



# News & Views

## HACE Improvements Put People Back to Work



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**C**onstruction contracts for more than \$10 million awarded this summer have made a lot of people happy, including Elizabeth Williams, Harbor Homes, a 15-year resident of public housing who is on disability.

“I’m blessed,” she said. “They’re fixing up everything – new water lines so I have more water pressure; new siding and new paint. I’m ecstatic. I feel better about where I live and about myself.”

“That’s what I like about the Housing Authority,” said Williams. “They do all they can to keep their residents

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# Tenants, Workers: Improvements a 'Blessing'

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happy while we get back on our feet. And they treat us all with courtesy and respect.”

Wajdi Ahmad, a resident of Harbor Homes, came to this country in 2003 from Eritrea, East Africa, to seek a better life and a good job. He ended up washing dishes at an Erie high school until he was laid off. After that, he could find no work for a year. But now, he is working for DC Installations, installing replacement windows at Erie Heights. “This work is a blessing,” he said. Ahmad now has every opportunity to keep working on this and future projects if he does his job, shows up on time, and enters an apprenticeship program.

If it were not for the Authority’s 2011 capital improvements project, Ahmad, as well as more than 100 other formerly unemployed Erie area residents such as Tony Milone and Dave Bean would likely still be unemployed.

Bean had been out of work for seven months and Milone for nine months.

“Up until now, this was the longest I’ve gone without work,” said Bean. He has worked for E.E. Austin for about 12 years. “Blame it on the economy.”

Tony Milone said he “couldn’t be more grateful” for the work. “I bought a house two years ago and then work almost came to a halt. I had a hard time paying the mortgage and had to pick up a roommate to help pay the utilities. Thank goodness I have no wife or kids or I really would have been in trouble.”

All the workers praised the Authority for having shovel-ready projects set to go when the money to pay for them became available – “Just like the Authority was ready in 2009 when the stimulus money came along,” Bean said.

Construction work has started at six different housing sites and is expected to provide work through Christmas.

Improvements underway or planned include the following:

- Project “G” \$5.3 million includes installation of new underground gas lines at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments; new energy efficient furnaces and electrical service panels at 325 single family houses; and, new interior water lines and exterior siding replacement at 224 apartments in Harbor Homes at 18th and Downing.
- Erie Heights modernization (W. 38th and Garden Avenue) \$3.2 million includes new energy efficient furnaces, window replacement, and bathroom renovations in 210 apartments.
- C. Ted Dombrowski Apartments (E. 15th and Wallace Streets) \$558,000 includes new energy efficient furnaces, replacement of exterior siding, and new electrical panels for 33 apartments.
- Friendship Apartments (11th and French Streets) \$135,000 to replace main heating system for 200 apartments.
- Various Sites \$234,000 to replace or repair sidewalks.
- 2120B Gladstone Court \$698,000 to rebuild a five unit apartment building that was lost in a fire that occurred in November 2010.

All of this work is well under way. Most of the work is scheduled to be complete by the spring of 2012.

Funding for these capital improvements will come from a variety of sources including Capital Fund grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$5.7 million); operating reserves (\$1.3 million), insurance proceeds (\$725,000), and loans (\$2.4 million).

The Housing Authority provides affordable housing to over 8,000 Erie residents.



**Wajdi Ahmad**



**Tony Milone**



**Dave Bean**



**Elizabeth Williams**

## Executive Director's Message



*John E. Horan*

Voting for officials to lead us at the national, state and local levels is a right and a responsibility that should not be taken for granted. If those who are eligible to vote do not execute that right, you can be sure that someone else will attempt to fill the void. When that happens, we all lose. Generally, majority rules at election time. However, when only 20 percent of eligible voters take the time to vote, then a small, organized and determined minority can and will take advantage of the opportunity to impose their will on the majority. Oftentimes, their will is not in the best interest of the country, state or locality.

