



Synopsis

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release, April 16, 2010

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Fauquier Housing Corporation Turns 40, Completes First ENERGY STAR Home and Unveils Plans for New Energy Efficiency Loan Program

Non-profit housing provider has served Fauquier County and surrounding areas since 1970 and has big plans for the future

Warrenton, Virginia, April 16, 2010 – 2010 is a big year for Fauquier Housing Corporation. The not-for-profit housing provider is celebrating its past as well as its future. Fauquier Housing Corporation has worked hard to provide “safe, decent, affordable housing opportunities” to low to moderate income residents. Now, forty years since it completed its first home, the organization will celebrate a new chapter in its history. Fauquier Housing received its EarthCraft House™ and ENERGY STAR certifications in 2009 and has made the commitment to build and renovate 100% of its housing projects to these green building standards. Homes that are built or renovated to the standards established by EarthCraft House will enable FHC to build homes that are 30% more energy efficient than current building code. In addition to these certifications Fauquier Housing has achieved the following:

- Fauquier Housing Corporation, its sister organization, Rapidan Better Housing, and its various rental properties have been **organized under the umbrella name Foothills Housing Coalition (FHC)**, with the larger mission of ecological design and sustainable community development
- Since 1998 the organization has **completed 160 projects and cycled \$6 million dollars** throughout its six county service area through its Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation Program
- Fauquier Housing Corporation was named one of the Top Ten Housing Rehabilitation Specialists by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- FHC has launched its new website **www.fhchousing.org**
- FHC celebrates John Wayland, one of the original founders of FHC and who has served on its board for all of its 40 years
- FHC has **implemented its new Energy Efficiency Loan Program** that will offer zero-interest loans to low and moderate income residents interested in reducing their energy and water consumption and lowering their monthly utility bills. FHC is currently seeking applicants and contractors for this program.
- FHC will serve as a pilot project for Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) as it implements EarthCraft House standards into its Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation projects. DHCD will use cost and energy saving data from FHC to help shape its 2011 IPR budget.

Please see attachment for further details on each of these accomplishments, brochures, applications and other additional information/material can be found at www.fhchousing.org

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Warrenton, Virginia April, 16, 2010-- A lot has changed since 1970, but then again, board member Max Tufts Jr. points out, “the need is still there.” That need is what has kept Fauquier Housing Corporation busy for the past forty years. “When we started, we were dealing with entire neighborhoods that didn’t have indoor plumbing and/or a consistent source of water” says John Wayland, current President of the Fauquier Housing Board of Directors. Wayland, one of the organization’s original founders, has served on Fauquier Housing’s Board for all of its 40 year history. Mr. Wayland, along with Maximilian Tufts Sr., and Roland Tapscott, formed Fauquier Housing out of the existing Community Action organization. In order for housing issues to be addressed, Community Action needed a separate legal entity that could purchase, own, and sell property. Wayland, along with Roland Tapscott, and Maximilian Tufts Sr., established the first board of directors for Fauquier Housing and together worked to address the lack of affordable housing in Fauquier County. Some of the first projects Fauquier Housing completed involved constructing community wells in the Turnbull and Midland neighborhoods to provide a consistent source of water to residents that previously had none. In 1972 the organization completed its first house, a simple, yet efficient two-bedroom home for a local family. Forty years and hundreds of homes and families later, Fauquier Housing is celebrating its anniversary and looking ahead. Together with its sister organization Rapidan Better Housing, Fauquier Housing offers services to residents in Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, Page, and Rappahannock Counties with a staff of eight full and part-time employees and the three member board of Maximilian Tufts Jr., John Wayland, and William Barr.

Celebrating 40 years

- **1970:** Fauquier Housing is founded by Roland Tapscott, John Wayland, and Maximilian Tufts Sr.
- **1994:** Fauquier Housing and Rapidan Better Housing become sister organizations expanding its service area to six counties: Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, Page, and Rappahannock.
- **2009:** Fauquier Housing becomes EarthCraft House™ and ENERGY STAR certified, enabling it to build and renovate homes to be 30% more energy efficient than conventional building code.
- **2010:** Foothills Housing Coalition (FHC) is established to serve as the umbrella organization for Fauquier Housing, Rapidan Better Housing, and its various rental properties. The organization completes its first ENERGY STAR certified home, unveils a new website at and launches its new Energy Efficiency Loan Program.

www.fhchousing.org

Fauquier Housing to Operate as Part of the New Foothills Housing Coalition

As a part of its recent growth, the organization has unveiled a new name and website. Fauquier Housing, Rapidan Better Housing, and its various rental properties will be organized under the umbrella of Foothills Housing Coalition (retaining the acronym FHC). Fauquier Housing and Rapidan Better Housing will continue their work but will share the larger goals of environmental, economic, and social sustainability that the Foothills Housing Coalition represents. FHC’s new website www.fhchousing.org has details on the complete history of Fauquier Housing as well as information on all of its programs and services.

