hoeven, who serves as chairman, Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson and Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem, oversees the NDHFA.

For more information about the Champion of Affordable Housing awards or other NDHFA programs, contact the agency at 701-328-8080, 800-292-8621, 800-366-6888 (TTY) or visit us online at www.ndhfa.org.