It is easy to become disenchanted with the state of our political action or lack of action at all levels of government. We feel that government does not adequately address our needs, and that only those individuals and business interests that can make

financial contributions have influence on government. That influence is multiplied many times over when the average person does not vote.

If we went to the polls in greater numbers (say 75 percent or higher), you can be assured that our voices would reduce the impact of the big donors. Elected officials and candidates would begin to make decisions that are in the best interest of the country, state and locality instead of just those who contribute to their campaigns.

We cannot rest our future in the hands of less than 25 percent of the electorate. They can too easily be controlled by the fringes on the left and right of the political spectrum. The greatness of this country continues to lie with the center, not the fringes.

The current "Occupy Wall Street" demonstrations that are occurring across the country, including here in Erie, are but a taste of things to come if changes do not occur in our political system. If you enjoy the turmoil caused in recent years by the "Tea Party" rhetoric and now by the "Occupy Wall Street" rhetoric, then stay home at election time. If you think it is time for thought and reason to prevail, then get out and vote in every election.

## From Residents and Friends

### THANKS SO MUCH FOR WALDAMEER PICNIC

Mr. Horan, I just wanted to thank you and comment on the annual picnic that you and the Housing Authority staff put together. It's one of the many nice things that you do and continue to do year after year.

*Tammy Jones  
Scattered Sites*

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

As president of Schmid Towers Tenant Council, I want to thank you very much for the transportation (buses) and the bag lunches for everyone on our trips. The trip to Sara's (restaurant) on August 31 and the tour of the peninsula, and then our trip on September 2 to the zoo meant so much. We had 13 people who

went to Sara's and 16 people who went to the zoo. Both trips were very enjoyable, and everyone said how good it was to be able to get out. I was so pleased that everyone enjoyed themselves. It would not have been possible if it were not for your wonderful help. Again, thank you so much for everything. May God bless you in all you do.

*Beatrice Bearce  
President Schmid Towers Tenant Council*

### THANKS FROM BMC

Thanks again to the Erie Housing Authority for participating in and sponsoring our Second Annual Cardboard Boat Regatta! I hope all of your students had fun learning to build cardboard boats and then racing in them. It sure seemed like they did! We

are so happy that HACE and BMC had the opportunity to partner on such a fun community event!

*Jessica Gallagher  
Bayfront Maritime Center*

### TIME TO MOVE ON

I recently got married and felt it was time to move on. While living in public housing, I was able to go back to school and earn my Bachelor's Degree in nursing. The rent was affordable and I didn't have to stress about getting things repaired. Overall, my experience has been great. The staff and maintenance crew were wonderful and treated me with kindness and respect.

*Angella M. Marshall-Horton  
Scattered Sites*

# Building Strong Children

## at HACE

The Erie Housing Authority's 10th Mentor/Youth Golf Program concluded in August with a tournament at the City of Erie's Joseph C. Martin Golf Course. The program, sponsored by the Authority in partnership with the Millcreek Golf and Recreation Center and the City of Erie, began June 20 at Millcreek Golf and Recreation Center. The seven-week mentor/youth program, for children 9-16 years old, included weekly group lessons, one-on-one golf instruction and encouragement with a mentor, and a Putt/Pitch and Drive Contest. PGA Golf Professional Karen Bukowski, with assistants and twelve mentors, provided instruction. The program taught golf etiquette in addition to putting, chipping, driving, and club selection. "The whole idea is to expose children to something they may be able to do for the rest of their lives, and give them the benefit of being with mentors," said John Horan, executive director of the Housing Authority. "Over the 10 years that the golf program has been offered, several of our young residents have gone on to participate on local high school golf teams. They all received their first experience with the game of golf through our program," said Horan. The finale, a golf tournament, partnered an adult mentor with a young golfer for a morning of fun and friendly competition.