FHC has also updated its physical location. The organization moved to a more accessible office at 11 Culpeper Street in Old Town Warrenton. To cap off its successful year, Fauquier Housing and Rapidan Better Housing were awarded the distinction as one of the Top Ten Housing Rehabilitation Specialists in Virginia by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

FHC's growth reflects the ever-present, increasing demand for affordable housing in a region of the country that faces constant development pressure from D.C. and its metropolitan areas. According to realtytrac.com, a popular realty website that tracks home prices and foreclosure rates, the average cost of a home in Fauquier County is \$255,000, down from \$370,000 two years ago. As Mr. Tufts explains, "Even for people making a decent income, owning a home in Fauquier and surrounding counties is extremely difficult. Many people have lived here all their lives. Land has been passed down through generations and people don't want to let go of that, they shouldn't have to let go of that, but the current generation finds it increasingly difficult to maintain a decent level of housing."

According to the 2000 census there are 400 homes in Fauquier County that still lack indoor plumbing and that number, FHC housing specialist Jo Ann Lomax says, "is likely a lot higher." Lomax explains, "People are often hesitant to provide information about their plumbing situation on the census because they are afraid of how the information will be used." Lomax, who has worked with FHC for the past 20 years, manages FHC's low-income rental properties and implements the Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation (IPR) program. The program, funded primarily through Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, provides assistance to homeowners who do not have any or poor indoor plumbing and/or need significant repairs to their homes. Since 1998 FHC has helped over 160 residents with the IPR program, cycling over six million in funds throughout its six county service area. When a home is beyond repair FHC will replace the home on the existing lot. Lomax emphasizes that homeowners should be completely honest when filling out the 2010 census, "this information cannot be used against them and data gathered from the census guides funding for programs like the Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation program."

Going Green

With 40 years of experience and expertise, FHC is now looking ahead, revamping its IPR model, and expanding its service offerings to better reflect its commitment to ecological design. In 2009 the organization became EarthCraft House House™ and ENERGY STAR certified, enabling it to upgrade and build homes

EarthCraft House™



"EarthCraft House Virginia provides a certification process for single family and multifamily projects. It serves as a blueprint for healthy, comfortable homes that reduces utility bills and protects the environment."

Find out more at: www.ecvirginia.org

that are 30% more energy efficient than conventional building code. In January, FHC completed its first ENERGY STAR certified home for a low income Fauquier County resident. The project replaced a home with poor indoor plumbing that had become increasingly inaccessible to its aging, mobility impaired owner. As a part of its future programs FHC, in partnership

with a local energy auditor, will assess the specific weaknesses in a home and target solutions to make the home more efficient. To minimize waste on new construction projects FHC has developed a cut list that details the materials and framing needed for their EarthCraft House homes. In its own offices FHC has made strides to reduce its environmental impact. The organization has offset the carbon emissions by purchasing carbon credits through TerraPass, an organization that uses these offsets to fund carbon reduction projects.

Chris Moyles, FHC's current executive director and the force behind FHC's efforts to go "green" describes the organization's move towards EarthCraft House, green building standards, as, "just good sound, building science." A long time resident of Rappahannock County, Moyles, who joined the organization eight years ago, has witnessed the impact high cost housing and rampant development has had on the accessibility of homes for middle to lower income residents. In addition, the unchecked growth of the urban fringe has negatively impacted the natural environment. Moyles explains the rationale behind FHC's ecological commitment, "It's estimated that the residential building sector is responsible for 20% U.S. carbon emissions. The way homes have been built and the way they're still being built, is detrimental to the environment. Taking the time to think through the design of the house, using recycled materials, minimizing waste, and sealing the building envelope can go a long way in changing the relationship between the built and natural environment."

The change won't be easy. FHC estimates upgrading their homes to EarthCraft House standards will cost an additional \$2,000-\$10,000 per project but as Moyles states, "We want to be a part of this change. We're [FHC] willing to push ourselves, find the extra funding and learn the new techniques because it's all a part of our mission. We're providing safe decent affordable housing, and that means housing that benefits the people *and* the environment it serves." Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development has recently accepted FHC's bid to serve as a pilot project for implementing green building practices into the Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation Program. FHC will document its use of additional funds to implement EarthCraft House standards on all of its IPR projects and will provide this information to DHCD to help them shape the future funding for the IPR program.

FHC's long-term goal is to create a revolving loan fund to cover the upfront costs of weatherizing homes and building to EarthCraft House standards. This fund will help cover the initial costs of green building, balancing the cost of these units against the estimated long-term savings associated with energy efficiency. Over the long-term energy efficiency upgrades can save homeowners around 20-30% on their energy bills, making the repayment on these loans much more accessible to low-income homeowners. The fund will then revolve repayments to finance future weatherization projects.

Seeking Applicants

Foothills Housing Coalition is seeking applicants interested in participating in a pilot project for this Energy Efficiency Loan Program. The program will provide zero interest, forgivable loans to low-income homeowners interested in improving the energy efficiency of their homes.

Contractors with, or interested in gaining, energy efficiency and EarthCraft House building experience should also contact FHC to find out more information about the bidding process

More details and applications can be found at fhchousing.org or by calling FHC at 540-341-2805.

In the end, the ultimate goal is to achieve a level of 'safe, decent, affordable housing,' that, as Mr. Tufts states, "puts us [FHC] out of business," but Mr. Tufts reiterates, "the need is very much present, and as long as that need is there, we're [FHC] going to keep doing our best to meet it."