*it's  
about  
people*



## HACE HAPPENINGS

### Curry Golfers Raise \$34,000

A grand total of \$34,106 was raised in the 15th Annual Ellen Curry Memorial Golf Tournament, which was held August 15 at the Lake Shore Country Club. The tournament is the sole yearly fund-raiser for the Curry Foundation, which sponsors scholarships for public housing children.

Since 1998, the Foundation has awarded \$362,034 in scholarships. This year, 29 children will be able to attend parochial schools by virtue of their selection for a Curry scholarship. Another five students will receive college scholarships. In 2010 the tournament raised \$35,000 for the Foundation's Scholarship fund.

Major sponsors for the 2011 tournament were Marquette Savings Bank and Waste Management of Pennsylvania.

Honorary co-chairs were Joseph Sinnott, Mayor, City of Erie; Michael Edwards, CEO, Marquette Savings Bank; and Rich Carniewski, Senior District Manager, Waste Management.

Ellen Curry served on the Housing Authority of the City of Erie board for 29 years, until her death on December 15, 1996. She was instrumental in shaping the many successful programs of the Authority. Before her death, Ellen established a foundation for the education of youth who live in housing managed by the Erie Housing Authority.



### HACE Seeks Comments on Plan that Details Spending for 2012

As of October 31, the Erie Housing Authority began taking public comments on the draft of its 2012 Agency Plan.

The plan is available for inspection by the public at the HACE's central office, 606 Holland Street, during normal business hours (8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday) for a 45-day period, ending December 14, 2011, at which time a public hearing on the plan will be held at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments Learning Center, 730 Tacoma Road, at 6:30 p.m.

Comments, which will be considered for the final plan, must be made in writing to: John E. Horan, Executive Director, Erie Housing Authority, 606 Holland Street, Erie, PA 16501.

The Authority's Agency Plan is a document submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

It details how HACE will spend federal funds for construction, renovation, programs, equipment, and services.

The Authority expects to receive \$3 million for public housing improvements in 2012.

The HACE Board will consider the final plan on December 27. If approved, the plan will be submitted to HUD on January 6, 2012.

## Housing Authority Praised By United Way

For the tenth year in a row, the Erie Housing Authority had 100 percent employee participation in its United Way Campaign, in which employees voluntarily give to the United Way through payroll deductions.

For 2012, employee pledges totaled \$22,386, as compared to 2011, at \$20,605.

There are 66 full-time employees at the Authority.

"The example set by the Erie Housing Authority is outstanding," said R.J. Zonna, senior vice president of the United Way of Erie County. "We look at the Housing Authority's United Way campaign as *the* model campaign, and highlight it to other companies so that they can try to emulate it. As we

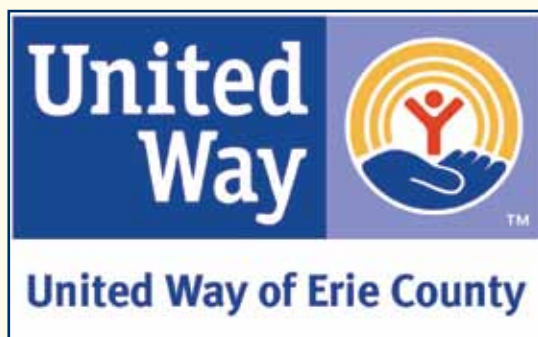
go out and talk to other employers, they say things like 'My people don't make a lot of money' or 'They don't have anything to give.' That's when we cite the Housing Authority of the City of Erie."

Zonna said he believes the generous giving of Authority employees is fostered by "an organizational culture that flows from John Horan down to every employee."

The Erie Housing Authority sets a true example of what it means

to 'Live United,' the motto of the United Way," Zonna said.

This year's campaign began on September 15 and ended September 23.



# HACE HAPPENINGS

## HACE Selects Annual Garden Contest Winners



These gardens are but a few of the many that abound throughout our neighborhoods. Since 1977, we have held annual garden contests, although we have photographs of gardens in our archives dating back to 1955. We provide seeds and tools, but for the most part, residents and contest winners do it on their own with little help and fanfare. We think the results are delightful, and are happy to announce the 2011 Garden Contest winners. Above left, is the winning vegetable garden of Ali and Hamdia A. Alaboudi, 2000 block of Gladstone Court. They have lived in public housing since 2008. Above right is the winning flower garden of Mykhaylo and Nadezhda Danylchenko, 100 block of East 17th Street. They have lived in public housing since 2005.

## Public Housing Safety Survey Goes Door-to-Door

**H**aving a safe place to live, work, and raise families is very important.

The KeyStone Research Corporation of Erie is conducting a study for HACE on these and other issues, such as maintenance, and to find out whether residents think that we at HACE are doing our job or not.

Questionnaires are being mailed to residents who have lived in Erie's public housing for at least six months. Door-to-door follow-ups will be conducted in neighborhoods where the desired response rate of 40 percent has not been attained by the mailed survey.

Survey results will be presented at the December Board meeting.

For 2010, the survey showed that:

- 89 percent of residents overall would recommend public housing to their friends or family members.
- 85 percent of residents overall feel safe alone at night

in their home or apartment, and 90 percent feel safe alone during the daytime in their parking area.

- Of the residents living in senior citizen housing, few reported any serious problems. The most reported problem, identified by 8 percent of residents, was a limited availability of parking.

- Most residents are aware of services offered by the Housing Authority. Nearly 92 percent of those surveyed said they were aware of the annual family picnic, and 82 percent said they were aware of the authority's garden contest, for instance. Fewer respondents were aware of more specific programs, including scholarship programs and services that cater to specific groups of people.

- Most residents are satisfied with the manager's office and with maintenance. Nearly 86 percent said they were satisfied with responses to questions and concerns, and 90 percent said the exterior of buildings and grass and landscaping are well maintained.



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John E. Horan, *Executive Director  
and Secretary*  
Donald E. Wright, Jr. Esq., *Legal Counsel*

[Check us out at hace.org](http://hace.org)

**Early Bird Winners**

-- Go to "NEWS"

**Press Releases**

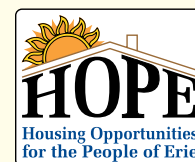
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**Minutes of Board Meeting**

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*'It's About People'*

## HACE HAPPENINGS

### Horan Honored for Dedication to People



- Quality of life for communities and producing work of lasting impact and acting with courage and verve;
- Demonstrating leadership and volunteerism;
- Creating opportunities for advocacy for clients and serving as a role model for others in the community.

Horan was honored for his contributions at HANDS' 45th Anniversary celebration at the Erie Art Museum on September 15.

He has served as executive director of the Erie Housing Authority since 1977. He also served as planning director of the City of Erie from 1972-1977, and as assistant director of the Erie Redevelopment Authority from 1968-1972.

Under his leadership, the Authority has obtained \$200 million in federal funds for the construction and modernization of more than 1,800 housing units for low-income families and the elderly.

According to the awards selection committee, he is a recognized leader in innovative resident service programs.

On behalf of the Authority, he has received 15 state and national awards for his resident service initiatives and innovative programs.

"Mr. Horan has shown his commitment to the voluntary system of human services through 40 years of leading and participating in service organizations and causes that provide opportunities for the entire Erie community, and particularly for the low-income and disabled populations," his award read.

Horan was one of four founding members of the Ellen Curry Foundation, established in 1996, to enhance and improve the general education level of children who reside in housing owned by the Housing Authority of the City of Erie.

**E**rie Housing Authority Executive Director John E. Horan recently received the 2011 Charles and Katherine Scalise Community Service Award.

This award honors the exceptional leadership of an individual or a group in the Erie Community who exemplifies Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS) core values throughout the years.

Horan was selected by the awards committee because he not only met, but exceeded, the following criteria:

- Advocacy for clients;
- Contributions to populations at risk;
- Impact on public social issues/policy;
- Program creation and innovative research;